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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

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Members Present

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 229-19(2):
STRENGTHENING MENTAL WELLNESS AND
ADDICTION RECOVERY

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions continues to be a serious issue in the NWT, which is why this government has committed to increasing the number and variety of culturally-respectful community-based mental health and addictions programs. I rise today to update Members on the work to meet this mandate commitment.

Mr. Speaker, we adopted the Stepped Care 2.0 approach to mental health supports to ensure individuals and families have access to the right level of care when and where they need it. This approach provides both modern and traditional supports, like smart-phone applications, to offer residents options to choose from, regardless of where they live. The goal of this recovery-oriented approach is to empower residents to offer more choice and reduce gaps in service. We want to be responsive to the needs of clients entering the system.

With the implementation of Stepped Care 2.0, we have improved access to community-based counseling by reducing wait times and adding same-day services. Prior to this change, the median wait time for a counseling appointment in the NWT was 19 days. Mr. Speaker, with this shift to a Stepped Care approach, the median wait time is now just four days.

Since 2020, we have increased the availability of e-health options. The Strongest Family Institute supports individuals and families who are experiencing mild to moderate anxiety, depression,

and behavioral challenges. BreathingRoom is an online program for youth that offers new perspectives and practical strategies to manage stress, depression, anxiety, and strengthen their coping skills. The Wagon app is a virtual addictions aftercare program that offers an abstinence-based approach to sobriety. It enables clients to develop a personalized plan for recovery and maintenance after they complete addictions treatment. It offers residents weekly two-hour virtual group therapy sessions with registered clinicians to build on the skills developed during treatment.

Mr. Speaker, offering effective and culturally safe programs and services is a priority for this government and for the health and social services system. Since 2020, we have enhanced the On the Land Healing Fund by increasing funding specifically for mobile addictions treatment aftercare. We have also added three new funds that support Indigenous governments and community organizations to deliver mental wellness and addictions recovery programming.

The Community Suicide Prevention Fund supports these organizations to deliver and develop culturally-safe programs by increasing community wellness and reducing stigma. The Addictions Recovery Peer Support Fund helps these organizations provide their own peer support programs such as AA or Wellbriety. The Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Fund funds the establishment of local community-based counsellors to support individuals working towards recovery and to provide addictions aftercare programming.

Mr. Speaker, we are also taking steps to create a territorial model for medical detox and managed alcohol, as well as establishing transitional housing for people returning from addictions treatment. The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has established a working group to lead the development on the medical detox model which will incorporate both inpatient and in-community offerings.

Lessons learned, through the distribution of alcohol during the pandemic, have been used to inform the development of standards to serve as the foundation of a Managed Alcohol Program in the NWT in the future.

An expression of interest for transitional housing programs was issued in December 2021. Four community organizations and Indigenous governments applied. Staff are working with these groups as they develop specific program models.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are integrating cultural sensitivity into the delivery of services, we have also increased support and training opportunities for frontline staff in the community counselling program. Staff are receiving training in cultural safety, addictions recovery, and key components of Stepped Care 2.0.

Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that there is still a great deal of work to do, I also firmly believe that we have made and will continue to make progress. These initiatives will make a meaningful difference in the lives of NWT residents, and that is what this government strives to do every day.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for NWT residents. The public health restrictions have affected our ability to gather, to participate in the activities that bring us joy, and to travel and visit with loved ones, to the detriment of our mental wellness. The department has been tracking social indicators throughout the pandemic, and while the total number of people accessing services has not increased, the reasons why they are accessing services have changed. Lately, we are seeing that the reasons are more frequently related to anxiety, stress, and substance use.

Even as the public health emergency and associated orders come to an end, Health and Social Services recognizes the effects of the pandemic will not be short-lived. People are going to need support to recover from what has been a very difficult time. The health and social services system will continue to monitor trends, shift service delivery as required, and actively promote our programs and services so NWT residents understand how and where they can get the support they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 230-19(2):
RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Monsieur le President, one of the beautiful things about living in the Northwest Territories is the diverse range of cultures and languages that reside here. Our Francophone community, made up of approximately 4,200 residents, is an important component of our society and a significant contributor to our social, economic and cultural development.

That is why I am proud to celebrate our Francophone community during the 24th Annual Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. This nation-wide event, held every March, is an opportunity for Canada's 10 million French-speakers, and all Canadians, to celebrate and promote French language and culture.

The theme for this year's Rendez-vous de la Francophonie is Traditions. This theme will highlight the ties that connect past and present generations, communities and cultures. Rendez-vous de la Francophonie gives us an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves and celebrate the richness of the Canadian Francophonie in all its diversity.

Monsieur le President, as we celebrate Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, I would like to acknowledge the work done by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. In the last year alone, the secretariat translated more than 3 million words that have allowed Francophone residents to access important information in French. [Translation Unavailable]

In addition, the secretariat launched the annual Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey in February to help ensure that the Francophone community is aware of the Government of the Northwest Territories' French language communications and services, and is satisfied with their delivery at Points of Public Service in French.

Finally, Monsieur le President, the GNWT has been working diligently to improve its French active offer and delivery of French services. A French active offer is a way of greeting the public to inform them that they are welcome to communicate in either English or French. The secretariat has updated training videos for employees and, this month, is launching a video campaign to promote our French language services to the public and inviting feedback on the quality of these services.

Monsieur le President, our diverse French population adds a cultural richness to our communities. I am proud of our ongoing efforts to support our Francophone residents and to strengthen the diversity of our territory. Merci, Monsieur le President. [Translation Ends]

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1028-19(2):
UKRAINE SUPPORT

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Service facilities, military installations, hospitals, communication infrastructure, residential buildings, airports, utility infrastructure, and much more. There

have been approximately 18 attacks on healthcare facilities with the latest assault being a children's hospital and maternity ward.

Mr. Speaker, an attack on a hospital is a war crime under the Rome Statute the International Criminal Court provided they are not military objectives, which come with consequences.

Mr. Speaker, an unnecessary death toll is mounting on both sides of the conflict. Destruction of infrastructure is growing, the number of people displaced is rising, there is no indication it is about to let up. Because of this, Ukraine requires supports from other countries, which include military equipment, medical staff and supplies, temporary shelters, emergency funds, and basic supplies such as food, drinking water, and clothes - support required not only for Ukraine but those bordering countries taking on refugees.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier announced that this government would match donations up to \$50,000. This is a fantastic way to encourage people to donate and support the needs arising from the conflict in Ukraine. However, the \$50,000 in matching donations, if not received, then my expectation is for this government to contribute the \$50,000 regardless. Although it may appear to be a small amount, it will help efforts in Ukraine and show our support as Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, what else can this government and the people of the NWT do in support of Ukraine - people forced to flee from their homes and country.

We must continue to denounce the action taken by Putin government against Ukraine and encourage the federal government to do everything in its power to support Ukraine while not ruling out military support. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government must be willing to welcome Ukraine refugees to the NWT. We must continue with the boycott of Russian-made goods coming to the NWT and not just limited to alcohol products. For the people the Northwest Territories, we can provide financial support directly to organizations delivering humanitarian efforts on the ground. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1029-19(2):
LAND LEASES

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I'm going to speak about the land lease fees for people who own cabins on lands in the NWT. This is a topic which I have discovered that the Minister of Lands seems to enjoy speaking about. In fact, the Minister asked me recently if I was going to ask him questions about this anytime soon. Well, here it comes.

Mr. Speaker, I once pointed out that the Minister stood up 72 times during the 18th Assembly, talking and asking questions about land leases. He later told me that it was likely more times than that. Well, I went back and checked Hansard, and he was right. I would like to amend that number to 83, that he stood up and mentioned land leases in the previous Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I have not done a Member's statement on this topic since November of 2020. That has given the Minister of Lands and his department plenty of time to work on the Public Lands Act and enough time to hopefully advance the whole issue into a positive direction for the people of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I spoke about this, the Minister admitted that the main reason lease rent fees had increased was to create more revenue for the government. Therefore, the previous government had decided to increase user fees for rent on leases rather than cut costs elsewhere or find revenue from other sources. So in essence, these fees and lease rent increases are a money grabber for the government. It's time we be honest and say that.

Mr. Speaker, at the time when inflation is at a 31-year high, these increased land leases are hurting regular people more than ever. It was nice that the lands department had waived all lease fees for the fiscal year 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic as that did offer some reprieve for people; however, I think that same offer should have been extended for another year for the fiscal year 2021-2022 as the pandemic was still ongoing during that time.

I did ask the Minister to consider that via email but he declined to pursue that. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister of Lands knows in his heart of hearts that the new rent minimum for cabin lease costs had gone up too much and too soon for the people of the NWT. To get up 83 times and talk about cabin leases and lease fee increases, I have to believe the Minister shares my concerns that the increases were too much for people to absorb in such a short time span. I understand that lease rent and fees had not

increased in 20 years, but I urge the government to have some compassion for people's pocketbooks.

There are some people who are on very fixed incomes, and there are others living paycheque to paycheque, so these high cabin-rent increases are having a very negative impact for many people in my riding and across the NWT. I can go on, but I will leave it at that for now. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1030-19(2):
REGULATION MAKING IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I made a statement almost two years ago about the lack of a clear process for developing regulations by this government. I had to dig deep, very deep - in fact, to appendix 4.11 of the executive council submissions handbook - to find anything public after repeated requests to the Premier on this subject. In that three-page appendix that was signed off by the Premier on March 11th, 2021, there are some vague guidelines on leaving virtually all of the discretion over any public and even standing committee engagement around regulations to each individual Minister and agency.

This appendix called Cabinet operational guidelines, publishing proposed regulations, was finally posted publicly in April 2021 with no public announcement and no consultation or engagement with standing committee before the fact. I contrast that with Cabinet taking more than a year to negotiate the legislative development protocol with the intergovernmental council to develop regulations and legislation. This came after repeated calls for involvement in the development of regulations and post-devolution resource management legislation from the last Assembly that left most of the details to the regulations and whims of future Ministers with no checks or balances.

I will give this Cabinet some credit as there have been a little over ten public engagement opportunities on proposed regulations since the beginning of this Assembly. These can be seen on the "Have your Say" web pages. However the first, and perhaps only time in this Assembly when a standing committee recommended public engagement on a proposed regulation, the response from Cabinet and the Education Minister was "no".

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommended, based on public input, that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment undertake public consultation to develop prescribed

emergency provisions under the Employment Standards Act. The department went ahead on its own and took three months to develop these so-called emergency regulations that did not come into force for another months. Four months is hardly the kind of emergency timeline that should have precluded public engagement.

I will have questions later today for the Premier on how our government is going to put into practice its open government policy with regard to regulation-making going forward and public engagement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1031-19(2):
IMPORTANCE OF LIVING WELL TOGETHER
TRAINING

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I woke this morning, had my coffee as I do, began to read the news as I do every day, and I was saddened to see the article about the NWT woman files lawsuit claiming doctor sterilized her without consent.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to speak to the details of this case as it's before the courts; however, it's unfortunate reality, Mr. Speaker, that Indigenous people in Canada have a history of medical experimentation and sterilization without consent.

Mr. Speaker, in this House my colleagues and I continue to raise the issue about the mistrust and the treatment of Indigenous people when accessing services in the NWT. That is why, Mr. Speaker, it is so critical for the GNWT to implement the Living Well Together Training Program. The Living Well Training Program provides Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training to all GNWT staff to assist them in their job, as well to give them space while they're learning or taking this training as it may be difficult for some.

On December 1st, 2021, the Minister of Finance publicly stated to everyone in this House to my answers, the GNWT, except for new hires, would have this training done by March 31st, 2022. The Minister also committed to discussing with Cabinet prioritizing the training among frontline service for staff.

Mr. Speaker, if you are a GNWT worker in the medical field, the healthcare field, correction service, child and family service system, you are in a position of power. The Living Well doc training needs to be prioritized among frontline workers dealing with Indigenous people when they are most vulnerable. And we are ensuring that locum doctors, locum nurses, all frontline staff also receive this training.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to stress the importance of hiring the Indigenous patient advocate. It is really important for the GNWT to fill these positions because there are so many stories we hear out there about the injustices from the healthcare field, and we don't ever want to see headlines like we did this morning. I will have questions for the Minister of Health later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1032-19(2):
DRUG DECRIMINALIZATION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just two weeks ago, our own Department of Health and Social Services put out an advisory of laced cocaine after two overdose deaths. And, Mr. Speaker, this certainly wasn't the first time. In fact, every few months the public, both across Canada and across the world, is warned of an increasingly toxic and poisoned drug supply. And Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is we are only going to see more deaths in this area unless we take serious action. And there is no enforcement way out, Mr. Speaker.

The Northwest Territories spends more per capita on policing than anywhere else in Canada. We've spent millions of dollars on very sophisticated wiretap drug operations, and all that we see is new drug dealers emerge with a more poisoned and toxic drug supply each time, Mr. Speaker.

It is long overdue that Canada decriminalize drugs, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, the conversation around decriminalization is not complete without mentioning the Portugal model.

Over 20 years ago, Portugal decriminalized drugs. It stopped arresting and putting people in jail for possession of drugs. Instead, it made an administrative penalty and provided them with treatment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this model is proven to work. The number of HIV cases went down. The number of hepatitis cases went down. The number of drug users went down, Mr. Speaker. And they have consistently remained lower than their European counterparts in Portugal, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, decriminalization is a federal responsibility, and it is not a silver bullet solution. Any decriminalization must be paired with increased treatment options and a safe supply where the drug supply is poisoned. However, Mr. Speaker, a government cannot arrest addicts on one hand and then ask them to come to that same government for treatment. Decriminalization removes the stigma and encourages people to get help.

Mr. Speaker, the Association of Canada Chief Police have asked for decriminalization; countless public health officials have asked for decriminalization; the Premier of BC has asked for decriminalization. There is safe supply operating in BC, Ontario, and Yukon. We have years of experience with providing people with methadone treatment, Mr. Speaker. This is not a new area. It is long overdue. If we want to save lives, we have to add our voice for the call for the decriminalization. I will have questions for the Premier whether she will join that voice in asking Canada to partner with us and decriminalize drugs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1033-19(2):
HOUSING

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, housing is a human right. Many in this Assembly are working hard to uphold this right but face a housing stock and housing repair deficit in their communities and unnecessary policy barriers to access housing.

Mr. Speaker, I speak often about policy barriers in this House. They don't always require millions of dollars and they have the potential for great change. Removing policy barriers requires political will, the ability to weigh the unintended consequences with the original goal, and the creativity to find solutions. Policy changes, Mr. Speaker, will open doors to alternative housing solutions that work.

The Spruce Bough, operated by the Yellowknife Women's Society, is a breakthrough example of an alternative housing solution. It started as a place for people to isolate but evolved into a community of Northerners from across the North, many seniors who now call Spruce Bough home. The Minister of Health and Social Services has herself stated that the Yellowknife Women's Society is running great programming at the Spruce Bough and that their work not only provides housing but also supports the healing journeys of residents.

To continue operations, alternative housing solutions like the Spruce Bough require stable, consistent, multiyear funding. Policy changes are needed to bulk fund the income assistance rental benefit to NGOs that provide alternative housing solutions.

Currently, tenants receive their housing benefits with income assistance on an individual basis in separate intervals without alternative solution. This means inconsistent and unstable funding for programs like Spruce Bough and jeopardizes the future of solutions like this expanding outside of Yellowknife.

But bulk funding policies aren't the government's barrier to alternative housing. The rent benefit requires people to have their names on the public housing waitlist. First residents need to go to the Housing Corporation to add their name to this waitlist. Second, many Northerners are unable to do this because of arrears and past evictions so either people need a grace period to get their name on the list while they are still moving their rent benefit application forward or, better yet, stop forcing Northerners onto a housing waitlist when the government knows there is not enough housing. This policy is clearly based on an assumption of available public housing but we all know housing Northerners is reliant on partnerships, market rentals, and housing alternative.

Mr. Speaker, the need for housing is too great and too urgent to pass on any and all policy interventions that can make a difference. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1019-19(2): UKRAINE SUPPORT

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions are for the Premier. I'd ask the Premier what discussions, if any, are taking place between this government and the federal government on what supports are being offered to Ukraine and those countries supporting humanitarian efforts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Canada's taken the lead on international relief efforts for Ukraine. There are discussions taking place mainly around immigration planning, donation matching, and sanctions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier commit to providing the \$50,000 in support of Ukraine regardless if matching funds are received or not as it is the right thing to do? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Northerners have always been really generous so we're pretty confident that the 50,000 will be matched by people. We will be also promoting it within the GNWT as well. So the other thing that we're doing is right now we have a portal that's now

online. It will be released this afternoon so that we can track the donations from the NWT. But again, like I say, I have no doubt that \$50,000 will be donated. And if not, at that point, then definitely I'll look at it. We're committed to helping the Ukraine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier commit to setting up a support desk that would provide various information for displaced Ukrainians entering Canada and who may be looking at the NWT as a place to relocate and work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if an online portal -- or a support desk is the right way to do it but we've always been welcoming people in the Northwest Territories. We'd welcome anyone from any nation, especially those that are going through troubling times. So we'll find the appropriate ways to provide opportunities so that the NWT is known to those that are coming to Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to squeeze two questions into one. Will the Premier commit to an advertising campaign in NWT to encourage ongoing support efforts to help Ukraine humanitarian efforts, and will she be willing to fly the Ukrainian flag in front of the Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be promoting the giving portal that I mentioned above. And as for flying the flag in front of the Ukraine, I think that flying the flag outside of the Legislative Assembly is the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly and I'm not sure if I can defer that question to the Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. We are -- it's in the plans. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 1020-19(2): LAND LEASES

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Lands has repeatedly stated he wants to "get it right" on the land leases. He has had now about three years to work on this. Has the Minister found a way to reduce the 460 percent increase in minimum land lease rent costs for territorial land leaseholders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank the Member for the speech. Her Member's statement was great, and I applaud her for that and I say thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, is it -- there's a process. The scope of the work is significant. The department is reviewing nine existing regulations, 22 land withdrawal orders, and developing in regs under this act. I committed to have these regulations done by the end of this year. I wanted to have them done sooner but there -- as I said, we need to do it right. So we need to work with the timelines with the Members. We also have to work with our Indigenous governments and community governments, leaseholders and stakeholders, and the public.

The other challenge is the department is following a new intergovernmental council protocol and legislative development and working collaboratively with Indigenous -- or Intergovernmental Council Secretariat members on the development of the regulations. Since 2021, there's been three other Indigenous governments that have participated in a public land regulatory technical work group -- working group, and it's been going well. It takes some time but it's going well. And we still have the commitment to have it done by the end of this fiscal year. Thank you. Or not this fiscal year, correction, the end of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the Lands department is planning to increase land lease rent costs on a regular basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently all lease agreements have a review clause for every five years to look at lease potential changes to address appraised land values. However, as I said previously in my other answer there, is this is all part of the regulations and the work that we're doing. We're trying to, as the Member said that I said, get it right this time, because it has been some challenges in the past. As the Member has heard me say was more than 72 times, it was 83 times, and she got it right. And I thank her for that. I applaud her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope he gets it right with my next question.

Mr. Speaker, for fiscal year 2021-2022 the Department of Lands waived all land lease fees in the Northwest Territories. That was a welcomed relief for the people of the NWT. However, the pandemic was still ongoing throughout 2021. Can the Minister explain why the lands department did

not extend the temporary relief in land lease fees for the fiscal year 2021-2022? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department's pandemic response was in time with the GNWT's COVID-19 economic relief plan with commitments to provide relief measures designed to assist territorial residents, business owners, and operators as the territorial response to COVID-19. These measures for the department cost -- provided over \$2.7 million in relief to our clients but was only designed to be the 2021 fiscal year with the impact of pandemic were the most sudden and impactful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I know that sometimes Ministers must defend bad government decisions; however, this Minister spoke 83 times about land leases in the previous Assembly. Will the Minister live up to his own convictions and reduce the cost of minimum land lease rent costs for territorial land leaseholders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate and share my colleague's passion for this subject. I am sticking to my convictions. We need to do it right. We need to look at this. So this is why I made it a priority when I became the Minister of Lands, it was one of the first things that we needed to address. Unfortunately, the timing that I wanted it done didn't meet with some of the challenges that we have faced in here. But as I said, we've made a commitment to have it done by the end of this year, if not sooner. We're working with the Indigenous governments. We're working with community governments. We're working with leaseholders. And the Member can be advised that one of the biggest things that we heard in our survey was about lease payments and how that was implemented. So we are looking at that and we are moving forward, and hopefully we'll have a solution that is acceptable by all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1021-19(2):
BEHCHOKO WATER AND SEWER EMERGENCY

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, today -- still today there are residents without clean drinking water in one of -- in one of the community. And their homes and personal property

are being damaged and made unsafe from backup sewer pipes. An emergency under the Emergency Management Act means a current or imminent event that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulations of persons or property in order to protect the safety, health, or welfare of people or to limit or prevent damage to property or the environment.

Mr. Speaker, Behchoko which is -- I mean, in Edzo but it is part of Behchoko, is in a state of emergency. Will the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs declare a local state of emergency in Behchoko and to finally respond to the lack of clean water and crumbling infrastructure? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not our responsibility to declare a local state of emergency. We're working with the municipality on this very issue. The Member has brought it up. We are working. We have staff, whether it's regional or headquarters, meeting with the SAOs and their staff there. So if the community wants to declare a state of a local emergency, we are more than willing to work with them and explain the process to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Because he said no? Okay, Mr. Speaker, in other situations in Canada, including most recently in Iqaluit, the lack of clean water resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency. Can the Minister explain to residents in Behchoko why he does not consider the situation as an emergency? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Member, you know, when she talks about Iqaluit, that's in Nunavut. The city of Iqaluit declared a state of emergency. The community can declare a state of emergency. We're more than willing to work the community on addressing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Okay, Mr. Speaker, under the Emergency Management Act, a local authority may declare a state of emergency but the Minister can cancel such a declaration and must approve it before it can be renewed. If the community government declared is local state of emergency, would the Minister cancel or not approve the renewal of such declaration? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear. Chief and council from Behchoko have not reached out to us to declare a state of an emergency. If they declare a state of emergency, we're more than willing to work with the Chief and council. And if they want to

declare it, I'm more than willing to work with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Yes, at this time we are still dealing -- this is an emergency situation for many of my constituents. We are dealing with a situation where there's health is addressed of many of my residents. That's why I am addressing this. And he keeps saying this is not my responsibility. Well Behchoko, or any of the community government in Tlicho regions, that is the responsibility of MACA. That's why I am addressing it. I am addressing it and it's just more of a comment; he doesn't have to answer me back. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Municipal and Community Affairs, we work with the community governments. That's our responsibility. If the communities come to us, we're more than willing to work with them. The Chief has identified an issue there. We had a conversation. We brought in support staff, regional and headquarters, to work with the SAO and their staff there at the water treatment centers. We're working with their staff. We are working with them. We are trying to address it. There are some challenges. And I feel very sorry that these challenges are happening but we are working with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1022-19(2):
LIVING WELL TOGETHER TRAINING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement December 20th -- or December 1st, 2021, the Minister of Finance indicated that all GNWT employees would have the Living Well Together Training Program by March 31st, 2022. Today it's March 10th. Mr. Speaker, but my question will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

How many of the Department of Health staff and the NTHSS staff have completed the Living Well Together Training? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the number with me of how

many people have taken Living Well Together. That is something that I can provide to the Member.

I will say that Health and Social Services has an additional cultural safety training program for medical and social services staff with a unit that -- a module that was developed in-house and has been delivered at different places in the NWT during the pilot phase. And subsequently in the pilot phase, about 225 staff of ours participated. And then there were various opportunities to do the training again last year. So what I want to say about this is that Health requires that people do both training. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that, Minister. I'm glad to hear that our Health is supposed to get more training than most of the GNWT staff. Can the Minister explain how they reach out before hiring locums, doctors, nurses, any other healthcare practitioners that may be working with Indigenous populations, to complete this training before starting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, cultural safety training is a standard part of the orientation process for new staff. However, that complete training program is not provided to locums and agency staff, and that's clearly a gap in the training that we provide that we need to address. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, with the rates of the locums and the way that we're going and agency nurses now, I'm worried that they're not getting this training but that's not my question.

Will the Minister -- looking at the position for the Indigenous patient advocates that this House has been championing and it was approved in our last budget, will the Minister commit to follow up on an exact date that the Indigenous patient advocate will be advertised? And if no date, commit that we will see these positions filled sooner than later, because I don't want to be asking this when I come back in May. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will come back to the Member with that information.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if this government, this Minister, as well as all the other Ministers, is really serious about cultural safety for the Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories, they will add to their job description as a mandatory requirement on all job descriptions to have this training completed. Will the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to doing that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this training is now mandatory for people who are hired on a long-term basis. So the gap in service that we've identified -- or in training is with locums and agency nurses. That's what we need to work on next. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1023-19(2):
DRUG DECRIMINALIZATION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier and whether she will take a stand and join police chiefs, public health officials, countless politicians, and most recently the Premier of BC, in asking Canada to decriminalize drugs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to defer that to the Minister of Justice, please. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as the Member pointed out, this is not our -- we don't have the authority to decriminalize drugs in Canada. That is a federal responsibility. But we are keeping an eye on the situation across Canada and there are -- there are committees made up of all the provinces, territories, and the federal government, who are looking at this exact thing. They held their first meeting back in August. So there is a movement on this recently, and I really look forward to seeing what comes of it because the Member pointed out there was a couple overdoses recently. But that doesn't take into account the other drug-related deaths, the murders, the suicide. A lot of things -- people who moved out of the territory, you know, who brought their drug problems with them out of the territory who recently passed away. You know, I think we all know people who have been affected by this. So we are watching this closely. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate that the Minister's at those tables and he's watching it closely, but I guess my question is what is the position of this government in regards to decriminalization? When we're sitting in a meeting with other Ministers of Justice, and clearly ones from other provinces are saying yes, let's do this, what does the GNWT say, Mr. Speaker? Do we have a position that it is time to decriminalize drugs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The position is that we need to work with the Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories because this is not our decision alone. Thank you.

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

Oral Questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1024-19(2):
REGULATION MAKING IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Premier on regulation-making by this government.

Cabinet did not engage with Regular MLAs on the development of the Cabinet operational guidelines publishing proposed regulations. I'd like to ask the Premier why that happened and compare that to the year-long negotiation with the intergovernmental council on the legislative development protocol? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, there were multiple letters exchanged between the government and the chair of the Committee of Accountability and Oversight between March and June 2021 on these guidelines on how they'd operate, including the role of the standing committee and where the draft regulations would be published.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally, the creating of regulations is generally the responsibility of Cabinet and Ministers. This is by design. It's the Legislative Assembly that delegates regulation-making authority to Cabinet and Ministers. Regulation-making is intended to be less onerous than the development of acts, and that's why the regulation-making power is delegated.

The negotiation with the intergovernmental council on the legislative development protocol did, indeed, take time. The devolution agreement that was signed in 2014 provides for mutual cooperation in developing changes to land and resource legislation. This is a legal requirement that we are bound by and that respects the jurisdiction of the intergovernmental council partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. And in those letters that were exchanged, what we got was a signed document. It had already been completed, drafted. No matter what this side said, they didn't make any changes. So it's taken repeated requests on my part

to uncover the process that Cabinet apparently has in place for engagement around regulation-making. It's buried as appendix 4.11 of the executive council's submissions handbook, a best seller, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier tell us if and when Cabinet expects to undertake some public information or promotion of this new process for regulation-making? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the primary ways that we make residents aware of the engagement opportunities is through the government of the NWT's flagship website. Information related to all active, pending, and closed engagement opportunities, including engagement regulations, is posted on the "Have your Say" page. We pre-published 17 draft regulations since the guidelines were created last year. EIA is currently making edits to the handbook to create a more user-friendly format, and this work is expected to be done in the spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that -- or the Premier for that. Needless to say the Premier can probably detect that I'm not very happy about the way this is rolled out.

Can the Premier explain why each Minister and agency gets to decide if, how, and when, any public or standing committee engagement takes place on new regulations? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regulation-making authority is outlined in each of our territorial laws. It's the Legislative Assembly that decides whether a Minister or Cabinet or another entity has responsibility for making regulations under a territorial law.

In cases where a Minister is assigned regulation-making authority under the law, the Minister decides whether engagement is to take place because it is the Minister that's responsible for all matters arising within their department. The guidelines are helpful in that they outline the incidents when a Minister should publish a draft regulation for input. They provide guidance in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. Of course, I'm not asking for an opportunity to review every single set of regulations but a more collaborative process; a better reflection of so-called consensus government should have been carried out here. The only way for the public to know about regulations now is by combing through the wildly popular Northwest

Territories Gazette that is posted after most of the regulations are already made.

Will the Premier commit to reviewing the Cabinet operational guidelines publishing proposed regulations with standing committee and the public before the end of this Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had almost a year with the process of publishing the draft regulations. I will commit that before the end of this Assembly we will review them to see if there's any improvements that need to be made, and we will share that -- we'll engage with standing committee as part of that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1025-19(2):
INCOME ASSISTANCE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

A lot of changes I'm going to ask for today relate to the income assistance review. Can the Minister clarify when we will see the updated -- or sorry, can the Minister provide an update on the progress of this review and when we can expect to see frontline policy change as a result of this work? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Members are aware, or as they've been notified, we are currently engaging the public and stakeholders on the income assistance program. That engagement ends tomorrow. There have been meetings with Indigenous governments, vendors, former income assistance clients, current income assistance clients, and so on, and once we have that information we will have a "what we heard" report to share with the House and a -- the reprofiled income assistance program that will be the ultimate result of all of this work should roll out in April 2023. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my concern is that it doesn't leave for a lot of time for us to see how the new program is working towards the end of our term. And we've spent a lot of our time over the course of the 19th Assembly identifying changes that different Members would like to see to the income assistance program. A lot of these changes are longstanding challenges that NWT residents have seen for decades. And so I'm wondering why not start with the

low hanging fruit or changes to policies that present barriers to getting Northerners housed? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been some changes. I mean, everyone now is on the wellness productive choice and so that is essentially been eliminated. That's something that's been asked for. So I want -- I just want to note that there are some things happening but, you know, calling something low hanging fruit doesn't mean it's low hanging fruit. The change the Member's talking about would probably cost millions of dollars, and we're working on that right now to make those determinations. So it's not as easy as just saying let's do something. There's other factors. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Somebody's paying for housing; I guess it just depends on who. It's either shelters, or it's ECE, or it's Housing.

Within the income assistance program policies, many policies that relate to housing Northerners are at the discretion of senior managers or the director. This means policies are subjective and potentially inconsistently applied to NWT residents. It also means people are sitting waiting for approvals rather than securing housing.

So will the Minister issue an immediate directive to remove "with director approval" from policies that is present housing barriers allowing clients to work directly with their caseworker to secure their rent benefit? Thank you so much.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if you have a director, then it would be more consistent than spreading it out perhaps. But the director is a statutory officer of the income assistance program, and the director has given discretion to regional managers and client service officers to issue rental benefits on the behalf of clients.

So in situations where a client doesn't have their name on the public housing waitlist or their rent exceeds the limits that we have on rent, the client service officer has to seek approval from the director but in my experience that happens very quickly. People aren't waiting days or weeks for this to happen. So having that central authority provides the consistency that the Member is talking about, and we don't sacrifice time. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister and I have differing reports back from people who are using this service and that sometimes days or even a week means that somebody is not housed in that time.

Will the Minister remove the requirement on the income assistance clients to put their names on the public housing waitlist knowing that there's not enough public housing in the NWT and that housing Northerners relies on market rentals, partnerships, and also alternate housing solutions? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If Members are aware of specific issues where people are waiting weeks for a service, please let me know. As part of the income assistance review, I want to make sure that we include some way to track these types of incidents. Until then, if I don't know I don't know. So I think it's the duty of everyone to let me know about that when they hear it because I want to make sure that doesn't happen.

And the comment the Member made about removing the waitlist requirement, we're working on that, as I've said. There's money involved. There's other things involved. But I've heard the Member, and we are considering that as part of the review. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1026-19(2):
ELECTRIC BIKE REBATES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. I want to build on some questions that my colleague from Hay River South asked the other day about whether the Minister is willing to implement a rebate for electric bikes.

I know the Minister's going to review this and do some calculations of GHG emissions, but I'm worried, you know, Mr. Speaker, if we say it's 50 bikes and you get \$500 back, that's \$25,000 a year. I'm worried we're going to spend more asking some engineer or consultant to review whether this is a good idea. So I know we don't have a lot of money laying around but maybe the Minister can find \$25,000 laying around, and we can get a rebate program started with 50 bikes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you. Since there's so much interest in this Assembly, I will commit to looking at the rebate for electrical bikes as part of the three-year energy action plan and the business planning process. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, this doesn't mean the Member keep asking questions that I would eventually say, yes. This is not the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quite a few of my constituents ride electric bikes, and they're

quite proud of them. My question for the Minister of Infrastructure is if I bring an electric bike over here to the legislature, will she take it out for a rip, Mr. Speaker?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Quanainni. I have a bicycle, but I use the pedals. So, you know, if they want to test a electrical bicycle, by all means; I'd be happy to do circles around the Assembly.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, sorry. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1027-19(2):
UKRAINE SUPPORT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have some Ukrainian ancestry myself. My great-great-grandparents on my mom's side came to Canada in 1898, and when the Premier called for donations on February 25th I did it the same day. I donated \$500. But how's the government going to match that donation now? The portal just opened up this afternoon. There's no way that my donation seems that I can get it matched right now. So can the Premier tell me how she's going to match my donation? I can walk the receipt over if she needs it, but. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Sounds like the Member wants to walk to the other side. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories is matching \$50,000 to all residents. We are hoping that residents will contribute.

I can say as the Premier if that Member walks the receipt over to me, I will commit to personally donating \$500 towards the campaign. And I challenge every Member in this House to donate \$500 to the campaign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that -- or the Premier. I think I can up her on that. I'm going to send it to her by email as soon as I sit down so she's going to get it right away. And so can the Premier commit that she's going to match that donation and make sure that the GNWT doubles it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made my commitment that I will. I already had one Minister say that they already give their \$500 as well. Out of that \$50,000, if we don't spend it all, which I commit we will spend it all, I already said if it's not spent, we will donate it to the Red Cross.

But, again, the plea is for all residents to donate to this cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1028-19(2):
ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions will be for the Minister responsible for MACA. Unfortunately I didn't have time to give him the questions, but -- I just wrote them.

Does the Minister of MACA believe water and sanitation is a basic human right thus essential for all our northern communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I think the Member's asking for my opinion so I can tell you the department believes that water and sewer is important. That's why we have the water and sewer subsidy program. We work with the municipalities on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister's department believe that every community in the Northwest Territories deserves access to clean water to avoid potential health issues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Yes, we work with the municipalities on issues, and that's why we have the CIP gas tax. We work with them. We give them the money. They pick their priorities. They work with them. If there's challenges, we work with the municipalities. We have staff that go in there working with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister's department believe that reasons Indigenous communities that don't have clean drinking water, in part, is due to marginalization, remoteness, age of systems, lack of funding, and maintenance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. That was like a written question so I will get back to the Member with that answer. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Management Act section 17(1)(f) says -- states: Provide -- it provides for the restoration of essential facilities and the distribution of essential supplies.

On the basis of the -- on the basis of the Minister's answers and this legislation, will the Minister commit to looking for resources to fix the water issue in Edzo? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. And I appreciate the Member from Hay River South asking questions for Monfwi; I greatly appreciate that.

We've said before in this House here we are working with the community. We're reaching out to the federal government. We are looking for funds to help the community address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1029-19(2):
LIVING WELL TOGETHER TRAINING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Can the Minister of Finance advise us what percentage of the GNWT workforce have completed the Living Well Together and if not, after March 31st, provide us with a number. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to answer two questions right now. So the first question is we do track those numbers. Had I known that this would come up today, I would have asked for those numbers. In fact when I heard the statement, I started to send an email but didn't quite finish. So I'll stare at my computer and see if the numbers arrive but if they don't, Mr. Speaker, I will commit to providing them to this House.

On the second point, Mr. Speaker, we had set March 31st as the deadline for mandatory completion of the training. But really that -- the reality is, Mr. Speaker, this isn't a punitive thing. This is meant to be an educational thing. It's meant to be an opportunity for people to absorb the training, to hopefully do it as groups, to hopefully do in a bit of a learning community with others in their department. I know that there's been very good uptake, that the numbers were looking good last time I saw them, and that we're happy with the number of folks that are on their way to completing it. And, really, what I think this will do when we see the numbers and where we're at and who's left is to give an opportunity to check in the folks who haven't completed it and make sure that they're being given the time and the tools and the supports necessary to get it done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have more questions. So if the numbers come up on her screen, I would like to hear them.

But my question is, is this government, you know, for the 20 years that I worked in the government, programs come up, training comes up, we get really active and want to make sure everybody does it, and then it phases out. So we have a timeline of one year for all government employees to complete this training, yes, not punitive, but what happens when they don't? How are we -- how is the government following up on that and how are we ensuring people have the space to be able to do the training? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the Member might be overhearing some of the conversations I have over with the department, only because it's incumbent on every leader of every department, from Ministers to deputies to every manager of every team, to watch those numbers and to actually follow up on it. So even as I was sitting here, Mr. Speaker, I was checking back in with my folks and to make sure that the folks that I work with are registered, that they are carving out that time, and reminding myself that I need to make sure that I give them that time to get it done. So it is incumbent on all of us to do that.

And I can answer the first question, Mr. Speaker.

The GNWT as of February the 15th had 61.6 percent already enrolled, just under 40 percent complete. I have breakdowns. The Department of Finance was 72 percent enrolled with 41 percent complete.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, again, the fact that we have so many people enrolled was a big part of why we made it mandatory, because that at least gets people started. They'll see what this training is. They'll see its quality. And hopefully, again, now that we're having this conversation, every manager out there is making sure they're carving out that time for themselves and their staff to get this done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that answer. And, you know, it's good to see that people are taking it, and I'm -- you know, and I'm glad that you had said that you're -- you said in this House that hopefully managers and supervisors will give that time for their staff because I know as a past manager of nursing, it was very difficult to fit those things in, but.

My question is, is when I asked the health minister to add this to the job description, we add criminal record check for vulnerable populations because we want our patients to be safe. Can we not add the cultural -- the Living Well Together as required in our job descriptions so that this government commits to

saying our Indigenous people are safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework, we're about to do a review of all of our job descriptions to ensure that they're matching up in an appropriate way to what's available -- or rather, to what is required to perform certain tasks. So Mr. Speaker, as that work gets underway, I will ask the Department of Finance to take this under consideration as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1030-19(2):
DRIVER AND VEHICLE LICENSING OFFICE
HOURS OF OPERATION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, and I'm hoping that after she finds \$25,000 to implement an electric bike rebate program, she could find another \$25,000 and maybe open the Yellowknife DMV for a couple hours on Saturday. My question, Mr. Speaker, is that something the Minister is willing to do? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here we go again.

There's been no change since the Member last asked the question so the answer remains no. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1031-19(2):
INUVIK AIRPORT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Can she give me a little brief update on when is the project at the Inuvik Airport going to be starting construction like beyond what it's already done now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's just get all surprise questions here, and I'll give it my best to be able to answer.

The Inuvik Airport ATB, the extension and the apron work and a lot of the projects, are ongoing. We are

still having discussions with the contractor, and until we have an update I'd be able to provide the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for -- oral questions. Written questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 38-19(2): PROJECT ASSESSMENT POLICY REVIEW

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President.

Project Assessment Policy Review

My questions are for the Minister of Lands with lead responsibility for the Government of the Northwest Territories Project Assessment Policy.

In its report on the environmental assessment of the Tlicho All-Season Road, the review board made the observation that the GNWT whole-of-government approach to participation "has limited the ability of evidence and expertise from GNWT departments about the potential impacts, concerns, and mitigations on issues within their respective mandates and jurisdictions."

A lessons-learned evaluation on the GNWT's participation in the review process advised that a whole-of-government approach "cannot be successful without an explicit commitment to greater transparency and evidence-based decision-making."

Can the Minister explain the status of the process underway to revise the Project Assessment Policy, and

1. How the review will address the criticism that the whole-of-government approach muzzles scientists and subject experts preventing their presentation of evidence vital to the identification and assessment of environmental effects;
2. The timeline for completion of the review of the Project Assessment Policy;
3. How the review will provide opportunities for public engagement into the review of the Project Assessment Policy including reporting of public input and GNWT responses; and
4. How the input of Indigenous governments and co-management bodies will be solicited and incorporated into any revisions to the Project Assessment Policy?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

I have a second one.

WRITTEN QUESTION 39-19(2): MINING PROGRAMS AND SUBSIDIES

My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The department offers an extensive range of programs and subsidies for the mining industry, including:

- The Mining Incentive Program;
- Work requirement and lease payment waivers;
- A prospecting support program;
- A work credit program that gives mineral claim holders 150 percent credit for exploration work to keep mining claims in good standing; and
- Other programs.

Meanwhile, the department is developing new regulations to implement the new Mineral Resources Act, including royalties, fees, and other government revenues and charges.

Can the Minister provide a brief explanation for each of the programs and subsidies for mining provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and:

1. What are the calculated costs to the GNWT for each of the above programs, including administrative costs since devolution;
2. What are the lost value of exploration expenditures and work as result of the waivers, work credit program, and other subsidies since devolution;
3. What is the direct and indirect economic impact of the GNWT programs and subsidies for mining; and
4. Provide an explanation of how the costs and economic impacts of the mining programs and subsidies will be considered during the development of regulations under the Mineral Resources Act.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 23, 29, and 38; Committee Report

24-19(2), Minister's Statement 202-19(2); Tabled Document 561-19(2), Tabled Document 567, 578, 579-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

---SHORT RECESS

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023, with Industry, Tourism and Investment and Finance, and Committee Report 24-19(2). Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

I am pleased to present the 2022-2023 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Overall, the Department's estimates propose a decrease of \$364,000, or 0.6 percent, under the 2021-2022 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives for ITI while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- Initiative funding totaling \$2.05 million, which includes:
 - \$1.07 million to continue our support of the tourism sector under Tourism 2025 towards the five-year investment strategy for the tourism sector;

- \$389,000 to support the continuation of advancing the knowledge economy;
- \$300,000 to increase funding in support of the Mining Incentive Program to stimulate prospecting and exploration and increase resource exploration and development in the territory;
- \$188,000 to support and develop the Northwest Territories agriculture sector, including financial support for commercial operators and Canadian Agricultural Partnership contributions; and
- \$100,000 to support Indigenous capacity building in the resource sector in all Northwest Territories regions, to build awareness and understanding of resource sector project lifecycles, as well as training for Indigenous Northerners to participate in the resource sector.
- Forced growth funding of \$169,000 for parks operations utilities to keep up with increases in usage and inflation;
- And other adjustments of \$236,000 comprised of \$804,000 for collective agreement increases;
- Offset by a reduction to the travel budget of \$568,000; and
- Sunsets of \$3.21 million.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly and supports the vision of Budget 2022, notably by:

- A regional approach to service delivery, where many of the department's programs are delivered in partnership with community organizations to support regional decision making and increasing employment in small communities;
- Focusing on economic diversification by supporting growth in a variety of sectors establishing regional economic development plans to increase economic opportunities across the Northwest Territories;
- Advancing the GNWT's procurement review and implementation, including the Business Incentive Policy, to ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to Northwest Territories residents and businesses;
- Public engagement on the royalty review discussion paper developed in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Council, in support of the development of the Mineral Resources Act Regulations, and review of the socio-economic

agreement program to support adopting a benefit retention approach to economic development; and.

- Construction of the Hay River fish plant, and collaboration with the Ministers of Health and Social Services, Environment and Natural Resources, and Executive and Indigenous Affairs to support increasing food security through locally produced, harvested, and affordable food.

That concludes my opening remarks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the House.

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on your right is Pamela Strand, who is deputy minister; and on the left is Nina Salvador, who is the director of finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the Tabled Document? Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with corporate management starting on page 208 with information items on page 210.

Questions? Any questions from Members? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just hoping we could get an update on the MRA implementation and the MRA regulations and just whether that work is on track and when we can expect the MRA to come into force. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so the Mineral Resources Act and the Mineral Resource Act regulations are well underway. I believe they are on track. There were some -- I mean, there was obviously some delays with respect to COVID at one time but at this point, we are looking -- well, and there's quite a lot going on, and I think we are at the point of expecting to see progress over the next few months and hopefully -- and if I am not mistaken, we have made an offer to do a bit more of an in-depth

briefing to committee and be happy to have that opportunity. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any other questions from Members under this section? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. And I appreciate the Minister making the offer for a briefing on the Mineral Resources Act regulations. And I've been asking if there's a plan for this, a schedule, for years quite frankly. Can the Minister just explain to me is there going to be one set of regulations for royalties? Is there going to be another one for map staking? Is there going to be another one for the benefits part of the MRA? Or are we just talking one set of regulations that will get amended over time and so on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's a fairly detailed chart with respect to the state of the work on all of these different parts. And Madam Chair, under the Mineral Resources Act, it is likely that under that act there will be multiple regulations to deal with all these different parts. But then beyond that, again, I would want to be able to defer to the work that's happening in each of those sections. So I'm happy to take further questions now or to do so in the course of the briefing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, rather than prolong this here, I really want to get that briefing, and I want to encourage the Minister not just to brief the Regular MLAs but the public, and even the mining industry. Maybe they already know what's happening, but I think there's a lot of questions out there about what is going on. So is the Minister going to make that sort of information public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's -- I know that some of the work has already been underway in terms of developing things publicly and beginning some of the consultation on some of these elements and some of these aspects. The formal public engagement on certainly some of the remaining aspects is forthcoming in the next few months. I believe the royalties paper has been released or is about to be released, for example. So yes, absolutely will continue on. And actually I should note, Madam Chair, one thing is that of course there's been a lot of work done with IGCS, or the

intergovernmental council. So, you know, again I'm happy to ensure that we do -- what I think I might actually suggest we do is to just get a timeline or a schedule out to at least to Members of what's coming when. I know that I have a very difficult to read small gantt chart that outlines that, so we'll put that down so that there's less uncertainty. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Thanks to the Minister for that. Can the Minister, though, give that or make that gantt chart, or whatever it is, public because nobody that I've talked to -- some of the folks that I've talked to that were involved in the last Assembly in the development of the MRA, they have no idea as to what's going on with the development of the regulations other than the just-released discussion paper which contains very little actual detail. But that's another matter. So can the Minister commit to make that gantt chart and a schedule and a plan, essentially, public. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm not going to make an internal gantt chart public. I don't think that's appropriate. But -- and nor is it necessarily going to be useful or answer the questions. So I don't know who has specific questions out there. I know that, again, as I've said, ICGS has been quite involved. And you know, there certainly has been efforts to start to communicate what's going on, including with the royalties paper. So I will, again, start with a sense of timeline of the different areas, and some of which the Member has, you know, appropriately noted here just with respect to there being the general regulations, benefits, different royalties, and then staking. So those are some big areas. We'll ensure that the sense of time of which ones coming up at which stage is available so that folks know what they can plan for coming out when. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I guess while we're talking about this, and I'll take the Minister at her word on this, I want to get the briefing, and I'll be making further suggestions to her about what she needs to make public or should be making public. There has been nothing in the last couple of years.

So is there a line item in here somewhere now for the mineral rights administration system, or this is the computerized sort of mapping system that will

allow map staking? Is that in this one, or is it in the minerals and petroleum resources? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that item is -- I suspect was going to be dealt with over in mineral resources. So I've been sort of frantically trying to get there from the corporate management section. But I can certainly -- I can either deal with it now, Madam Chair, or wait until we get to the appropriate section.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, well sure, let's hear about it now. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Stake -- sorry. Sorry, Madam Chair. Over here, thank you. My apologies. So that project was moved from the Department of Finance over to ITI, MARS, or the mineral -- and I actually am forgetting what MARS stands for. But it has moved over. I don't have the numbers here because it is in that other area. If I might just turn it over to the deputy minister and she can provide the detail of that transfer from Finance to ITI. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The budget for the MARS project, so the mineral administration and -- program, is \$3.7 million over four years, and that budget just started in 2021-2022. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So it's going to take us four years to get this system in place to allow for map staking; is that I guess what I'm hearing? Plus whatever time it takes to develop the regulations. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I believe this project is being implemented in parts and over the course of those times. So we do need to -- part of the reason it was transferred is so that the software can be developed in conjunction with the development of the regulations. So just as I've said that there's the different parts of the regulations to develop, the one

that involves staking has to come first, and then the system to implement it can go online. So they're being developed, as I say, one at the same time as the other but we need to put the regulations out there before you turn the system on or else there's not -- it just doesn't make sense to do it the other way around. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have for this activity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under corporate management? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I notice that this is the area that covers communications for the department. And I'm going to say I have some inside knowledge about how that may operate. And I'm just curious to know if there's been work done on updating the communications strategy, maybe a better utilization of social media by the department. I do note that it has definitely improved over the term of this Assembly but I would just like to know where that's going in light of our expedition that showed up here with not really knowing where to go, something they admit fault to, but I'm just wondering if we're looking at revamping our sort of business and public-facing communications tools. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I mean, I won't speak to what may or may not have happened earlier this week. I don't know that ITI would have necessarily been the lead on that one. I appreciate the point, though, that, I mean I think any government anywhere is probably always looking to do better in terms of communicating what it does. I don't know that we're any different.

Now that said, Madam Chair, ITI does tend to do a lot of the social media blog posts, etcetera, and that is a lot of the nature of being a frontline, you know, economic development department. One thing I had noted I think to -- in answer to a question earlier in question period this week was with respect to the Invest NWT website and acknowledgement that we do, indeed, need to modernize that a little bit. So while there's not a line item or a specific budget item associated with that, there is obviously budgeting here for the communications work that does get done across the department. And that is one area that we are, as I've said, alive to. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I can respectfully disagree with the Minister. I think that her department is exactly who an expedition wanting to transverse the Arctic with, you know, and do things around the cold weather testing and all of that is industry. It is business. And we often sort of, unfortunately maybe for her, deem her as the economy Minister. So I do think that this is where this lies or should lie anyway. I do appreciate that.

I guess my next question is here around, like, succession planning for the department and perhaps that might be more sort of for each sector within the department to sort of be looking at. But I'm just wondering -- I think this one is really important, and I'm wondering if the Minister has sort of a strategy about building up the capacity within this department and if, you know, we see things coming on more with oil and gas in the Beaufort Delta, will we be needing to have more staff and looking to ramp it up, because it -- a lot of that work is kind of specialized so we might need to be preparing more for -- more so for it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, while I might oversee the broad policy directions of human resources, for the operational augment for the department, I'd suggest to go to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, obviously, succession planning is first and foremost for us as we move through some of the work that the departments are going to be doing in the next couple months towards our Indigenous hiring targets and plan.

We currently have a strategic HR session planned for early May where we'll meet with all of our senior managers. With that, we will be looking at, you know, what vacancies are open, where retirements are coming up, any potential within the department, and having that in-depth conversation. So it's something that I'm hoping as we all work towards having our plans completed by the end of June. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad to hear the deputy minister speak about the Indigenous hiring targets. I think this is definitely one of the departments where we could be really pushing hard to increase representation.

And I guess just further to the succession planning, is there any sort of a, like, job shadowing type program going on right now with existing employees within the department? The reason I ask is I'm aware of a couple of the pathfinder type positions within ITI where there's a wealth of knowledge, and I would be concerned that they'll retire out and not -- and you know, and as always happens in the territories, we lose that wealth of knowledge. So I guess I'm looking along succession planning, job shadowing but also I guess retention of knowledge and how do we -- we keep sort of maybe something that's not an easily quantified thing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's actually a lot of good news on this front. So, you know, and again this is where, as the one Minister on the one hand where I'm asking everyone, all Ministers and all departments to truly take this to heart, I certainly make no exceptions for ITI, so. But I'd like, if I could, the deputy minister should be the one to speak to that on behalf of our team about -- we have work happening in secondments, work happening in client services, client relations. We have work happening in mentorships, and I think we've also made pretty good use of the Indigenous recruitment and retention. So if she could speak a bit to that, please, Madam Chair. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, it's absolutely on the pathfinding one in particular. Because of the complexities of the regulatory system, we do have a job shadow going on right now, knowing that we have a retirement coming up. So that was one that -- one in particular we identified as a risk area.

That being said, as the Minister outlined, we currently have four secondments underway - three to Indigenous governments and one from an Indigenous government. So the one coming from the Tlicho is in the economic development officer position. We have ITI staff, who are beneficiaries, have gone back to work for the Sahtu. Sahtu Secretariat. One in Tuk. And the last one that I'm -- oh, Deline Gotine government. So yes, so the three, it's great. And this year to date, we've hired five through the ICGP program and a couple more on the way. So it's something that I take very seriously. Every position that goes out for competition crosses my desk for approval first, and we make those questions. You know, can we fill it through this or that. It's a bit labourious for staff I would say, but it's an extra step that hopefully we'll

be able to see the rewards from as we move through this year and next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I really do appreciate that. I -- one thing I think about when I think of this department, it covers such a wide range of topics but then is one of the departments that feels kind of underfunded or understaffed, under capacity. And given that it has such a role in our economy going forward, I look to see that we're not increasing any positions in corporate management at this time. And I have so much faith in this department that I -- that concerns me. So I guess I want to maybe get the Minister or -- and/or the deputy minister's thoughts on whether they actually feel that their budget is sufficient and that they have enough capacity to execute basically the recovery of our territory? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sort of unsure I guess; I'm really at a loss for words. You know, the reality is that that's sort of what ITI does, is deliver on frontline programs across economic sectors. It's done obviously in conjunction with other departments. What I will say is that, you know, there's two things that we do have over at ITI going is that in my time, even in this department, the connections that are being made; for example, ITI and ENR now sit down regularly and discuss our shared areas of programming, for example, remediation economy. ITI and ECE sit down regularly and discuss labour market training and what that's doing in terms of what we're hearing on the private sector side. So there's quite a lot -- yeah, and -- and lands and natural resource departments collectively gather at an officials level. So a lot has started to happen in the last couple of years of really bringing that total government capacity to bear, which means we're not just looking at, you know, the ITI budget for economic recovery. We're looking at really back to the total government department -- total government budget and how things get done.

So, you know, yeah, I do think we have the capacity necessary. You know, does everybody want more money? I can assure you, everybody wants more money. The Department of Finance hears that, the Minister of Finance hears that all the time. But can we get it done? Madam Chair, we can, absolutely. I'm mindful of time so I'm going to stop right there and make sure there's room for one more.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, I appreciate that. And I think we're both -- me and the deputy minister are both speaking probably about the same pathfinder position in our concerns.

I'm glad to hear the Minister say that she is sitting down regularly with other department -- departments and talking about -- or her department is talking about collaborative or issues that span all departments as, you know, we've talked a lot about the silos. And I guess where I'm going with this, and I have concern, is that it is times to me where the economy or business is being slowed down by people in departments that are, you know, pushing personal agendas and, you know, not working really faster trying to facilitate things, and it really concerns me at times that that voice is shouting out the voice of the business community and the business sector and not always truthfully. So I just want to say that I strongly encourage that conversation to continue, and I don't think that our land should be sacrificed for parks and tied up in that manner. And I just want to say that now because I think there's a real battle that seems to be happening between the two departments. We can have protected areas without tying up resource extraction or resource potentials, and it should be the Indigenous governments' voices that make that determination. Thank you. More of a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions under this section? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about, and I guess Indigenous-owned business and how, you know, management, how the department I guess deals with it. Because, you know, we do a number of reviews for various -- on various topics. And I would like to ask, I guess, the Minister has there ever been a review that's taken place to look at the treatment of Indigenous-owned business in the NWT and, you know, in how they are -- you know, how they're treated when they are accessing funding or service -- services and other programs with the department and to ensure that -- because I guess I'm wondering if we -- if these -- if the department takes a culturally, I guess, appropriate look at the way they are providing service to Indigenous-owned business owners. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, there's not differentiated tracking of, say for example, various seed monies or other funding pools that are directed exclusively or solely to an Indigenous versus non-Indigenous Northwest Territories government. And Madam Chair, not to deviate too much but that

is going to what's happening in the procurement review and the definition of what is a northern business and the definition of what is an Indigenous business. And I've certainly heard different versions and opinions on what that is and what that should be. So it's difficult to track what you haven't defined, and that is some of the work of happening -- happening in the procurement review right now, is to in fact come to a shared agreement as to what those definitions might be. At that point, we may well be able to better track it, and then I'd be in a different position to answer the question at a later time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'd ask the Minister, you know, to give it some thought and consider conducting a review because, you know, that deals with just Indigenous-owned businesses and the issues that they run into. Because I have a feeling that the results, while they would be very surprising to the department and -- because, you know, I get a lot of calls from, you know, owners of a business, and mostly Indigenous; I don't get a lot of calls from, you know, non-Indigenous business owners, so. And so I think it would be a worthwhile exercise just to get -- get their point of view. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I mean, there's been -- that's really the work that ITI is generally responsible for, is to ensure that we are providing an opportunity and a place for the business community to come and share their thoughts. So happy to certainly take that and think more about what is out there, what information's out there. I mean, there are Indigenous business coalitions, Indigenous business associations and, you know, Indigenous business boards, etcetera. So there are resources out in Canada, whether they're present in the Northwest Territories or not, and maybe there's a role for them. So again, a lot of questions there, and I'm happy to continue having that conversation. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just talk a bit about the occupational health and safety program and give me, I guess, a -- a quick study on what it entails. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, I -- the overall

occupational health and safety plan and coordination for GNWT-wide is happening over in the Department of Finance, which I don't have in front of me right now. But for the sake of what's happening specifically in ITI, let me turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So yes, obviously occupation, health and safety is first and foremost for the Department of ITI. We have one position dedicated to this that we funded from within. I think it's probably been about the last four years at this point. And you know, it's really super important because, you know, we do have some higher risk areas, such as parks and our geological survey, that require extra attention to protocols and standard operating procedures. So that person oversees that and does regular visits into the regions as well. We do know that in the coming year, all -- we will be updating our plan. So that is a goal that that work will start next fiscal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, I just want to turn to, I guess, the active positions and could I get a sense of, you know, how many are P1s and how many are P2s, P3s? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't -- oh no, I think we do have the breakdowns here. But let me see, Nina Salvador might have that right at her fingertips, Madam Chair. So maybe let me direct that there, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So yes, ITI currently has 180 staffed positions of which 29 percent are Indigenous aboriginal; 12 percent are Indigenous non-aboriginal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And my colleague talked a bit about succession planning, and I guess I'd just like to follow up on that. And, you know, when I -- like, I'm not sure the numbers, you know, what we have for Indigenous numbers within the corporate management. But when we talk succession planning, are we looking at

building -- building up corporate management with additional P1s? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, as you will perhaps recall from some discussions in the House, every department is required now to come up with targets over a course of three years, which is done so that they can do succession planning. So you look at anticipated retirements and what kind of turnover a department might see in positions and can then start to figure out what areas you might see some movement in and then plan which -- you know, which employees are in positions that are a step or so below and then can be trained up and provided the opportunities to be able to move in.

So what I can say, for example, is that with respect to positions classified as middle management, there are currently seven Indigenous employees in those positions, and the target for next year is eight. I know that may not seem a lot, but we're actually not dealing with a large number overall. We're looking -- and that's not necessarily looking at a change in the number of positions. It's a change in the composition of those positions.

Similarly, positions that require university equivalency, again looking to increase that by one in the next year. And with some trades or college, looking to increase those by three over the next year. So, you know, again, overall, looking to move these numbers and to continue then to do that over the course of the next several years.

I also want to note, Madam Chair, there are four -- I don't like using the P1 -- I actually would prefer Indigenous aboriginal -- in our senior management in ITI, which is a significant improvement in terms of that demographic from just a few years ago. So looking to continue that trend. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And, yeah, I'm glad to see that, you know, we are looking at setting targets and that. But, you know, we -- we've been doing this for 30 years. And in one of my -- in the statements this week, I had mentioned about putting a moratorium on hires of non-Indigenous candidates for one year. And in part that was to jolt the other side and jolt bureaucracy to let them know that, listen, we're serious. There's a serious issue here that's been going on 30 years, and we have to look at it. Because in reality, like I know that we have -- you know, we have P1 candidates or, you know, Indigenous candidates. We have P2 candidates. We have people have lived

here and been born and raised here, and I have no problem with them getting jobs as well. But at the same time, you know, are -- the affirmative action was there for a reason. So I'm just hoping that's taken into consideration. Because, you know, one thing I always hear is, you know, I say oh, we -- you know, I hear people saying, oh, we can't place Indigenous persons and set them up for failure. I don't usually hear that about anybody else. You know, then -- you know, and then the job shadowing, you know, is that meant for Indigenous people or is that meant for everybody? And those are things that -- that, you know, I hear and, you know, I always try to look to -- to think, you know, the goodness that people are -- you know, are trying to relay when they say that. But sometimes it doesn't come out that way. So I just want -- yeah, I just want to make sure that -- that we are headed in the right direction. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, Madam Chair, I don't think this is about setting people up for failure. I certainly do not ascribe to that. This is a question of ensuring that the opportunities are available but also it's not always about waiting for someone to come and look for the opportunity. I mean, that's the difference between mentorship and sponsorship and really showing people, taking them and showing them the opportunities that have there for them, and then bringing them in. And you know, if it's a question of an equivalency, if it's a question of some training, if it's a question of, you know, they have already certain skills, qualities, education, what is it that we as a department or we as a government need to adapt in ourselves in order to make ourselves a place where those skills, qualities, and abilities are best used. So yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under ITI, corporate management? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to touch base. It's my understanding that this section here talks about communication. And I raised in the House, in Caucus as well, about the communication that we have in the community of Lutselk'e. And you know, we -- like I said, I mentioned also that the GNWT spent a lot of money building a broadband system up and down the Mackenzie Valley, and that's been ongoing for some time now. And, you know, when I was in the community of Lutselk'e and whenever I'd go there, there are a lot of issues in regards to internet services. Even the telephone services as well. In fact, I -- we can make a call to the band office there right now and you would -- you would get a one or two second delay. And -- or if you were to call for

emergency help with the RCMP, you had to go through Yellowknife. Again, you got one or two second delay. And also just the basic essentials of using your internet for Zoom meetings and that kind of services. They -- by the time the guy gets the bill back from Northwestel, it's very expensive. One I even heard as high as \$1,600 to have a four-hour meeting by Zoom in the community of Lutselk'e. So there has to be a way with ITI to bring this issue up and see how we could improve the internet services for the community of Lutselk'e so that it could be used for fire, ambulance, RCMP, medical health, medical imagery for x-rays, etcetera, of telehealth and so on. I guess my question to the Minister is -- is -- I guess, what are the plans are of this government to look at improving the internet services for the community of Lutselk'e? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I think internet services and something like that fall under Finance. But it's the same Minister so I'm just going to see if she could just kind of, to the questions under ITI but the budget -- as to the budget, that falls under Finance. So did you want to make any comments, or we can come back to it later on?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me see how far I can get. I know that Rick Wind is our chief information officer is also listening right now because Finance is coming up next. So anything I miss or get wrong, he will tell me when he's up in the House later maybe today.

I can say, Madam Chair, that the communities that are on satellite, and that includes Lutselk'e, they are expecting to be in the latest -- there's Connecting Canada funding that is bringing a price drop down by about 65 percent actually for services. This is -- and then there's also what we're looking at next is to be able to take advantage of the low earth orbit satellite or LEO satellite technology that is coming out sort of imminently, and there's deals already between Northwestel and the anticipated providers of those satellite services, which is expected to significantly improve on the delivery of services for all satellite communities.

For some of the other communities, Fort Resolution for instance, they are expecting to be up at a 50/10 service as part of a -- and, yeah, I'm being mindful of time, Madam Chair. CRTC basically has told Northwestel that they have to do this, and so our role is to make sure that they're getting that done and to be able to update Members of the House when those services are coming up to their communities. So as I said, happy to continue that conversation over the next few hours if necessary. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Yeah, thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, no, thank you for that. And I guess if there's a way we could start working towards improving that relationship and provide really good service for that community to keep in line with all the 33 communities in the Northwest Territories will go a long way.

The other question I had also on this matter is that last year and in the last number of years, the internet services to the Northwest Territories were interrupted, you know, at times even up to six hours or longer. Are you able to let us know what are your plans to have a secondary type of internet services provided for the Northwest Territories so that we don't have any more interruptions? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): So what I'm going to do with that is I'm going to -- if there's any more questions on internet services, we'll save those for Finance when the Minister has her staff that can support her with that. So if there's questions on the corporate management other than internet services, then go ahead, Mr. -- sorry, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We could just table this until we come to that section. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sounds good. Thank you very much. Are there any more questions/comments for ITI corporate management?

Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023: Main Estimates, \$9,266,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now move on to Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, and that is on page 212 with information items on 213, 214, and 215. Questions from Members on economic diversification and business support? Seeing none -- oh, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair; it's a little bit of a waiting game sometimes.

Can I get an explanation on the contributions page on 213. There was economic diversification and business support contributions - various, \$748,000 for 2021, and then nothing after that. Was that some sort of COVID relief money, or what? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, the detail there, let me send that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That various contribution line item is largely contributed to the \$517,000 that the creative industries economic relief, which is the arts and crafts pandemic program, provided. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So I see that -- I think this is the part of the ITI budget where agriculture is found. So I'm just wondering if the Minister can tell us how we're doing with the food security strategy. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there's -- yeah, another one where there's a lot going on in food security so I'll try and watch the clock.

Right now, it's been determined that there will be a housing list largely I think going over to Health and Social Services, finding a permanent home for this and finding a permanent staff that had previously resided over in ITI. But both ITI and that senior advisor position is underway. It's not staffed yet. But I think it's well underway to being so soon. Health, ITI, and ENI -- EIA are all working together on the strategy or on this area because there are, of course, different elements to it, including agriculture funding as well as more poverty alleviation type funding. So again, not -- yeah, and again, is an ADM working group, I believe, on this one too. So again, mindful of time I'll stop there, Madam Chair. I'm happy to go into any part of that as needed. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think the Minister actually let it slip there a little bit that there is a food security strategy being built. I don't need a description of the activities that they're doing in relation to food security, because I think there is a lot going on, but with the other departments. The issue is a lack of coordination and that there is a policy framework for this to take place. So is this the lead department, then, for developing an actual food security strategy and are there -- is there money in the budget to actually make sure that it gets done in 2022-2023? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, sometimes we use words that have different meanings. No, there's not a food security strategy per se; however, there is a clear recognition of the need to have a strategic approach to what we're doing in terms of responding to the needs around food security. And I'm not trying to be glib, Madam Chair. It's just that to develop a strategy takes a certain amount of investment by public servants and by staffing and potentially the dollars they are associated with. But what -- that's again, that's why we're saying, that there will though be a position created now, a senior advisor position. It'll be housed in Health and Social Services, and that will make them the lead with that position there. And coordinating the three departments that are operating on the two sides -- or as well, at least two of the many sides of the issue, namely, around supporting those industries that are contributing to food security, such as the agriculture sector, also harvesters, also fish. And that's where ENR also has a role in terms of harvesting. But then also development with EIA who also have a role in terms of executive and Indigenous affairs connection to the federal government and the subsidies program. So when I say it's -- you know, again, there's a lot of strategic considerations. There does need to be a house for it. Health and Social Services will be that home with that senior position. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Well, I don't want to get into a debate about -- I firmly believe in that the House actually passed a motion on the need for a strategy to ensure that there's better coordination, the Minister in charge of all this and so on. But doing things is not going to make them necessarily be done any better.

But I want to turn to the -- you know, if you look at the overall amount of money spent on economic diversification from 2020 to 2023 for the current budget that's proposed, it's a downward trend here, just as we're trying to, you know, help with economic recovery and so on and, you know, we all made lovely commitments to economic diversification but the dollars being spent on this are heading in the wrong direction. So what's going on here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the difference that you'll see between the actuals and mains from the

prior budgets to now is predominantly as a result of the COVID-related increases that we saw -- well, COVID-related spending that we would have seen for relief and recovery efforts. And so, you know, as those windows -- programming dollars for those specific items were put into the actuals, the number goes up. But of course, the -- the core budget that we're looking at for 2022-2023 is -- is a bit lower. And then of course, there's also the reduction in the travel budgets which is also showing up there. So between those two items, Madam Chair, that is what's -- what's you're seeing the difference in. But in terms of the available dollars to put out the door in terms of programs, those dollar values are still there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess I -- I'd actually hope that there'd be some increases to support, you know, Emerging Stronger and so on. But let's turn to the regional economic diversification targets that are part of Cabinet's mandate.

I think -- I don't know, somehow this has been recast into developing regional economic development plans of some sort and being contracted out to consultants and so on. Are we actually going to have regional economic diversification targets by the end of this Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, I don't have the mandate document in front of me, but I know ITI's commitment certainly was to work with Indigenous and community governments in order to identify and advance economic opportunities. I can say, Madam Chair, with respect to the regional economic development plans, and what those would look like and what they may or may not include, such as targets, it was my direction that we were not going to direct that from ITI, that we were going to go out to the regions themselves and to the community governments and Indigenous governments themselves first, to figure out how they wanted us to actually do the development. So that did slow down the development a little bit, I acknowledge, but the end product, I believe, is going to be better. And it was under their guidance that the decision was made to have a facilitator that would look at the total -- the total plan and the total strategy. So there's some consistency between Northwest Territories regions but then also that each -- each region has its own person there to help them develop from -- with a local focus, help them develop on what their area of expertise or specialty might be. There's no doubt going to be some difference between, you know, for

instance, communities that are stronger in fishing versus others that may be stronger with arts or with ecotourism, for example. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I -- I'm just concerned that the original intent from the priorities of the 19th Assembly reads "increase economic diversification by supporting growth in non-extractive sectors and setting regional diversification targets." I'm worried that that has been lost and that we've somehow morphed into some sort of regional economic development plans that are going to get contracted out to consultants. That's not the same as what this priority says. So can the Minister convince me that we will actually end up with regional diversification targets at the end -- before the end of this Assembly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, it seems to me -- and, again, I don't want to get into a semantics argument and I'll try to be mindful of time. But it's difficult to have a target if you don't know what you're targeting. Difficult to have a target if you don't know what your industry of target would be. There are targets for tourism. There are specific targets around where we want to get ourselves back to, broadly speaking, for the Northwest Territories. But as for region to region, again, I really do believe that the first step is to talk to those regions and see that they have a chance to tell us where their areas of growth are that they see and what those opportunities are and at that point, if -- the targets may well flow quite naturally. I'll stop there of the time -- mindful of the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: [Audio] the Minister is keeping true to the original intent of these priorities. And I'll just leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just -- I'm going to start with the BDIC here. You know, it seems -- and I understand that there is another line -- an item, and it's not going to be about the details of the BDIC, so. I see the Minister looking a little concerned.

My question is one of the things we have heard around SCEDI and the SCEDI committee from Indigenous leadership is the lack of funding for Indigenous organizations that, you know,

is -- because a lot of times they're -- they don't have the -- and I'm not an accountant but they don't have the equity or maybe the financial reputation or whatever it's called to get a sort of standard bank loan, that there has been talk and want for a long time for an Indigenous investment bank, for lack of whatever you want to call it. So I guess my question is can -- because the BDIC -- and I know there's strategic plans, and I'm going to ask about them when we get there. But is there a way for the BDIC money to somewhat be repurposed this way to provide those -- that type of loan or to prioritize Indigenous businesses? I understand it's northern but my concern is I often hear is that people just can't get money out of the BDIC, and yeah, I -- I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, actually the CEO of BDIC is in the building but I'm not going to try and swap out right at this moment. So if there is a chance later, I'm happy to bring her here and have her address that because the BDIC is -- although she is the CEO, it's managed by a board, and the board has undergone quite a bit of strategic planning in the last year, you know, composed of folks from all regions and composed of folks with different areas of expertise, you know, done a lot of work just in terms of having a matrix of how we fill that board and then once that board was there, giving them the time to do that planning. I mean, they're -- they're the ones also hearing the challenges in the private sector around getting equity and having equity available. So I know they're looking at what that -- you know, how that's going to happen, how they are going to be able to evolve to be, you know, an organization that can be a real growth organization for community development. And also seeing where they fit in to, you know, the spectrum of funds that are available, where you may have things like seed and ITI, and you might have your community future's organizations that do the small scale and then you get to the BDIC that has the next step up. So that work is also happening. That's been -- there's been a workshop done just not that long ago.

And, you know, again, that -- and that workshop will hopefully give people the sense of, you know, where -- yeah, where they fall on those options. But, you know, again, other than that -- yeah, the strategic plan for BDIC is one that I'll pause and if -- again, I suggest I hold off until I get Joyce in here and have her speak to it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: With all due respect, that was an extremely long answer to a question of whether the

money could be repurposed towards Indigenous banks. So I would just ask that the Minister be more responsive or aware of the time.

My next question is around the Canadian agricultural partnership. I see -- I note there that the increase for the \$200,000 in the actuals for 2021-2022 is probably some extra COVID money. One of the biggest things I've heard as a barrier to agricultural development in the Northwest Territories is -- is fuel and the cost of power and such to run greenhouses, etcetera. So can the Minister speak to how any of this money is being used towards that and has there been improvements or subsidies for energy for the agriculture sector? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know -- I don't personally have a breakdown here right now of what each recipient has done with their funds. We could certainly commit to see if we have that breakdown available. As for other subsidies that might come for fuel or whether that -- or power, that would be I think a different department I'd have to ask. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that commitment. I would like to see what the -- where they're spending the money and where they kind of feel their needs lie. So, yeah, if the Minister could send that along, that would be great. And again, just -- I've talked lots about silos. So I do hope that there is more of a conversation happening around energy for supporting our agriculture sector.

My next question is around the commercial fisheries. Again, we're seeing a bit more -- or sorry, a decrease in money on the actual from the revised estimates to what we're estimating for the upcoming year. Can the Minister speak to what that -- that change is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, Madam Chair, thank you. I'd suggest that one go to Nina Salvador, please.

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

MS. SALVADOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The decrease from 2021-2022 Revised Main Estimates to 2022-2023 Main Estimates is due to the hundred K sunset of the fishing sector -- well, fishing sector sport officer, but actually that is the contribution for

professional services to the Tlicho fishers cooperative. That's for their accounting, legal, admin supports, and such. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. And the reason that that's now gone is that that's evolving with the change in the fishers federation, is that correct? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That's correct, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm now looking at the community transfer initiatives. I'm happy to see that we're at least not cutting the money there, and there's a little bit more than we actually spent. It is my understanding that -- and I probably should know this so forgive me for asking. But that this is not -- that there are some communities that don't have these organizations in the community, and so I'm just wondering in a case where a community doesn't have a transfer initiative, where -- is there money being made up in another pot somewhere. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, Madam Chair, there are a couple of communities that have opted not to undertake having communities -- or community foundations, community transfer initiatives, and no, if they opted not to do that, then they are -- then they've opted not to do that. They're not recipients. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that, then. Is there an opportunity, then, for them to come back at some point and rejoin if they were to decide that they wanted to become part of this initiative again? I would guess there's a changeover in staff often, people have big personalities at times, and perhaps a new ED or something may want to come back on board. So could the Minister speak to maybe how that would even happen or could it happen? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I think there's only a couple of communities, and certainly the first step would be to path find some reasons why communities -- organizations might not be part of this funding pool. It may well be just their own decision around how they're managing their bookkeeping.

There's an opportunity for partnership here with CanNor which is with whom we work on this initiative. So absolutely, if there's a community that would like to be more involved, I would suggest that they start -- let's start the process by having some pathfinding done with ITI, and then we'll move -- we'll move forward from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to spend the rest of my time talking about SEED, the support for entrepreneurs and economic development. I am disappointed to see that we aren't increasing this money in the upcoming year. I think that given that we are at the start of our economic recovery, even that we were just in a wave as of two months ago, or an outbreak, can the Minister speak to why the decision was made not to increase the SEED funding this year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So it's not necessarily a decision not to increase so much as it's a decision that it may or may not come forward as an initiative, and obviously there's quite a wealth of opportunities for different initiatives across the GNWT given our 22 priorities and the impacts of COVID. So, yeah, SEED at this point did see a lot of increases because a lot of recovery funding went through that. There is a lot of work happening, though, right now in terms of reviewing the SEED program. There was an effort done to get a sense of a survey as to its effectiveness. Not a lot of responses. But we're hoping to be able to try that again when things are settled down for the private sector a bit with COVID recovery. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Minister letting me get one more question in. So I guess, then, I struggle with these surveys because I just noticed as well -- and I know we get notifications but there's lots going on. I just noticed one that's closing tomorrow and it's, like, oh, I didn't even think to promote that. So I guess my question would be is when we are doing these types of surveys, and I again should probably know this,

are they solely done through a social media type platform, or are we using our -- utilizing our existing database of tourism operators, of all of that? What network, I guess is the question, do we use to get that survey out there? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, all of the above, social media, Chamber of Commerce, going back to past clients and asking them, looking at regional business lists as well. So, yeah, so all of the above, Madam Chair. But, again, this is one where we were particularly struck by a low response rate and so we're not -- we're not done with it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under this activity, economic diversification and business support, from Members? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk a bit about food security because when I think of food security, I'm not sure exactly kind of what it means because I also think of affordability as well. So there seems -- to me, there's a disconnect between the two. And you know, when we -- when we look at the North and the high cost of living, affordability seems to be the main issue and not so much food security. So the -- can the Minister just talk a bit about that and how -- you know, how they deal with that differentiation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. That is exactly the challenge and the exact reason why there are multiple departments involved. ITI's side tend to be more on the commercial production of food and in that sense, wanting to ensure that we're doing everything we can to promote and support the local production of food. So whether it's through the fishery, which has a fair bit of investment from ITI in it, as well as obviously commercial agriculture which has different scales, you know, and can be everything from greenhouses to community gardens, which involves ECE on the community garden front. And then -- but then you do have an element of food security that is really poverty alleviation very specifically, and that is where Health and Social Services comes in. And a decision was made that they then would be the lead if that -- if we're looking at food security from that perspective, that they should, in fact, be the lead but in a way that's going to coordinate the efforts across all those departments on all of these initiatives to ensure that all are working together to the end goal of having

more food available in the North, from the North, at more affordable rates. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, in the South Slave, you know, the amount of money I think that goes into agriculture is -- is a fairly significant amount. But there's also other work being done, I guess -- I think Guelph University is in there and they're looking at -- or they have been doing -- putting greenhouses in communities such as, I think, maybe Enterprise, Kakisa, Jean Marie, and in areas like that. And, you know, one of the issues there is that the weather up here and the snow loads are such that some of the greenhouses just can't withstand, you know -- stand that, those snow loads that we have, and they get destroyed during the winter.

So is there -- does the department work with -- with -- with the university and -- and some of the proponents in the community and also the people that are maybe providing that service to them by -- you know, by providing greenhouses. Because I know there are different types of green houses. There's ones that are probably, you know, more suited up here but of course they cost more money so. So if the Minister can just comment on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. We certainly do work with communities, and the Member's quite right, there has been collaboration with universities and communities around greenhouse and agriculture. The South Slave actually has a growing -- quite a growing area of agriculture. I had the chance to speak with other agriculture ministers recently and was struck by some of the numbers I'd seen about the growth that we have seen in this area here in the Northwest Territories.

As far as, you know, snow loads and sort of specific challenges, there are staff in the agriculture. There's a manager in ITI who does do exactly this kind of outreach and this kind of work. So I mean, the short answer is yes, and -- and actually one -- and sort of -- you know, -- or eight -- 1.2 or 1.8, whatever, is that there's also the agriculture food association who are now, I think, a couple years into their mandate and able to advocate for exactly the kinds of issues that the Member is raising. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just only got six minutes or less than six minutes,

so I have to talk about the commercial fishery. And I guess more so about, you know, production costs. And this comes up year after year, and it's been ongoing for -- for a long time. And that's to do with equipment.

Like, equipment is dated. You know, they're running -- like, you know, we expect to do winter fisheries, and we're running with, you know, bombardiers that are probably in the '60s. That's how old they are. Trying to find parts for them is another thing.

I was helping, you know, one of the fishers there source parts and -- for his bug here this winter, and it -- and it's pretty -- it is pretty difficult.

So what is the department, I guess, doing to look at the equipment and how to -- is there a -- is there any move to look at replacement type equipment for -- you know, for winter fisheries or summer fisheries? The boats are kind of older as well, and they just been -- it's just been the same old thing year after year. I think it's -- you know, we're in -- you know, it's 2022. So there's got to be some better equipment out there, and I just want to know what the department is doing to assist the fishers in sourcing newer equipment and efficient equipment and energy efficient equipment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there are funding -- there is funding available to support the need for new equipment. I can give you actuals from 2021. There was, you know, I see \$549,000 spent in this area. There's specific payments both for equipment as well as for training supports. And as the Tlicho fishing cooperative is overtaking the management of the plant, there's a lot of work happening with them in terms of, you know, as I mentioned earlier, that transfer assignment of the money is so that the manager there is in a position to, you know, understand what are the needs and what types of equipment are necessary. So, yeah, I mean -- so yeah, short answer is yes, there's some funding. Long answer, there's always room for more, but there's also a lot of work happening in this area with the manager to understand those needs and to also be talking to the federal government. So could certainly offer to have a bit more of an in-depth connection, Madam Chair, on this one. There is a working group available, and they would be the most up to speed on the current needs and if there's been any difference or change. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, because I know, you know, some of the operators they're going out with the same equipment they went out with last year and the year before and ten years ago so, you know, I haven't seen a lot of change. So I think it's incumbent upon -- you know, upon the department to -- to have somebody work with them to actually look at new types of equipment. So I'll just leave that one with you.

The second thing that operators have issue with, and that's hiring workers. Like, it's -- you know, it's -- it's difficult work, and sometimes there's not a lot of money in it. Is there any -- any support to offset some of the wages for the workers that they do hire? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's not necessarily a sort of wage support specifically; however, there certainly are supports for other things. So, for example, the cost of the freight. So, and obviously if you're able to offset one cost, then that might help overall in terms of one's business plan.

There's also supports available and training opportunities available, particularly in the winter fishery, for example.

And then, Madam Chair, more broadly speaking, our goal with the fishery revitalization strategy and the fact of having the plant is to put us in a position where the product that we know in the North is unique, distinct, and world class, starts to garner actually higher rates. And if that's the case, then, you know, by association those who are responsible will be receiving something more.

Now, Madam Chair, I would also just note that there's probably some conversation here for the Department of ECE which, of course, is responsible for employment. So I can certainly follow up and commit that if there's something over there that we can -- I can check in with Minister Simpson and see if there's more information we can provide. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Another issue that arises is WSCC coverage for the fishermen and, you know, as far as I know, they don't have access to it. We've had -- we've had issues in the past. We've had deaths, drownings on the lake. We've lost fishermen. And there's no support at the end of the day for their -- for the -- for their families. So is the department looking at what they can do to support the fishers with respect to, you know, obtaining WSCC coverage? You know, everything

is -- everything is an added cost at the end of the day. You know, and how far do you go? Because the costs are going up and fish prices aren't. So, you know, and -- and it's going to be government that's got to step in to do something. And -- and we've been doing it. But, you know, this one here I think is very important going forward because, again, we're -- it's 2022, and, you know, they need -- they need some assurance that they're looked after. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I -- I was actually in Hay River meeting with fishers when I heard very much about that exact issue. So I think our offer at this point was to help them go through those processes of applying, that we had made that offer and certainly would make that offer again. As for any costs associated, I don't have specific funding available right now for that. But I'll simply take that away. It may well be that there's some federal dollars they could find some assistance with. Again, we've offered in the past to help to path find a way forward on this one, and I want to reiterate that. And beyond that, take it away further because it -- yes, again, as I said, I've heard that myself. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under economic diversification and business support?

Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$17,919,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we will continue on under Industry, Tourism and Investment, and we are under the activity minerals and petroleum resources. Do I have questions from Members? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is really a critical time to support companies that are promoting economic activity in the Northwest Territories, including mining. So I'd like to spend a little bit of time talking about the mining incentive program.

I see that there is an increase of \$300,000, and I'm wondering what the people of the Northwest Territories can expect from this increase? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, the mineral incentive policy, I would suggest, should at some point go to the deputy minister just to speak to the specific amounts that we've been able to leverage over the course of many years for this where it's -- it is an incentive program whereby exploration companies can apply, and now advanced exploration companies as well can apply, in order to help encourage them to bring and spend their exploration dollars here in the North. There's a lot of competition in the world right now for exploration dollars, and we want to make sure that we are able to provide incentives so that those dollars get spent here. If there's more exploration, then there's more likely to be more opportunity for the development of an advanced project and then an actual mine to be developed in the -- in due course. You can't -- you can't develop mines without doing the exploration to start, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I see that in last year that CanNor increased the funding of the mining incentive program and put some extra dollars into it. Are we expecting that same type of influx of funding from CanNor in 2022? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the influx from last year was -- it certainly was -- came in last year, and I can't speak to any guarantee that I have from the federal government with respect to getting more necessarily. But the relationship with CanNor is, I'd say, a very strong one and a good one, and they have been focused not only with us but on both territories about the place of the mineral resource industry and so as such I am hopeful that we will continue to see some support from them. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, looking back at the years for the mineral incentive program, I see it started in 2014 which would put it in its eighth year and that the funding originally started at about \$400,000, and has tripled. But my question is given that over the course of the last eight years, I believe the influx of funding from ITI has been approximately a combined \$3 million and that that \$3 million apparently, according to what I believe -- the source, sorry, escapes me

right now, but has equated to about \$15 million in spending from funded projects in northern communities. And so I'm wondering if there has been discussion over increasing the mineral incentive program even more than where it's at right now given the return on that investment in the North? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, that's a big one. So this is certainly one of the areas where to -- in order to achieve the goal of increasing the mineral resource sector, and really at this point helping it to recover and achieve some growth, yeah, there's -- it's at -- right now been a little by little approach to -- in order to increase it. And I can say that other -- the other territories are also -- particularly Yukon is also focused on seeing increases here. This isn't the only thing that we need to do to increase the mineral resource sector, but, you know, yes, as far as this being an opportunity to leverage significant funds, I think the Member's number sounds about right although my -- my scan doesn't go quite as long, is that, yeah, the plan is to try to continue to increase this incrementally. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister alluded to the need to put an influx of effort behind mining to help this sector rebound with COVID. And I know that this is a consistent issue that's happening globally and that mining really hit -- took a hit in 2020 around the world. But we're seeing different levels of success in our sister territories on either side of us that are greater than our success here in the territory. So I'm wondering if there are conversations happening with stakeholders, or the major players in the mining industry, to find out what the interest is in our sister territories versus here in our territory and how the GNWT can kind of further leverage any -- any policy changes or increase interest in mining in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, one -- there's one critical difference is of course that there's different commodities that are at the front end of our mining sector right now. So diamonds took a particular hit over the last year, although has also now rebounded and is doing significantly better. You know, we are at different stages in our sort of mining lifecycle, if I may, you know in terms of the exploration and then the level of advanced projects and where they're at

in their mining cycle. We certainly are talking to both territories and are also talking with the federal government. And, you know, the things that we hear -- and talking to industry. And the things you hear aren't new. They are long-known that the cost of operating in the North are high, and also that the regulatory landscape in the North is one that is -- can be seen as a bit complex. That said, it feeds back that -- that feeds back into the fact that we have high environmental, social, and governance factors, which means this is a place whereas corporate social responsibility becomes something with a significant value in the industry. You know, the fact that once you've gone through the processes of being regulated and approved here, you have a project that is one that will have a high ESG or economic social governance factor associated with it. So all of which then is to say -- you know, and we're doing some work in that area to try to be more standard about it and also to be -- to be more public about that. And, yeah, I mean -- I feel I can go on quite at some length, Madam Chair, but I just simply do want to reassure that there's a lot of work there in this area happening both in terms of talking internally and with the other governments and with the sector about what we can do to advance this area, this industry. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. And I think that's a really important message from the Minister, and I appreciate her acknowledging the effort to speak more publicly about that. I think that our social responsibility as far as mining is a very important one and definitely an area that -- that is an honour to be a leader in and hopefully more work can be done as the NWT continues to grow a responsible mining sector.

I'm -- just in terms of the importance still of mining to our economy in the Northwest Territories, I do see that there -- between our 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Main Estimates for mineral and petroleum resources, there is a slight decline between the main estimates, and I'm wondering if the Minister can just speak to where that decline comes from. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'd suggest that go to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The slight decrease in the revised to the main estimates was

largely attributed to the sunset of the implementation for the NWT petroleum resources strategy. So that was close to a half million, and that sunsets in next fiscal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if, either through the work of the Mineral Resources Act or presently in the mining recorders office -- I'll note quite a bit of our territory, the subsurface belongs to Indigenous governments. Is it possible to do any exploration on that land? Have we -- have we reached any agreements with any of those governments on how that process would work for their land? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's quite a variety of different situations depending on whether we're talking about withdrawing land, settled land, unsettled land. So certainly the Indigenous governments that are already land rights that have their lands settled, so for example, IRC, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, we are working with them very much directly in terms of the LNG projects in that region, so. And similarly working with others around -- for example, Tlicho government and, you know, with respect to getting regional mineral development strategies to support them in that work. So, yeah, I think I'll stop with that, Madam Chair, to see what other questions might come. Thanks.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess this is just also not my understanding. So Tlicho, for example, got quite a lot of subsurface. If I walk into the office and say hey, I want to stake a claim there, I think the office probably goes, no, you can't do that. Are they then -- is there some sort of process where that's possible? Do they say, this is how that would go, go talk to Tlicho or something? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. In -- yes, no, and that's correct that it's -- it's not our -- it's not ours to control but as far as the specific process, I'd suggest I think the deputy minister might be able to speak to that more specifically. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. Obviously we know there's interest in some of the land that is, you know, under -- under the land claim agreements for various groups. You know, I just mentioned the Tlicho. That's an area of high interest for critical minerals. We did provide some funding to the Tlicho government to start working on what they might view as their own minerals act, and, you know, certainly we have that in mind when we're developing our online map staking system, if that's something that can be applicable and used by the Indigenous governments if and when they want to open their land.

So certainly, if there is that interest, you know, we do have the Indigenous -- the Indigenous amount that's coming into our 2022-2023 Main Estimates that will be -- you know, if that is of interest to the Indigenous governments to follow up, certainly we will have that funding in place this coming fiscal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm happy to hear that. I think when we do get online map staking, if we could work away and to explain to people the very complex nature of who owns the subsurface everywhere. And I guess I want to ask the similar question for withdrawing. You know, when I look at the map of the Slave Geological, about half of it is withdrawn, not open to exploration or mining. Although we do pull land out of there every once in a while, I know usually after consultation by the Department of Lands and quite often it's just consent from the applicable Indigenous government, I'm just wondering if there is a process or work underway where kind of a -- you know, if you want to do exploration in withdrawn lands, you could go get permission from the applicable Indigenous government, or whether that's even at all considered possible or in the ITI's hands? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that really is in the hands of the Indigenous governments. But I want to -- I realize we're in a public forum, and I want to just say I've -- the opportunities I've had to speak to some of the proponents here in the Northwest Territories, there are examples where, in fact, exploration companies have gone, done that early engagement, done the community relationship building, and have had the opportunity to have, exactly as the Member's said, consent from those groups where they are working together in partnership where they're signing agreements with them, and it's really the way of doing business, I

think, of the future, and really, we have -- we are starting to see those examples here. So if they need supports in terms of client service community relationship building, we do have CSCR staff in ITI who can do that support and make sure that the right connections are made so that those -- those early engagements happen and then those good news stories come out of it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I was glad to hear the deputy minister say that the NWT petroleum resources strategy was being sunsetted. I just don't think there's any interest, really, in big oil and gas anymore. But when are we going to do some sort of rationalization of staffing and resources devoted to oil and gas as was done for OROGO? So when is that exercise going to be done by ITI? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's not a formal staffing review right now in the books. I'd turn it to the deputy minister who can speak a bit to the work of the staff in this sector and to what extent they may need to have some review done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, so our Inuvik office has six employees budgeted within it. The work under the petroleum resources strategy is important. You know, we're looking at the export LNG opportunity. We're also supporting IRC with the MA team. So that is important work that, you know, obviously given what's going on globally right now, local sources of fuel is super important. So I view the work of that office as very critical at this point in time. We also do know that the offshore moratorium and negotiations are underway and that would also have to be administered out of our Inuvik office. So, you know, waiting for the outcome of that obviously is important. But, you know, we do assess workload. It's performance reviews every year, what is on the books. Those staff do help us on the mineral side as well. They help implement the regional mineral development strategies that we have in the IRC and the Gwich'in. So they do keep busy on not just petroleum activities, but certainly we will be looking at that in the future. And I have reached out to inquire about how and why the OROGO example happened. So I will be diving deeper into that, but not at this point. But we will -- we'll be assessing it as we go forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm just -- lest anybody get any ideas, I'm happy to have those folks stay in Inuvik and maybe they can transition into tourism development and promotion. But I guess I want to go over to the -- sorry, on 217, Mineral and Petroleum Resources Act implementation, the Minister spoke of all of the work that's going on with development of regulations. Why are we actually seeing that small decrease in that line item between last year and then the mains this year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yeah, we're seeing a decrease because in that year we had vacant positions due to COVID and the staffing generally because of the nature -- technical nature of the positions that we were hiring. So that decrease was because of the unspent funds in that 2021 fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I'll try again here. So there's -- maybe it's I better -- I'm not even going to try to do addition or subtraction here on the floor, Madam Chair. But there's 545 in 2022-2023 yet the current year, it's anticipated we're going to spend 587. Why is that amount going down? Thanks, Madam Chair -- for next year. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thanks, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, I do -- I'm going to try this again. I think I'm saying the same thing but there's elements of the work that didn't advance in one year that got moved into another and now we're back to where we need to be on track for 2022-2023. Yeah, so -- again, I'm not really sure how else to put. There was a sunset of some of the costs that weren't, and then now we're back to where we need to be for 2022-2023, and the work is scoped over the course of several years, and it's not necessarily going to be the same amount every year to get the work done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Is any of this money actually used to help support Indigenous governments involved in the development of these regulations, whether they're members of the intergovernmental council or not? Or where's that money found? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so I mean funding for the -- for Intergovernmental Council or Council of Leaders, IGCS, that money would be coming out of EIA generally, and there's -- you know, or money that would come -- yeah, that would be coming out of EIA that's not a line item for us. We do have other opportunities. There is the \$100,000 that we've advanced this year but that's not necessarily for participation here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, so -- all right, so the Minister mentioned the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat. What about those Indigenous governments that have not signed on to the devolution agreement, are they funded by ITI to participate in this development of regulations and where is that money found? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, there is -- Madam Chair, let me actually turn this one over to the deputy minister. She would be dealing with it on the operational level and may be able to give some more specifics. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So right now, we have no funding agreements in place to fund those that aren't part of the IGCS, but certainly they are at the table with us in active discussions. We have offered -- when we did develop the MRA itself, we did provide contribution agreements for those that aren't part of the Intergovernmental Council. We are taking an united approach with our LNR departments, ENR and Lands on the development, so obviously we want to be doing things consistently across departments. So more to come on that, but certainly, you know, if there is that need to provide funds, luckily -- well, COVID has enabled us to do all that work virtually but as we -- as there might be more needed capacity to look at some things legally, then, you know, certainly we're -- we're able to look at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. All right, yeah, that's a lot of money for some regulations and I just continue to note that ITI goes to the pot to get money for post-devo regulations and ENR, Lands don't. And just leave it at that. Or maybe they're just not successful in getting the money out of Cabinet. I don't know.

I want to turn the page over to 218, the Indigenous mineral development support program of a \$100,000. Is this money to fund people to go to PDAC, the Prospector Developers Association of Canada conference or roundup in Vancouver; is that what this money's for? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that is but one example of what they might use that money for. I mean, there's, you know, other opportunities for training, opportunities to -- well, yeah, just to -- you know, opportunities to make themselves as a government more aware of what the mineral resource sector might bring as a benefit to their community. And obviously being able to attend the resource -- or a resource conference of their choosing and decide how to do that and be prepared for it would certainly be part of that. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and I realize my time's running down. Is there a similar pot of money for other economic sectors, you know, negotiating forestry agreements or agricultural work could go to conferences and so on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure what ENR may or may not have for forestry development. I can say that over in the tourism sector, Madam Chair, there's quite a lot of funding available - community tourism, community tourism initiatives, and the like. There's a significant amount of money over in tourism, for example. Similarly in the fisheries area, we have a lot of money available for Indigenous fishers with the Tlicho or -- and the fishing industry generally, we've been offering training and programming over the last couple of years. So but mindful of time, Madam Chair, I'll stop my comparisons there. Thanks.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I want to turn to the core funding that's provided to the Chamber of Mines, the \$55,000 here. Is that used to support their work in this working group that they have with ITI? Is that what that money is for? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I believe this is all program-based funding, and let me turn it to the deputy minister who can then provide hopefully a bit more specific examples of those projects. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, it's -- it's actually project-specific funding, such as Mining North Works. They're websites that encourages, you know, identifying occupations in the industry and encouraging, you know, youth to get involved. Another example would be Mining Week which we've delivered virtually during COVID and in-person hopefully this year. Other examples might be, you know, they're working contributions to the prospecting program that we co-deliver with the Mine Training Society. So, yes, those are just some examples. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to point out I think there's an error here. It's actually the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. So I think it's a really important distinction to make that this is a group that actually promotes cross-territorial economic development and is actually really, really important and critical to our work. So I'm actually quite concerned that we don't fund them more. I note that we do have an \$80,000 in the 2020-2021 Actuals, and I know that's a -- I think a COVID boost that was happening at the time.

So could the Minister speak to, given the importance of the mineral resource and extraction sector to our economy and our recovery, why we're not actually increasing the money to this important NGO? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm not sure that there were a lot of -- Madam Chair, I can't necessarily say why we're not increasing to this particular NGO over one or another. As I've said, there's a lot of program-based dollars that go to them right now, and

it may well be if there's further opportunities for them to apply to deliver programs or apply to deliver other opportunities, conferences or whatnot, they may well see that they are able to access those funds for other purposes. So yeah, Madam Chair, I think I'll probably just leave it at that for now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm glad to hear that because another piece of the work that I think that the Members of the Chamber of Mines and such are doing is increasing awareness with our youth around the importance of geology, mining, and resources to the Northwest Territories. Such examples being the Rainy Lake Trail; I know that a lot of those members were involved there. And other sort of facilities that are used around Yellowknife that I'm more familiar with, but I'm sure elsewhere. We only have to look at Norman Wells to see the influence of the resource sector there.

I guess my next question, then, speaking along that line, is I will just sit here and plug again for more money to the Indigenous Mineral Development and Support Program. I think this is really great. I felt it was wonderful to take part in seeing some of the first development in mineral resource strategies but also, you know, mining projects that have kicked off that actually have Indigenous ownership, which I believe is the future of our extraction sector because I was actually just saying to my colleague from Monfwi that, you know, my goal is to support the Indigenous people and what they want to do with their land. So if they came to me and said no mining, then of course that's where I would go. But that's not what I hear.

So can the Minister speak -- and I apologize if she's already answered this, I was out of the room -- to why we're not seeing a larger amount there? And I recognize we didn't have any money spent here in the COVID time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the first year that this has been introduced at this -- at this funding level. There wasn't a lot being spent previously. So I think at this point, we'd like to see -- sorry, and it's application-based. So I'd like to see how this goes, what applications come in, what type of requests there are. And it may well be that it is quickly oversubscribed which, you know, was probably a good sign for the interest by Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories in terms of seeing opportunity and wanting to take advantage of it. So if we have a wealth of oversubscriptions then I'm -- then I may well have to figure out what we're going to do going forward and how to manage that

going forward, knowing the pressures put upon me by the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: We're always hardest on ourselves, I agree with that. I am pleased to hear what the Minister is saying and if it is really well subscribed, she's reading my mind that I would expect to see her back here, excuse me, looking for more money for this as, again, it's a great way to increase regional employment and get money into the hands of our residents versus, you know, keeping it internally. So I think that's great.

And speaking to that then, I'm looking at the Mining Incentive Program, and I'm happy to see the increase of \$300,000 here. Can the -- and again, I do apologize if the Minister has answered this. But is it going to be a year where we're going to see all this money spent? Do we anticipate having to come for more money again, or maybe just a little bit of a comment around how is our exploration sector shaping up for this summer? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's -- I think there is a lot of good news right now in terms of exploration. You know, even the large diamond mines where you might think there's no more exploration happening are also looking at exploration programs on their properties potentially. There's some discussion of whether there's opportunities for them there. There's lots of opportunities happening in the gold sector, rather a bit to my surprise. I have to say I was quite struck at the amount of exploration happening in terms of gold. And then of course, rare earths and critical minerals and metals, kind of all over the news but this is also an opportunity for us here in the Northwest Territories. So as those commodity prices all go up, that only makes us more attractive where, notwithstanding the high costs, it starts to make sense economically for those projects to be looking here given the strength of the sector that we have, given the strength of the geology. So I do expect this will be oversubscribed. It always has been oversubscribed, even with the increase, and that is a good news story at the end of the day, given the leveraging that happens. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And actually I think that's the first time in a long a time on talking around this topic that I'm feeling a bit of hope that perhaps maybe things are going to start to pick

up. And I just want to state that I would be in full support if the Minister came back for a supplemental for the MIP. I think it's a great way to keep people working, and I think it's really important to recognize too, that our exploration and companies, our drilling companies, our construction companies, our ice road companies, all of them do hire Indigenous people. They're the wildlife monitors. They're often the drillers, the drillers' helpers, etcetera. So this is one way that actually does put money into the hands of residents of the Northwest Territories as well as leading to the chance for them to have royalties down the road. So I really can't express enough in this House my support for this sector. And I will leave it at that, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members under minerals and petroleum resources? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I left the room for a bit too so -- and it sounds like I think most of the talk was probably around minerals. So I want to move to my favorite subject, petroleum. And I know that there hasn't been a lot of activity in that area. But however with what's happening around the world today and the price of crude oil and, you know, countries looking for some independence and, you know, others looking for, you know, to buy the crude, has there been any I guess -- or has the department, I suppose, received any calls or any interest from any oil and gas companies from southern Canada that might be even having an inkling of maybe coming up this way and, you know, maybe going back into some of the areas that they'd been exploring? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me turn that to the deputy minister. No one's called me directly. But let me see if there's been any discussion over at department level. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, keeping in mind that we're a high cost jurisdiction but huge potential, I think infrastructure's our biggest issue, like in the Sahtu, for accessing some of the resources, you know, across the Mackenzie. That being said, I mean, I have had a conversation with one that's, you know, have stranded, you know, assets in the Sahtu. So they're looking at some creative things but, you know, very early stage. So I think it's not exactly like all dead here.

You know, when we were in the Sahtu just last year, you know, I think they definitely would like to know what's going on and who's got what assets. But all the big players pretty much have assets here. You know, I think we've approved five benefit plans over the last year of reclamation on some of those assets. So, you know, it's an active conversation. We're going to be down in Calgary at the Arctic Energy Show at the end of April and, you know, certainly will be meeting with them and seeing if they do have any plans. Maybe they would reconsider given the global situation that we're facing. So we're going to work on that, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, when I look at the -- at oil and gas, you know, and I look at where it is, it's pretty well straight down the Mackenzie Valley into the Arctic Ocean, and further than that. And, you know, there was a lot of exploration back in the '80s, you know, '70s, '80s, and a little bit here in the last -- last while around -- around I guess maybe Inuvik a bit and in the Sahtu as well. But, you know, when I think about -- about the impact of this is that it may be an opportunity to open up some highways and push them a little -- a little quicker to get -- get some of that work done. So has the department, I guess, had any discussions with Indigenous groups with respect to, you know, potential for oil and gas activities in their areas? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think deputy minister already mentioned that the Sahtu still has a fair bit of interest in this area. But possibly the bigger area of the conversation would be with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. They of course have the M18 asset that they have in the North and, you know, would be in that area of some liquid natural gas potential. So that would be the one group where, as I said, there's definitely been some conversations with them and looking to continue that. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, we -- like, the government has MTS, which is a very important component to the -- to exploration. You have a lot of it -- a lot of big pieces of equipment that has to go into -- into areas that it -- you know, that maybe not have the roads or -- or the winter road infrastructure as well. So, you know, there's a lot of opportunity there as well to make -- make some -- some sales. And I see the oil and gas sector as, you know, to be a driver I guess

for -- for businesses along -- along the Valley and -- and into the Arctic, and it's important. You know, it's -- it's created a lot of businesses. It's -- you know, it's provided -- you know, it's provided some of the people, you know, to own their own homes. It's provided some for -- for -- you know, with their education, such as myself. And you know, if it wasn't for that sector, you know, there would probably be quite a few people that wouldn't be where they are today. So I think it's important that we don't dismiss the petroleum sector as we move forward. The mining sector, no doubt, very, very important. And, you know, I support, you know, like my colleague to my right said that, you know, I'd like to see some more money go into -- into this area, and I agree with her. Like, we need to support -- support those organizations that -- that are in direct contact with mineral companies and that are -- that can open the doors, and we need sales people out there. And that's what I see them doing. So, you know, I would encourage the department to -- to take a hard look at that and to throw a little more money in there and create more sales people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did the Minister of ITI have anything to follow up with those comments?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, only to reiterate that, you know, this is where the importance of having something like regional mineral development strategies, land use plans, you know, opportunities with CSCR, our client services folks; connecting the businesses that have already have interests in the region across Northwest Territories to the communities and the governments, community governments and regional governments. That is likely to be, as I think it has been said to today, the way of the future and a way that is -- you know, puts us on the map internationally in terms of investor interest and investor confidence. So those are the kinds of approaches that we take to developing, you know, any industry but particularly an industry such as this one that has such international interest and has, frankly, such high costs associated that we're going to need that external investment. So I do appreciate the comments and the discussion here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have anything further, Member for Hay River South?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Well, maybe another question. Maybe an actual question.

You know, when I think of the oil and gas in the southern part of the territories, you know, we talk about Cameron Hills and we talk about the Fort Liard play there, and has there been -- you know, has there been any discussions with respect to Cameron

Hills? Except for the sale of the company and cleanup of the lands, has there been any interest there? And also with Fort Liard, there was a lot of oil and gas activity in that area at one point, and I'm not sure if -- if anybody has shown an interest to go back in there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so Cameron Hills is still a Lands lead on that one. I don't have the latest details right in front of me. So could certainly check back with my colleague and see if there's an update that we can provide.

With respect to more generally, though, I -- put a bit of a plug in for the NTGS, Northwest Territories Geological Survey. They have a lot of research done. They have the knowledge of what's out across the Northwest Territories in whatever types of natural resources one might be looking at and get a lot of hits internationally but, you know, can't -- certainly we would want to take any opportunity to say that that's a source of data and information that can be used and would hope that it would be used. So, you know, look as we're opening up and, you know, travelling again and having the opportunity for conferences again. This is part of why there still needs to be that direct contact to promote the fact that we have data and information, we're here, and that that can, you know, start to get people's interests flowing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under mineral and petroleum resources? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. It's more just a comment I guess to support my colleagues as well, that the importance of the NWT economy is front and center here today. And, you know, it's been said that the future really looks bleak in the Northwest Territories with our budget that we have of \$2.2 billion, \$1.6 billion in the hole, and \$1.8 billion is the debt wall. With the population going down here in the Northwest Territories, the mining industry is -- are winding down and so we got to look at new ways to really move towards improving the economy here in the Northwest Territories in the short order. But before we could even do that, you know, we got to -- you know, industry is looking for certainty in terms of coming North and to really develop the Northwest Territories. But we got to get the land claims settled, you know, in all the regions of the

Northwest Territories. And I think that's something that we really need to take a look at and really try and get those things out of the way.

You know, I -- I chaired the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board on year five of the five-year review of the Mackenzie gas project. That project there, it was -- it was a big project. And at the end, they -- they -- Imperial Oil decided not to go forward with it. But, you know, that whole corridor there, you know, there's -- there's -- you know, you can really take a look at the, you know, the new pipeline. You could take a look at highway. You know, you could take a look and put all what we can down in that corridor. If we ever had to go through another EA process, that process would be a lot shorter because that whole area's already been dealt with and talked about and etcetera. So I think it's important that, you know, this government at this point right now, you know, we're going to be hitting that debt wall probably next year or year after. And we really need to think about how we're going to do business in the North now. And the economy is front and center. And I think that it's something that we can't turn away from.

And I know that when we talk about looking at how we can work with the exploration, and I know there's limited amount of monies there to really advance some of these areas compared to the Yukon, and the Yukon is spending millions of dollars in helping young companies to come into the Yukon, etcetera. And so I'm not sure if ITI is able to take a look at this area so that we can really look at advancing some of these areas and mineral developments in the Northwest Territories.

But I just want to -- want to say that to support my colleagues that this is a -- something that we -- we really need to support, and also get the land claims done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I didn't hear any questions but, Minister, did you have anything to respond?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Sure, Madam Chair. Thank you. Yes, I'm happy that -- you know, thrilled to hear that kind of line of comment. Not that it's new or surprising, but it needs to be said and resaid. But I would say that there is hope here. I mean this is, I think -- I've, in the budget session, spend maybe a bit more of my time speaking about budget and finance and sometimes that can seem a little bit more daunting, but Madam Chair, sometimes when I sit over in this -- with this hat on, there's actually quite a lot of energy and potential in the North. There's a lot of interest across the three territories in how to, all of us, see increase in exploration. There's a real feeling that that -- the future of Canada can see -- see itself in the North. And, you know, you start to look at something like

Mackenzie Valley or the Slave Geologic Province, and those are nation building. And the reason you say nation building is because those are opportunities that will not only have impacts for the residents and communities in the Northwest Territories but would have potential impacts for all of Canada and could bring people, then, to the North, to bring them to the North for these opportunities. And so, you know, I -- I don't think the future is bleak. I actually think there's a lot of potential. But we do have work we have to get done, whether it's in programs like MIP, which provides the incentives for exploration companies; whether it's in a mining exploration credit, which has been something that the federal government, CanNor was actually saying is an idea that we should be looking at. So there's a lot of things that can be done. And then we just look at the potential we have. The critical minerals and metals and what that's doing internationally and here we could be the next -- the next big place for a lot of those -- or what's happening on commodities like diamond and gold where prices are going up. But, you know what, they're -- as -- those are the kinds of companies where they want to be associated to good environmental social factors. Well, look at how we do business in the North. This is where business is done differently.

So there's a lot of really good stories here in the Northwest Territories. We do need to get them out. There are challenges. There's high costs. But there are programs in the work. There's efforts in the work to try to mitigate those costs or to outweigh them with other positive benefits such as, you know, showing what kind of governance factors we have here in the Northwest Territories and the relationships with Indigenous governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions? Are there any further questions from Members under minerals and petroleum resources?

Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$16,186,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now turn to page 202, 221, industry -- or sorry, Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks. That has information on 222 and 223 and 224 for that section. So up to 224. Questions for tourism and parks? Seeing none? Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Over the last two years, we -- I think we found that a lot of people in the Northwest Territories started to use -- or used our parks, and I think that it was an eye-opener for a lot of them. I know it was for Ms.

Cleveland who just loved Hay River, her kids loved Hay River. And, you know, when I look at the number of parks and the number of areas that we have, you know, it is somewhat limited, and I think we're going to probably see more people, you know, come this way and stay closer to home, stay closer -- and stay in Canada. So I'd like to know if the department is -- is considering or looking at maybe opening -- or identifying some areas and opening new -- new areas to set up parks? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, the next new park is the North Arm Park, as you might recall, in the Tlicho region, which is a capital project that is coming in under the Tlicho infrastructure cooperation agreement. I don't know exactly what year it's going -- it's all online. That work's underway but that is -- that is the next new park that's coming out, Madam Chair. Thanks.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One item I'm looking at here, tourism skills development, and it's to do with contributions to support youth mentorship, and community tourism coordinators, \$50,000. You know, I look at that program and I think that it's a worthwhile program. \$50,000 probably isn't enough because I think something like that could be rolled out into probably every community in the Northwest Territories. And I'd ask the Minister if -- if that's something that -- you know, if that program has worked or is it being pushed enough to make it work, because I think it's -- you know, with tourism, we're trying to, you know, bring tourists here. So we need more people. And you know, we need people from the Northwest Territories who have -- that know the history of the Northwest Territories and, you know, are storytellers and, you know, the -- to provide that support to youth mentorship is great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there has been some increases to the community tourism coordinator positions. I would suggest to turn that over to the deputy minister for some further detail on the uptake thus far. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Just a few comments that I think that, you know, some of the programs, as the Member spoke about, were a

bit of a challenge to deliver during COVID, especially with the youth because that program itself is, you know, to pair up a youth that is interested in working with an actual tourism operator itself. Instead we did, you know, different things like, you know, Days in the Park in North Slave and stuff like that virtually. So on the mentorship thing, we're definitely interested in this year as our reopening and be able to provide those experiences again. And every region sort of approaches things a bit differently. But we'll definitely be getting that word out.

With respect to the community tourism coordinators, yes, we did increase that from the 150 to the 350, adding four more positions within the regions. So that is a good program. A number have had a challenge, though. I'll tell you that some of those positions are -- they've had challenges staffing them. And we're there to help. It's -- you know, it could be Tuk for housing, etcetera, etcetera. So we work closely with them. But, yeah, we will continue to support and help with training for those positions in the communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, you know, with respect to parks and the people that use them, you know, you had -- you probably have the people that, you know, when they enter the park, they want to be looked after. They want -- they want it to be easy. They don't want to have to really think about what they're doing. But then on the other hand, you've got the people who are tenting and, you know, they don't -- they're not looking for power. They're not looking for water. They're not looking for any of that. So there's that -- there's a difference in what we may require. Is that something the department has been considering as well, to ensure that, you know, that we have something for -- for, you know, the difference in what tourists are looking for? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I mean, there's a lot of work that's going on over in parks in terms of doing that kind of analysis of who's using what services, where, and what kind of the numbers are. I know we did just recently do the long-term reservation uptake or I guess intake. So -- and I don't know where that landed or what else there might be on the docs right now. So let me turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, next year, we will have our new parks reservation system open, which is great. I know we're expecting to probably crash the system again this year because we'll have -- it didn't crash last year by the way. You know, we -- we anticipate a flux -- influx of non-NWT residents. And as you know, like last year, we weren't at our normal occupancy rate but the numbers for NWT campers was, you know, really great and we'll be sharing with committee those numbers, and they'll be coming out here shortly.

But with respect to parks, one example is we have land in our parks that are marked as parks. And as the Member said, there could be opportunities where we could do low cost camping, for example, that isn't within a big, you know, looped, you know, camping. And one I went to last year with my -- with my North Slave regional superintendent was just up the Ingraham Trail and there's an opportunity to maybe have, you know, just pay as you go and there are camp -- you know, spots allocated. So it's something we're thinking about. That being said, you know, it's -- it's been fairly busy but certainly we'll take that away and see what opportunities we can do within our budget that are lower cost. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I got to get a plug in here for Hay River and Enterprise as well. And you know, we have the Twin Falls there and, you know, it's -- it's beautiful there, and -- what I would like to see though, is like I see on the movies, is a bridge going over the river to the other side with a trail. Kind of like the ski club in Hay River. You can go to the other side and ski. So something like that.

But one thing I guess -- I've only got a couple minutes left here and I will be -- and I'll be brief.

One question, and one thing that I know that the Minister wants to hear, and probably the Premier as well. I don't think I brought up toilets. So I think we had a pretty good year this year. I don't think that -- I didn't get any calls. So it's been pretty positive. And -- and I just want -- oh, I just wanted to stop with that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. You might not need toilets in your area, but I do so I'll just leave it at that. Thank you. Did you have anything to respond, Minister of Finance -- or ITI?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, there's been a lot of work happening actually, so it's not just by accident. Folks are out there monitoring those wayside toilets and collaboration over with the

Department of Finance and -- or sorry, Department of Infrastructure and ITI. So this is everyone's working together.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I had the opportunity to travel to Inuvik where the chair specifically took me to see the toilets in Inuvik. I can confirm that she needs toilets. I also went to Hay River. I can confirm my kids think Hay River is the Disneyland of the Northwest Territories.

Over the last two years has been very difficult for tourism operators in the Northwest Territories, and so I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to the number of operators that have actually closed their doors over the last two years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, the information I have is that there have been only two. Obviously I -- you know I say that with a bit of hesitancy. You don't -- you know, people might close their doors temporarily. People may make different -- you know, some of the operators are small scale. So, yeah, I -- the formal information I have is two but I just -- I want to be mindful that it's an industry that has struggled a fair bit. But out of the tourism operator licenses that we've issued, there's only been -- there's only -- there's only a couple that we've lost and, again, a lot of interest in the area so hoping to see folks back at it again. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I do note that the Growth and Recovery by Investing in Tourism Fund is sunsetting for 2022-2023, and I'm wondering if there are -- if the Minister can speak to funding programs to help people, because like she says, they may not have fully closed their doors but they may have drastically scaled down. I know people who have sold off a lot of equipment, who have kind of taken a necessary step back to make ends meet. And so I'm wondering now that our doors are open again, if there are supports for people to kind of ramp up and hopefully support an influx of tourists. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the shift really is now away from relief into recovery. There is Tourism 2025, which is the five-year strategy that you might recall was coming out back in March of 2020 but we put a hold on it and took it back and grateful to have

done so, not knowing then what we know now, which is the level of impact on the industry. So there is funding in this -- in this proposed budget for Tourism 2025, looking at just over a million dollars in 2022-2023, to support four different priorities, you know, the investment that we need in the infrastructure for the industry, engagement with tourism stakeholders, you know, helping them gather data about the market, and of course, helping them build a capacity. So there certainly will be and are financial supports available through the department for the industry just that the focus now is to shift towards reopening.

And Madam Chair, I'd be remiss to not say there's -- this is an area where we do get a lot of support from CanNor, and a lot of the programs are often jointly funded by the two. So expecting that to continue in some fashion. Not entirely sure what it will look like from the federal side but we do have money available on our end. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm looking at tourism industry contributions which has seen a decline in the main estimates from 4.1 to 3.3. And this is the line item that deals with marketing and industry association support for NWT tourism, including funding for large scale marketing campaigns.

And I'm wondering why now that we are opening our doors and hoping to attract a lot of people from around the world, I see that this is what is available -- or this is the section where we speak to marketing the NWT to the world as a premiere tourist destination so I'm wondering why the decline in that funding at a time where, really, we should be stepping it up? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, I don't think this tells the full story of the efforts that are going to be happening over at NWT Tourism or Destination Canada. So if I might send that one to the deputy minister to just explain how that has shifted around. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, the Member is right; there was a slight sunset. That being said, at the present time CanNor is providing those marketing funds to NWT Tourism for a two-year basis. We continue to -- to work with NWTT moving forward on that. At the time, you know, remember Canada 150 was one of those large

scale marketing campaigns. But certainly, you know, we as a department will be taking that away and working with NWTT. We totally recognize the need, you know, for those marketing campaigns to continue and even become more -- more -- increase and to, you know, a wider audience. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm wondering if we know how much the contribution is for the two-year agreement with CanNor? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I'll send that back to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Yes, so that funding from CanNor is approximately \$1 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So that puts us back up, luckily, to replace that sunset that's seen in that area but it doesn't put us up and above and considering that in a year where we couldn't really have tourism, we spent over \$4 million. Right now, I think would be a time to be able to kind of tap into a market that the GNWT wasn't a leader in but had a lot of potential to be a leader in, and that's that eco and cultural tourism. Before the pandemic, BC was seeing like massive -- hundreds of millions of dollars in cultural tourism. And I think that the NWT has some incredible, incredible, cultural experiences to offer, especially outside of Yellowknife. And so my next question is what is ITI doing, along with this CanNor funding and Destination Canada and NWTT, in order to drive tourism outside of Yellowknife? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I couldn't agree more. I mean, and I think I've said this, that the benefits of taking tourists outside of Yellowknife benefits Yellowknife, benefits -- or outside of Inuvik, benefits Inuvik. They're still coming in and coming through regional centres as well. I mean, Madam Chair, the money that's allotted here under tourism and tourism product development is not -- is certainly not just for regional centres. It's really meant for those small

operators and often it's the small operators that are, you know, the ones that will truly provide that sort of one-on-one and personal experience.

So, you know, I'm kind of going back to this being money that's going to the tourism coordinators, the individual communities, and the marketing of all of those opportunities by NWT Tourism, they understand -- and I've had the opportunity to look at what the products were that they had right at the beginning of the pandemic, or I guess right before the pandemic, they were territorial-wide. They were focused on that breadth of experience. And, you know, wanting to -- yeah, I mean I -- again, I'll kind of be mindful of the time here, that there's two minutes left. It's -- it's literally the focus of all of the money that's here. It's the point of all of it that's here, to make sure that that is something that benefits the whole territory and that the operators are ready for it when folks are coming to their communities, which was probably a place of challenge before the pandemic. A lot of the money we've spent in the last couple of years on recovery has actually been money that can be used for, you know, training, for infrastructure, for product development. So, you know, hopefully if that was successful, folks are even in a better place to in fact be welcoming people back. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, with my last one minute here, I just wanted to kind of make I guess put a little plug in for some -- some food for thought here. And there's nothing that drives me more crazy than when I get to a retail outlet that is selling mass produced arts from down south. We have so much to offer here in the territory. There are so many people, even in this room right now, that are wearing locally produced art very passionately. We have Minister Simpson wearing his vest, which he told me he made himself and I believed him for a very short period of time. He did not?

But I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to how the economic diversification key activity is working together with the parks and tourism key activity to bring our local crafters and artisans together with our tourists and our retailers? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, it is part -- that does fall under the arts strategy that of course is shared between ITI and ECE, but to the extent that it's shared within ITI, you know, I mean we're not -- we're not such a huge department that there's not collaboration from within the same department. And

there's a lot of displays that are out at the tourism intake points, a lot of work that's trying to be done, again probably more on the art strategy side around ensuring that the producers themselves and the artists know how to get their products out, how to market them, how to develop their web sites. You know, everything right down to the polar bear diamond, if I might go in to yet one of the other activities that we had, you know, and the interest there that they're using arts to promote and they're, you know, trying to put themselves out there in a way that folks are associating all those items with the Northwest Territories. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: I didn't have my hand up. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Oh, I thought you did before -- whoops. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I won't repeat everything my colleagues have said around the tourism support funding and the CanNor, and I appreciate the Minister's response to those, and I'm looking forward to more CanNor funding announcements down -- down the line. So I think that's great.

My question is around at one point, the federal government had been talking about incentivizing tourism and movement of Canadian tourists within the country, and they were sort of calling it at the time, at the FPTs, like a -- a sort of a grant or like a tax benefit or such. I'm just wondering if there's been any further discussion from the feds about that sort of thing? So not necessarily funding to the territory but rebates or incentives to the individual tourist to come here. And then specifically is there -- if that is the case, is there anything specific to the North? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there was the change from the federal government in their last budgetary cycle now so that the travel benefits are no longer requiring folks to have that from their employer, that they can be brought more broadly claimed, and that, you know, does hopefully incentivize people, at least in the Northwest Territories, to travel. That's not necessarily the full Canada-wide kind of incentive that we might then, you know, hope for that could really draw people up to the Northwest Territories. So we don't -- I don't know if there's a tax credit or a tax incentive to do that sort of on a nation-wide basis but I can say that there's -- we've had a couple of FPTs now with the tourism minister, and the new

tourism minister, Minister Boissonnault, is very keen to see a growth in this sector for all regions. I mean, everyone's had such an impact from COVID that I think there's a real pent-up -- not only demand but sort of a pent-up on the side of the supply of wanting to see that growth. So, you know, never know what might come but we'll kind of go from there. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I would actually really strongly encourage the Minister to go back and work with her two territorial colleagues to really push the federal government for a northern travel incentive. I really actually think it's fantastic because if they're pushing in, say, in Ontario, it'll benefit three provinces as people make their way over here or potentially looking at -- and around a road trip type maybe situation. So I like what the Minister's saying but I actually would like her to raise that specifically if she could.

But my next question is around the visitor information centre line, and I see that there is quite a significant jump -- well, significant for this department, in the visitor information centre line. And I believe that has to do with the visitors centre that has not been existent in Yellowknife for a while.

Can the Minister speak to that line item and the jump and how is this new centre going to be that destination -- I forget what the -- the call is where it is that spoke or the centre to the hub that goes out to the -- to the rest of the territory. Is it the destination marketing? I'm not sure if I'm labelling it right. But -- but in the past, that had been a frustration expressed I think by small community operators and such that it was, you know, Yellowknife centric, that visitors centre, and so I'm just wondering how that will change in the new iteration. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think there's a couple of different things kind of squished in there. So there definitely was a bump here that is going to benefit the Yellowknife visitors centre which is expected to have something of a hub element to it. But there's also funding within this -- that's meant to be more generally providing opportunities for upgrades to other visitor centres as well. I don't have the detail here. I'd suggest that go to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, definitely the line item you're seeing for the 161 was going to the City of Yellowknife only, and I was very fortunate to have a virtual tour just about a month ago. So we're really looking forward to that opening actually before the summer. So that is quite exciting.

But what we've done as part of Tourism 2025 is identified that, you know, we have the ICs across the territory, and you know one size doesn't fit all. So every region sort of sees what works for them. We wanted to have a dedicated program. We're developing that right now, to provide funding, you know, so that some can be modernized and you know, really -- and -- and this money too, like, we're looking it as can it be transformational rather than have it little pieces going on, like -- you know, can all the regions say, okay, we're going to focus on this one this year or that one next year. So it's \$250,000 as part of 2025 for VIC. So hopefully we'll see some significant upgrades, and we're really looking forward to some of the ideas that come out of the regions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I really like what I hear there around the idea of not always just sort of little bits going out which, you know, may Band-Aid a situation in one area but doesn't really lead to a long-term solution. I think one of the issues that will really hurt tourism, and any of our economic development going forward, is the housing issue. I'm not going to get into that because that's not the right Minister. But that has been something we've been repeatedly hearing now, is that even if we want to bring people in we don't have housing for them. And I guess why I bring this up is just to maybe ask for the Minister to be advocating for some sort of change to the -- to the -- to the allowance of structures on sites. And I know, again, not her department but so that, you know, temporary structures could be brought in such as we've now seen for the new warming centre, where they don't have to be piped. They don't have to be, you know, hooked up to sewer, and allowing more flexibility that way. And so then in the meantime, we could at least use temporary structures to house some of the people that are going to be needed here, and particularly as our tourists -- sorry, I should slow down. Sorry, interpreters.

Particularly as our tourism is, you know -- is generally a seasonal economy at this point, either being winter or summer, but the summer one more so. You know, the housing doesn't need to be the robust northern housing necessarily if we were bringing them in the winter. And maybe that is some way to -- to increase -- we -- I often saw in British Columbia that you would see international tourists but they were

doing the tourism jobs in BC. So, you know, often the ski instructors were from Australia or the rafters were from Europe. So I think there's an opportunity for us to look at some sort of model like that and look at our immigration and all of that and play that into -- into providing -- to having more employees or staffing for tourism.

I guess I'm just going to leave it at that. I think that's more -- more of a, excuse me, a comment. And I think my colleagues covered everything else. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI, did you have anything to follow up?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, labour market shortages in this industry are actually top of mind. We don't necessarily hear about it so much here in the Northwest Territories, but they are definitely a focus on the federal-provincial-territorial tables. And so yes, there's probably more to come on that. Our issues may be a little bit different but at the same time, certainly don't want any barriers if we do hopefully have an explosion of tourism here. So I appreciate that there was some ideas there and as I said, yeah, definitely we can continue to look at what's happening elsewhere and make sure that we're using best practices. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under tourism? Thank you, Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you. Okay, now that pandemic is almost over and the road to -- okay, and the all-season road to Whati is open, people are inquiring in the regions how to start up a small business to promote tourism industry. I just want to know, I see in this -- in the budget -- I know we already passed that but corporate management, there's one active position and two economic diversification. Are those positions currently filled?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. We'll -- did you want to answer that, Minister?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I'd suggest that go to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So right now, I think the Member is referring -- there is one position right now in the Tlicho. It's our Tlicho superintendent, and that staffing process is underway so that should be out in the next couple weeks.

Also in the Tlicho, we do fund to the Tlicho government directly for three economic development

officers, and those are staffed by the Tlicho themselves. I hope that answers the question for the Member. If not, you know, I'd be happy to see if I've got this wrong. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for -- sorry. Wait for your light. Member for Monfwi, if we can just stick to tourism and parks. So -- yeah, thanks.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I understand about that one. I do -- I am aware of that but I'm just asking about, you know, because tourism is almost here, and the pandemic is almost over. So that's why I'm asking in -- with the all-season road open and people are asking. So that's why I was inquiring about that, if those were active positions.

So but I will talk to Caroline about the other position that was just mentioned.

And then I heard the Minister talk about the North Slave Park. So it's going to be open. But is there a timeline when it's going to be opening, or like when it's going to -- the project is going to be completed?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that's summer of 2023. So we have this construction season coming up for the bulk of the work under this capital project, and then it will be good to go for the following season. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yes, we know that tourism is greatly needed in all the regions, especially in Tlicho region. We have -- we don't have too many. But I see here tourism skills development, contribution to support youth mentorship in the community tourism. I mean, that's really good but it's just that the number is really low. Why is that? For the 2022-2023, it's 50. Why is that? Because if we're going to be promoting and, you know, teaching or working with youth, mentoring, why the budget is low in this area. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's only one of a suite of programs. I don't know to what extent it's been oversubscribed in -- over any reasonable period of time or if we even have that right now given the last couple of years of COVID would have certainly thrown that off. But maybe let me put that to the deputy minister, and she may be better able to speak to what the history of the uptake of that is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking for that tourism skills development program right here. That is divided up between tourism training fund, which is \$25,000, and then the youth mentorship program, which is \$30,000 annually, and so each region is provided with that funding. So that is -- and I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I do not have all of the details with me. But if we could take that back to provide the details on the uptake of those programs, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We'll take that as a commitment to return with a response. Thank you. No further questions? All right, so are there any further questions under tourism and parks?

Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$16,254,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, are there Members that are going to have questions for the information items? Okay, well we'll break right now, and then we'll come back to the information items.

---SHORT RECESS

I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we are on Industry, Tourism and Investment, and we finished the last key activity, and we ended with the information items on page 225.

Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation, 226. 227 is Northwest Territories Environmental Studies Research Fund. 228, lease commitments. And 229, work performed on behalf of others. Do I have questions from Members? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just ask a couple really quick questions.

In the aftercare supports, which end on March 31st, 2022, there was \$100,000. I'm just wondering if there is any money left in that pot, or was it fully subscribed? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am trying to see that here. I may have to commit to get back to the Member just to confirm that. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair, I appreciate that commitment. I just wanted to be able to let constituents know if there was still funding available there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions? No, all right. No further questions? Okay. Any other questions from Members? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to go to the Northwest Territories Environmental Studies Research Fund. Given that this is an environmental studies, why is it -- I know why it's appearing under ITI, but why is this not something that's delegated to, say, ENR? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that kind of a reorganization hasn't been contemplated by ITI but maybe the deputy minister can speak to the history on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, ENR is definitely very involved in the ESRF. Andrew Applejohn is our chair and he is an ENR employee. So although the funds come through the PRA, which is the Petroleum Resources Act, we jointly manage this fund together, and ENR -- we do provide some funding to ENR to cover the salaries for those that do work on implementing the projects that the ESRF funds, and those are, you know, what is boreal caribou, which is ENR, ground water monitoring, and some train sensitivity for permafrost. So definitely highly linked with ENR and it, you know, obviously doesn't paint the picture, you know, within what we have here but certainly there's a lot more information that we have in the annual report that's funded. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks for that. Yeah, I guess maybe during the government renewal initiative, this might be something that maybe should just be moved over to ENR. But I want to ask the revenue is -- looks to be pretty steady, and I'm a bit surprised of that given, you know, the level of non-activity. I believe that these -- the revenues actually tie to exploration-licence-sort-of levies. Certainly, I don't think any of this money is coming from significant discovery licences where companies don't have to do anything forever. So are these levies

then from the active exploration licences, and is this expected to decline over time? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, all of the licence holders do pay I believe 32.3 cents per hectare. So that's what makes it a fairly steady amount. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Does that include significant discovery licence holders? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, let me put that to the deputy minister just to be sure, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes, Madam Chair, that does cover SDL holders. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Well, that's a bit of a surprise to me. I didn't think they actually had to do anything, so -- well, if they're contributing a few bucks to the ESRF, that's probably not a bad thing, so. I don't think I have anything further on that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just curious to understand a little bit more about how this works together, ITI and ENR, because we talked a lot about, you know, breaking down silos. So when I hear someone saying they would like to move it to one department only, I'm just curious to know -- I see here that ITI manages, like, the legislative part, and because petroleum is -- is under this Minister's purview, could she speak to how that works? Like, what is sort of the percentage or breakdown here between the two departments and is it more of a collaborative thing or maybe speak a little bit further to that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'll direct that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So yes, you're right. ITI's main responsibility here is because of the act and the anchor within the act, that that's how we collect the funds. As I said, we have six board members of which we have a GNWT representative, which is ITI for one, two industry members, two public members, and the chair, which is ENR. And also we do pay, as I mentioned, compensation for an ENR salary to do the work that the fund entails. So it really, I guess in a lot of ways, is a good partnership and largely implemented by ENR. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that answer because, yeah, I actually think this is a great example of what we are actually trying to move towards, and I've often thought are we -- you know, it's not just me, but having discussions around, you know, we tend to have departments and then certain things are slotted into them but if we truly want to change to -- to not having those silos, you have to kind of look at the issue and then put the people around it, and that -- we talk about that when it comes to people, and I think it's the same thing for the economy. So I would actually like to see this type of a scenario -- and I think when I hear the Ministers talk about the ADM working tables and things, I think that's also somewhat of a similar model to how this might work. And I think it's a great way to check and balance between the interests of industry and the environment.

So can the -- perhaps the Minister speak to are there others where this type of model is in the department already or something similar to this that we could also look at as an example? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The one that comes to mind, the remediation economy work for example. So this is an ENR lead, and I don't want to go too far down the road. But it's -- because it is an ENR lead but it's one where I know both departments have worked fairly closely together. Similarly, the work around Reimagining Closure, which is not a GNWT project at all but to the extent that we participate in it, I believe that one is Infrastructure and ITI are the leads there in terms of being able to participate and respond. I mean, you know, the art strategy, sort of

not quite the same area, but again very much ECE and ITI are involved. And economic development, you know, on wood pellets and the opportunities around forestry, again very much ENR and ITI working together on that. So one -- Canol Trail's another one where we've got tourism but there's a significant ENR portion involved there. So there's actually quite a number of these initiatives. Like I said, I -- if I'm not mistaken, Minister Thompson and I have now set up ourselves quarterly meetings just given the amount of things that we seem to have overlapping one with the other. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. I, again, also appreciate that answer because I think that's exactly what we're striving to do here, and I appreciate the Minister's efforts towards being collaborative in that way because I think once we get into the departments and we have our -- you know, our sort of focus and the work we're doing, it's very easy, and even in this job, to get very tunnel visioned. And when you get into the echo chamber of only working around people that say the same thing as you, you often miss lots of opportunities and you miss the holistic nature, really, and complexity of the work we're trying to do here. So to me, that -- that's actually really important and something I strive to do personally. So I guess that's more of a comment. I think this is great, and yeah, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I -- I mean, I -- I'm glad that the message is getting through because I think there has been a history of some departments, particularly ITI and ENR being of different stripes and that simply has not been my experience. And to the extent that that was a belief, I think both Minister Thompson and I are quite happy to dispel that myth. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Did you have any further questions? Okay. Are there any further questions under the information items? Seeing none. Thank you, Members.

Please return now to the department summary found on page 205, revenue summary information items on page 206. Are there any questions?

Committee, I'll now call the departmental summary. Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditure, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$59,625,000. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Actually, I did have -- if we're going to pass revenue summary, I did have some questions about that. I wasn't quite

on the ball here. If I could ask some questions about the mineral revenue summary.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Then we'll go back to that. Mr. O'Reilly, general comments on the overall?

MR. O'REILLY: 206. The minerals, oil, and gas royalties. They jump all over the place, and I guess I'd be interested in hearing some explanation as to why that is the case. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. That's on page 206. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, royalties, of course, are tied to the markets and what's going on in terms of what's happening the producers that we have, and certainly in the last two years, there's been quite a lot of uncertainty and reflected both in the -- I just want to get the actuals out to be able to reference them. But, yeah, in terms of not only the projections, which is what you will see in the budget, but also actually in the actuals, that, you know, in 2020, we saw Ekati close, and then other areas had production shutdowns. Even in 2021, there continued to be production shutdowns as a result of outbreaks. And anticipated that things would not go particularly well and then discovering of course that, in fact, the resource sector was responding better than expected. So, yeah, quite a lot of volatility here but, you know, hoping that in the -- as the economy comes back on and that we will actually see doing better than expected in this particular area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think part of the issue too is that of course companies only pay royalties when they sell their product, which is I think part of the difficulty with this kind of regime in that it just bounces all over and makes the ability to predict revenues very, very difficult. Is that something that's going to be fixed when the royalty regime is revised? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so the royalty system that's in place right now sees value being paid on -- or sees the royalties being paid on the value. So it doesn't depend on the sale but there are -- it is -- it is not based simply on production numbers. So all of which is to say there are different types of royalty systems out there. We use one. Other provinces or territories may use other or combinations, hybrid systems. And the short answer, Madam Chair, is that is exactly the kind of analysis

that we want to engage in over the next few months so that we can determine if, in fact, a different system would be more appropriate in terms of balancing out benefits to the Northwest Territories, both in the form of royalties but as well in the form of growing the sector. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, and I -- I think we do need to find ways to make this kind of revenue stream a lot more predictable over time. And, yeah, I look forward to that discussion. We also need to make sure that the Northwest Territories is getting a fair share of the profits from mining and I guess the work that SCEDI has done would indicate that we're not. But let's leave it at that for now and look forward to the debate as we move forward. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the departmental summary?

Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call the departmental summary. Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$59,625,000. Member -- or Mr. O'Reilly.

COMMITTEE MOTION 201-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 561-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2022-2023 – INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT – DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment at this time. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the -- or the motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Consideration of Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, operations expenditures, total department, is deferred.

---Carried.

Thank you, Minister. Thank you to the witness for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we've agreed to consider tabled -- order.

We've agreed to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to present the 2022-2023 Main Estimates for the Department of Finance. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$33 million, or 10.9 percent, over the 2021-2022 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Finance while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- The sunset of \$1.1 million in contributions to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation associated with the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund Agreement;
- \$3.3 million in forced growth which includes \$1.9 million in additional funding for insurance premiums for coverage of GNWT wide assets, \$262,000 to increase the capacity of Finance to provide benefits services to GNWT employees and \$1.1 million increase to the contribution to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation for public housing expansion and additional property tax costs;
- An incremental increase to the Carbon Tax Offset rebates of \$8.2 million and an incremental increase of \$12.2 million for annual service payments for the Tlicho All-Season Road;
- An increase of \$2.94 million to accompany salary increases resulting from the new collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers which includes \$2.06 million directly related to Finance and \$882,000 to be provided to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;
- \$8.5 million to account for the increased accretion and amortization costs in compliance with the new accounting standards for asset retirement obligations; and,
- A reduction to travel budgets of \$602,000 to align expenditure appropriations with duty travel requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic of which \$68,000 applies to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly and supports the vision of Budget 2022, by:

- Supporting strategic investments to expand the economy and reduce the cost of living in communities across the Northwest Territories;
- Continue to deliver and improve procurement services and contracting opportunities; and,
- Ensuring that GNWT departments have the support they require to manage both human and financial resources appropriately.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on your right, Bill MacKay is the deputy minister of Finance. And on the left, Terence Courtoreille is the deputy secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome. The committee has agreed to forego general comment. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail tabled in the document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with the directorate starting on page 140 with information items on page 143. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I actually have a few questions about the departmental summary that are just unique to Finance. I'm wondering if you would prefer I ask them at the end or ask them now.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I would -- when we go back and we call the departmental summary, then you can ask in regards to the departmental summary. So do you have questions on the

directorate? Anybody has questions on the directorate? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So yeah, there's I think a new item on pages 141 and 142, something called social justice fund. I just love the name of that.

Can someone explain to me what that's all about? It looks like it's something that might have been negotiated as part of a progressive collective agreement. I'd love to hear from the Minister about that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that is correct. This was, in fact, something that was part of the most recent collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers where the GNWT has agreed to match in contributions to the Public Service Alliance of Canada's social justice fund which I gather 50 percent of which will be going to the Northwest Territories United Way. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, that's great. It shows what organized labour can do. And the other 50 percent, then, that doesn't go to the United Way, does that stay within the PSAC social justice fund for them to disburse? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I believe that is correct. Madam Chair, if I may also I just wanted to note that there can be deductions of up to \$0.02 an hour from bargaining Members units -- from a bargaining Member. So a bit of a plug for this social justice fund, it's something I'm also fond of. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister -- I'm sorry, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no, thanks. I think this is really good. You know, it's helpful that -- I know I think in the past, I think you can see there's a line item for contribution to United Way NWT. I think that was kind of how this got started a few years back where UNW and GNWT both were involved with the United Way, which does great work, and they basically serve as a clearing house for a number of other NGOs and, you know, valuable work by NGOs that's conducted across the NWT. So very happy to see this and glad

that our government agreed to these negotiations. I don't have anything further. Thanks.

Oh. The contribution to the Housing Corporation, it's what you see on page 142, and of course this is the main avenue for GNWT to provide funding to the Housing Corporation. So I was glad to see that it's actually going up a bit, maybe a couple -- not quite \$2 million in 2022-2023. Does this include the extra \$5 million that the Regular MLAs pushed for in the last budget, or where would that be found? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to direct this over to the deputy minister, please, or to Mr. Courtoreille. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$5 million referenced by the Member is not included in that incremental increase. If memory serves me correct, the \$5 million was part of the co-investment fund last year and was utilized for a number of projects within that scope. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. No, thanks for that. So the \$5 million would have shown up in the capital budget for the Housing Corp, is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. And so this increase here for the Housing Corp, 2022-2023, is this forced growth? Is it -- what happened here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's a mix. There's some forced growth for public housing expansion in the amount of \$947,000. \$164,000 to accommodate some increase in property taxes. There is \$752,000 of shelter initiative funding for Hay River and Fort Simpson. And then there is also an increase as a

result of the increases to the collective agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So what would it take for this to become, like, automatically indexed or in some way to CPI, you know, so that, I don't know, the Housing Corporation wouldn't have to kind of come back and continue to make submissions to the FMB or whatever. And I have no -- I just don't understand how that stuff works. But what would it take for there to be kind of like regular incremental increases to the budget this contribution from the GNWT to the Housing Corporation over time? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, every element of the government that is dependant upon the operations budget, including the Housing Corporation, goes through the same process. There's a business planning cycle during which point the department determines what their needs are. If there's forced growth, appropriate asks under the forced growth. So that would be your collective -- collective agreement increases; taxes, for example. Then that comes through forced growth and that, you know, receives a different type of appreciation through the Financial Management Board process. If they want to have initiatives to expand programs or increase programs, then that does go through the initiative process. So it doesn't -- nothing gets indexed in terms of being programs and services funding that then gets indexed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks. So -- yeah, I don't know, we've -- well, we have just continued to kind of beg the Housing Corporation to ask for more money, and I guess this is the flow through of that. So I just would continue to make that plea. That's all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Yeah, I am going to just continue on that line of questioning.

So the Housing Corporation contribution increased slightly by 2 percent, which an increase is great news. I'm wondering if the Housing Corporation asked for more than a 2 percent increase? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, what shows up here, as it does for every other department, is the results of -- well, the combination of starting from the foundational budget coupled with, you know, forced growth and then initiatives and any other adjustments that might exist and that are being carried forward. So, you know, if there's new programs or federal programs to which we're contributing that might find its way into other FMB adjustments and then the result is that where we get to in the 2022-2023 Main Estimates, Madam Chair. And so the total departmental examples that we see before us are the sum total of all of those decisions by the Financial Management Board. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, since -- well, over the course of the last decade, the contribution from the GNWT to the Housing Corporation has actually gone down on average. I'm wondering if the Department of Finance has ever questioned the Housing Corporation as to why their -- why their ask I guess has gone down. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I mean, the role of the Department of Finance really in terms of the line item here is to provide the funding that it was asked for under the budget that's approved by the Housing Corporation. So what their -- what the Housing Corporation's budget actually is and how it gets determined is done by the corporation, and then Finance sort of pays at this point through this line item. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I guess I disagree with that, just simply because this is a contribution not to a department but to a corporation. So it's government funding that they're giving in expectation for work to be done. So I guess my next question is how does the GNWT as a whole, because it's making a contribution to a corporation, how do they evaluate performance of the corporation for an exchange for that GNWT contribution? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, Madam Chair, I mean, the evaluation of the performance of any -- of the corporation or of any department or of any arm, you know, Northwest Territories Power Corporation might be another example, they are all -- they all have certain business plans that they have to achieve or strategic corporate plans that they have to achieve. BDIC being another one, for example. And obviously that -- you know, then they would submit annual reports as to the degree to which they've achieved their goals or not.

Now, one other thing that I -- I've certainly plugged many times, I know everyone's heard me talk about it, is the government renewal process. I do think that the GNWT can, and we've all acknowledged, can do a better job of being more evaluative and ensuring that we are a fact delivering on value. That's really the foundational reason why we are putting everyone through that fairly extensive process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I guess just last comment here is I guess the mandate of the Housing Corporation, or the expectation of the Housing Corporation, would be able -- would be to maintain the units and the housing stock that it has. And the contributions and the dollars it's receiving through this budgeting process does not begin to cover the O and M required to take care of the units that they -- that they do have. And so I guess I question, then, how we are evaluating that as a government and holding them, I guess, accountable to the that they're asking, or being honest about what -- what providing -- what the cost is to provide housing in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm not in a position to speak on behalf of the Minister who is responsible, but if I could just have, perhaps, the deputy minister could speak a bit to the processes that might be involved, I'd suggest that, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just -- I might be saying the same thing the Minister said before but through the FMB process, the corporation brings forward its business plan and its plans for the year in terms of what they're going to do in terms of upkeep of housing and all the other expenses that they're going to incur and also try to

give a reasonable assessment of their capacity to undertake that work. So that's how they come up with the money that they propose to spend that year. And in terms of accountability, well, they have the president who reports to a board and we also have a Minister responsible for the corporation who can be questioned in the legislature over the budget and how it's used.

So the corporation actually does have quite a bit of oversight, and I think the process by which they come up with their -- their budget is one that's based on what -- what needs to be done as well as what's their -- what they're capable of doing in that given year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the directorate? Seeing none. Finance -- oh, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to pick off my colleagues talked about housing. I was just listening to what they were saying and when business plans go whether it's based on needs and when I take a look at the operational expenses of 121 million and 145 -- \$125,145,000, and then you take a look at on the contribution agreement side it's \$62 million. So far, the Housing Corporation's getting \$183 million and yet our communities in Wiilideh -- in Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh there's \$5.4 million just to fix up the Housing Corporation assets.

You know, I'm still not too happy for the fact that here we are, we're asking money what we need for our communities for housing but yet, you know -- I want to bring forward what I think is needed for our communities for homeownership and homeownership repairs in our communities but, you know, we've been at this for 50 years and I'm not sure why the Housing Corporation doesn't have proper needs assessments for all the communities, especially in our riding and throughout the Northwest Territories, but yet here we are today we're looking at adding another \$78 million here. So I don't know.

I think with AFN, like I said earlier, they had a housing shortage right across Canada of 45,000 in 2003, and here we are 20 some odd years later and, you know, back in 1999, when I first talked about this was -- and 2003 AFN, I had that much, but here in the North, we have 4,500 homes short. If anything, we should be double that now but we're now going backwards. So I don't understand how the GNWT could go forward and say okay, well, this is based on your need but yet nobody goes into our communities

and talked to us. I mean, I've been the Chief. I hear it in the communities, old housing. And housing repairs, nothing. We're only going to fix up your ask is a \$5.4 million. But we got a lot of houses -- we got 540 houses in Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding and they -- a lot of these guys are -- I get messages every day. I got a -- I got a client -- a constituent in Lutselk'e that has sewage in their bathtub. And yet they apply for funding, yet they get turned down because they make too much or they don't make enough. So the barrier here is your policies that are prohibiting our people from getting help. So I -- I don't know. I'm really not too happy when I see numbers like this, and yet you're -- you know, here we are, you got the -- your operation expenses is about \$121 million. So something has to give here. I'm not happy. I'm not happy where this government's going, especially in housing. We're going backwards. We're nowhere near filling the gap of the 4,500 homes. Times it by two, probably about 9,000 homes here in Northwest Territories that need help. So your need, maybe you could elaborate a little bit more so I understand how you could ask for another \$78 million to address your needs. Maybe you could help me explain that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, again, I'm not the Minister of Housing. I think the Department of Housing, the president and their finance person, were here for two days to speak to how that -- how the corporation functions and how their policies function, speaking to the strategic plan that they've released, speaking to the complete review that they're doing of all their policies and the efforts that they are undertaking to try to change and try to change how that organization has worked for many years far beyond what this government has. You know, the Department of Finance, because it's corporation, is where the money sits. But it's -- yeah, it's not -- I'm not in a position to necessarily speak in any depth about the Housing Corporation's policies or, again, or the significant review that they are undertaking right now recognizing where some of the frustrations that I know the Member's expressing. So this also isn't the sum total that gets spent on all housing needs. There's, you know, homelessness funding, and health and social services for instance. So I certainly appreciate the comments. You know, there's a reason all Ministers are always here. There is so much overlap between departments, and I have no doubt that my colleagues are hearing the comments and hearing the frustration. I won't be able to provide a substantive answer, Madam Chair, other than -- other than the comments I've made thus far. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, well, thank you, Madam Chair. No, I mean it's -- I think this issue is not going to go away. It's still going to be here for a long time yet. We're not -- nowhere near closing the gap in trying to address the issue of housing here in the Northwest Territories. And -- and at the rate we're going is we're going to continue to, you know, prop up the Housing Corporation and their expenses. Again, you know, nobody has come into our communities to say that, here's what you need for housing. How can we work with you? How can we write policies that will better suit your community? Nobody has come into our community to do assessments at our homes. And you know, it's okay to say that we're going to come there with a Minister and talk about and listen to those issues. But we've been doing this since 1970 -- what -- '72 when the Housing Corporation was created. That's 50 years ago. So I'm getting a little concerned here that, you know, as we move forward I'm worried that this government's going broke. The economy is just not there anymore. We got really take a look at as to how we're going to approach the whole thing and housing is front and center here in the Northwest Territories. So again, Madam Chair, that's just a comment. And thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Members, please keep your comment -- your questions related to the budget. I understand, but this -- there's a section with the contribution to Housing Corporation. I mean, we have done Housing and so the Minister explained this, these dollars within this budget. Are there any further questions on the directorate?

Seeing none, Finance, directorate operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$84,508,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now move to page 145, Finance, human resources, and there's information item on 146. Questions from Members? Seeing no questions from Members? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'd like to start by -- the all work that department has done to date on the Indigenous Retention and Recruitment Framework and setting targets for departments. You know, I heard the Minister say the other day they're looking at doing competitions that are only available to priority 1 candidates, and they were very cooperative with committee. So I'm going to start by saying that.

But my question is, you know, outside of this, there's a debate about whether we will change the Affirmative Action Policy, and I'm just wondering whether we expect to do that in the life of this government. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't think there's a debate about it. I think the Premier had -- it's technically a policy that sits under EIA, and the Premier had already made that commitment. It's certainly administered by the Department of Finance through human resources, and so we'll be leading that work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. And I guess my other question is that we have priority 2 candidates, Indigenous non-aboriginal, I believe is what we call them; you know, people born in the North or have lived here half their life, which unlike Indigenous people, is -- doesn't have a target attached to it. And I guess -- and we don't currently have a way to know how many people that is. There's not a statistic we measure, how many people have lived here half their life. I'm just wondering whether the department has any sense of how many P2s are in the GNWT versus, you know, how many are in the population, or whether that's a statistic we're trying to at all get? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know that we do have that statistic. But I suspect it's probably unlikely that we do. That is -- it would depend on people want -- because I mean, when someone's applying to a job, they have to choose to disclose their status, P1 or P2. And it's -- and it's only when they have been hired that they would be required to do so. So as far as going out and surveying the population, again, as I say, I don't think that's been done. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under Finance, human resources? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I just want to speak to that management and recruitment service as well and the Affirmative Action Policy.

Can the Minister tell me what authority this government has to provide preference to P1 candidates? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So right now, Madam Chair, that would be the Affirmative Action Policy that creates the policy framework for that program, and -- yeah, thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I understand that we have a policy and the policy is giving preference to a group of people. And I know people cite the Charter saying that, you know, everybody has a right to, you know, gainful employment in -- throughout Canada. What is it that provides the government to allow us to go -- to go around that and show that preference? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam -- sorry, thank you, Madam Chair. So, yeah, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does allow for programs that promote equity amongst distinguished groups that are otherwise disadvantaged. So I'm not sure if that's the answer that the Member's looking for, Madam Chair. But see where the next eight minutes take me. Thanks.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, and that's the answer I wanted because I think that there are people out there that -- that feel that by giving preference to P1 candidates and showing -- you know, like I've got emails stating, you know, racism, and, but in reality it's the law that allows us to do what we're doing. And it's got nothing to do with racism or anything like that. I just want to -- I want to make that point because it's important that -- that people hear it.

And the other thing is, you know, like I said before, I made a statement in the House and -- with respect to this, and -- but, you know, I'd like to say that, you know, for P1s and P2 candidates, like, I've got no problem with people -- you know, people who are being -- who are born and raised in the Northwest Territory, you know, they deserve to be working here, whether it's public sector or whatever. But at the same time, what we're trying to do is increase the number of Indigenous people in the public service. We've been trying that for 30 years, and nothing seems to work.

I threw out a solution that we probably raise it pretty quickly but, you know -- and I know it probably

wasn't -- you know, was probably not -- not well received. But at the same time, we have to do something. We have to have solutions if we're going to change this. And I'm glad to hear that we're going to review -- be revisiting this, this policy. I just want to be -- you know, I just want the government to be careful that we don't open up something that will -- that we can't go back into. That's my -- that's my -- you know, my worry. And, you know, I don't want to close by any, you know, any Charter challenges as well. So just keep that in mind. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I was being cautious before but no, I do totally agree that there's a difference between equality and equity, and if there's groups that are historically and systemically disadvantaged, then bringing them to a place where they have equal opportunity means that that's different from saying everyone gets the same treatment. Some people have to have different treatment to actually be treated equally. So that is the fundamental difference. It is quite certainly allowable under the Charter. The question is how to achieve that when you have to overcome those historic disadvantages, but that's why you have something like the framework where we're trying to root out the things that systemic barriers and identify opportunities to bring people up to it so that we're all -- we're all at an actual equal level despite the fact of not necessarily starting from the same place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And you know, I'm just looking at the number there, you know, \$6.8 million, \$6.9 million we're spending on management and recruitment services. You know, I would hope that -- you know, that we would be able to get it right at some point, and I'm not sure why we can't. But, you know, I -- it has to start somewhere and I'm hoping it starts with this Assembly, and I think, you know, we are off to a good start. So, you know, I just -- I just want to make that comment. That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Are there any further questions or comments under human resources from Members?

Seeing none, Finance, human resources, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$22,161,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now move to page 147, Finance, Finance Management Board Secretariat, on page -- and yeah, 148, 149. Do we have any questions on the FMB or Financial Management Board Secretariat?

Seeing none. Going once. Financial Management Board Secretariat, operations expenditure summary -- oh, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. The carbon tax offset line on page 148 is going up fairly quickly, but I think that's just a -- corresponds to the increase in the carbon tax that was put in place as part of the Pan-Canadian Framework. Can the Minister confirm that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Correct, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So the NWT Heritage Fund; I know I've asked this before, I just don't understand. So the actuals for 2021 was about \$2.5 million, and then it's just this straight line of \$7.6 million. Do we actually know what the contribution is now for 2021-2022? And why don't we use some more accurate forecasts here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, that is dependant on what is happening with royalties. And if I might suggest with respect to the mathematics of it and the projections, that I'd send it over to Mr. Courtoreille.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And yes, the Member's absolutely right. There's a fair amount of variability in this budget line item. For 2021-2022, we're expecting that number to increase to \$5.6 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think I'm asleep at the wheel. Which number's being increased to \$5.6 million?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. So that would be the actual contribution for 2021-2022.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. So it's another -- sorry, I'm trying to do adding on the way. So it's going to be not the \$7.6 million but an additional 5.6 on top of that, or is it actually just going to get replaced by 5.6? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. COURTOREILLE: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair, and I could have been a little bit more clearer with my response. The 7.6 is the -- is the standard budget line item that we have for this item. Since the budget was printed, though, we have now learned what the actual amount will be for 2021-2022, and that's \$5.6 million total. So it will replace the 7.6. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, yeah, I was trying to reconcile it. I thought I heard the words increase, and 5.6 is not greater than 7.6, so okay, got it.

I just want to go up to the Tlicho All-Season Road. So now our annual payments are going to be \$14 million a year for this because it was done as a P3. How many years will this \$14 million be required. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a 25-year agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. So how do we, you know, really kind of assess these projects, because, you know, that's now -- this is the biggest part of an increase, as far as I can see, in the Department of Finance budget. Maybe I'm missing something, but. This starts to eat into our ability to spend money on other programs and services. And it's a capital project essentially, and now we're paying somebody else to operate it more cheaply than apparently what we could do. So how does this really impact our ability to spend money on programs and services with this big \$14 million hit for the next 25 years? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I mean, Madam Chair, this is one of those times where the totality of the government budget does come into play here. You know, there -- had the entire project been done as a typical or a normal -- or rather just a typical infrastructure project funded entirely by the government and not in the P3 process, well then there would have been a greater demand and draw from the capital budget. And for a project of this size, a requirement for significant amount of debt to be taken upon -- taken on in order to build the project. So by undertaking a P3 project, it spreads out the impacts over the course of multiple years and shares that risk between the private sector and us so that we're able to undertake that project now and not have to wait for one period of time. And that's where the benefits come in, Madam Chair.

So now the other question around how P3 projects, mindful of time, are evaluated. I know there's been -- there was at one time a fairly detailed briefing about the Stanton P3 but if there is interest, we'd certainly be happy to do a briefing to the committee on how P3, the P3 process is evaluated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, I think I know enough about P3s that I don't support them, especially when they're large ones like this because I just think that they're not transparent and we're mortgaging our future. But, you know, we can have that debate.

Why is the Stanton project not listed here as a P3? Like, why does the Tlicho All-Season Road show up in Department of Finance rather than in the Department of Infrastructure? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that one would have shown up under Health and Social Services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. That's what I said. The issue, though, is why are some P3s in Department of Finance and another P3 shows up in the HSS budget? Why are they not all together in one place? Maybe it's an accounting wizardry thing, I don't know, but why are -- like, we got Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link. That's a P3. Tlicho All-Season Road, that's a P3. And then another P3 is parachuted in to HSS. So why are some showing up there and not here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So again, this -- at the end of the day, it's all -- it's all one budget at the end of the day. But let for -- I just -- I think likely to be an accounting explanation. So let's send it to the accountant if I could, please, Mr. Courtoreille.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. When the Stanton project was originally completed, my understanding was that it was originally budgeted under the Department of Finance for that first year of operation. And then subsequently, it was transferred to the Department of Health where it properly resides. Same situation with TASR. This is early days in this P3 project. We just achieved substantial completion last November. It was, as part of the financial closed model, budgeted under Finance just for simplicity, and it's my understanding, and we're talking to Infrastructure now, about how we can move this budget over to Infrastructure where it would likely reside going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. Yeah, that's all interesting. So just with the Tlicho All-Season Road contract I guess that's out there, with Kiewit and whatever, are there actually any northern performance standards in terms of employment contracting related to the maintenance of the highway now, and is any of that publicly reported anywhere or tracked? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the partner here of course is the Tlicho government. I'm not familiar with the ins and outs of that contract. I might see if deputy minister or Mr. Courtoreille might have a bit more information that we can share on their behalf. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And yes, absolutely, there was some performance metrics established as part of the construction of the road. And there -- as part of infrastructure cooperation agreement with the Tlicho government, we also have provisions in that agreement to establish performance metrics for the maintenance of that project as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members under Management Board Secretariat?

Seeing none. Finance Management Board Secretariat, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$111,894,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now turn to the Finance, office of the chief information officer, on page 153 with information items on 154, 155. Are there questions from Members? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, in the life of this government, we've seen some improvement to E-services. I believe a lot of the DMV has been moved on there, the healthcare card renewal, the fishing licence, kind of all got under one portal. Some great work, and I would like to thank the department for that. I just bought my fishing licence while I was sitting here to make sure it works. I encourage everyone to do. Remember they end with the fiscal year.

But my question is can the Minister give us an update -- I know this is rolling out in phases of what the next services we can expect to be moved on to the E-services platform, or My Services, whatever it's called. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I -- there is a staged process for this. I don't know exactly what's coming up next. Other -- well, I know vital statistics is coming up next, Madam Chair. Let me see if the deputy minister might know after that what the next round or set might be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have that information in front of me right now. I can -- oh, it hasn't been finalized yet what the next one is after vital statistics.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I hope the office of the chief information officer -- or the chief information officer is listening. I guess to me, the big and giant hurdle here would be the social programs and possibly even some of the information sharing in an online portal. I'm just wondering if there is any possibility of income assistance and housing

being brought into My Services as an online forum. I think that would save people a lot of time and a lot of headache to be able to go and do it on a portal similar to the way the card services are. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, Madam Chair, future E-services planning will include an increased focus on internal priority service complexity assessments and service readiness planning with all of the different owners of the information across the GNWT. But anything is possible, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know there is, under the office of the chief information officer -- I know part of the chief information officer is kind of an open data plan and hopes to start publishing a lot more of GNWT data in machine readable formats. I note at one point the NWT disabilities policy which required a lot of things to be made in machine readable formats because people who are blind often use them. It was a scanned PDF that was not machine readable. So we got a lot -- a lot of work to do in this area. I'm just wondering if the Minister can give an update on whether there's any money here or any hope of getting an open data portal going? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm not necessarily the best place to answer this. There is expected to be some movement over the course of this summer. This is definitely another area of multi-department collaboration, and while Rick Wind's team may be responsible for the physical or, you know, intangible in some ways, computer structures, there's the -- the policy is led under EIA. But as I say, from what I understand of this -- of the substantial side here is that it's expected to see some progress over the summer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think -- well, so there's about \$15 million here for information shared services, and then over in Infrastructure through the chargeback, there's another 30 something million. There's close to \$50 million -- or \$30 million for the TSC. And admittedly I'm rather ignorant about the difference between what ISSS does and what TSC does. In the broadest possible terms, I just wrote them up to be IT.

I'm just wondering if the Minister -- and I guess I find there's a bit of a problem here, and when you're spending \$50 million on, you know, a lot of it on software and on IT and you have a bunch of MLAs who have no idea of whether that is an appropriate amount or whether that's -- we need more of it, it just kind of seems to be a black hole that we're throwing money into. I'm wondering there is a review -- you know, we're a few years into the creation of ISSS, whether there's a review underway? And I guess I would prioritize a bit of a spending review perhaps, you know, a third party IT audit, of whether this \$50 million is doing what it's supposed to be doing. I'm just wondering if this is being looked at in any of that detail, because I'm not capable of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So yeah, I mean TSC really is the -- is our network. It's our hardware. It's sort of the functionality across, again, 6,000 strong public servants and multiple departments, divisions, corporations, etcetera, and including schools, right. So that's -- that's the TSC's function whereas, yeah, ISSS is, you know -- for example, the geomatic centre that's on there, I mean, the kind of data mapping and layering that they do is incredible. It's world class. This is, you know, similarly the kind of -- you know, to be able to deliver the amount of data that's stored within the government, to make an open data portal of it, I've had the opportunity to speak at some length asking not dissimilar questions. And as it starts to get laid out for me, all the steps that are needed to create a system that brings data in effectively and functionally and quickly -- you know, for example, Madam Chair -- I am mindful of time, but Madam Chair, when we first brought the -- or proof of vaccination system online, enter your name and your birthday, and it's popping up. That's the kind of stuff that's going through the ISSS to do that.

I might suggest, Madam Chair, we could offer a briefing. I don't know that we've ever offered a general briefing on what ISSS does and if we haven't, I think that would be a good solution. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I think I might really enjoy that briefing, but I -- there may -- the excitement I share with Minister for ISSS may not be shared with a committee priority.

I guess I just -- one more question is is there, like, some sort of formal review? I know that this is a few

years now that it's been created, and you know, whether it's working as planned? I believe there was a bit of a cost sharing kind of goal in centralizing this at one point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know that I have the -- enough of the history myself on this. So I might suggest directing that to the deputy minister, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yeah, the ISS was brought in to Finance in the last five years or so, and it -- we have been trying to work out what the role is with -- with respect to its relationship with TSC. So we are looking at ways that we can coordinate those functions a little better, including -- you know, we're looking at all the different options that we might put in place so and -- the CIO reminded me it's three years, not five years since ISS came to Finance. So -- and two were with COVID, so. We still are working out how best to deliver those services to the GNWT, ensure we have the network capability that we need to perform our functions and deliver services. But part of that review is to look at what the role of TSC might be with respect to ISS. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the office of the chief information officer? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to contain myself from drooling at the prospect of an ISSS briefing. But more seriously, the government information -- government chief information officer seems to have taken a huge pay cut here from 2021 to 2022-2023, and I'm just wondering if somebody could explain that to me. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe, Madam Chair, that that is in relation to monies that were expended in the first year of the pandemic where significant costs were incurred in order to help, you know, shift over to Inninick to having the devices and hardware needed for schools and students to shift to online learning. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Is that, like, more than one person doing that, or -- it's just kind of an odd title to the program detail. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there is a chief information officer, and that's Rick Wind, but I think this particular line item is referencing something other than -- than his actual role. If I might just suggest taking that -- directing that over to Mr. Courtoreille, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thanks, Madam Chair. So the purchase of this hardware involved the chrome books, the turbo sticks, all the software and licensing related to online learning for students. The expenditure category where Members will see that expenditure take place is under computer hardware and software. But it rolls up under the -- the government chief information officer activity. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks for that. I'd like to go over to page 155. There's a four person increase in the active positions here in this one part of Finance. It seems to be a pretty big jump. Can someone tell me what those positions are? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I certainly can. I don't have it at my tip -- fingertips. Let me direct that to Mr. Courtoreille, I think, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have one junior information security analyst, a junior security technician, an IMT technician, and an enterprise architect. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I was trying to scribble all of that down without much success. But do we really need all four positions at the same time? Could we start with some junior folks and see how it works out? Or -- yeah, let's start with that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So positions certainly don't get added lightly or easily, Madam Chair. There's -- you know, it's a couple of these in particular are -- have long been asked for with respect to supporting fairly unique functions in the courts and corrections systems. They are systems that are rather distinct from what happens in the rest of government. And that is one of the growing pains of ISSS was identifying that they -- that when they were trying to amalgamate what were positions previously in those roles that there was a loss of functionality. And another one, Madam Chair, is for cyber security as you heard. And cyber security is an area of growing concern with the movement of things online and functionality online. There's been only an ever increasing number of cyber security incidents over the last couple of years. So concern that by not having a modest investment of one position there now we'd run into further risk down the road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So where's the money coming from to fund these positions? Is it just the consolidated revenue fund? Is it -- maybe -- where's the -- where's the money coming from? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The -- this is internal money. But let me turn that to the deputy minister to offer some further explanation, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So two of them were reallocations of contract services, and then the other two are new funding. So thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I'll just leave it at that. I'm just not fully convinced that we need all those new positions at the same time. But thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have any further questions? Okay. Thank you. Are there any further questions under the office of the chief information officer?

Seeing none, Finance, office of the chief information officer, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023

Main Estimates, \$22,841,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move to Finance, office of the comptroller general on page 157, with information items on 158, 159. Any questions under the office of the comptroller general? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thanks, Madam Chair. The territorial power subsidy program I notice is a stable number over the last years. But with the increasing cost of living and increases -- increased cost of power, is there an expectation that this number will remain stable throughout the years? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I can't necessarily see with a crystal ball but let me see what discussions may have had -- been had at the deputy minister level, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the subsidy, as the Member pointed out, hasn't changed for some time. But obviously if there's a need to increase that subsidy, we'll discuss it as deputies and bring something to the FMB for consideration. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm also seeing the increase to insurance premiums here. I think I know what that is for and I just -- can they -- can the Minister just confirm, please.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So there's a couple of things. Certainly -- firstly, the premiums themselves are going up as others may well have seen in their own personal lives in budgeting that insurance costs are going up. There's also some new assets that have been taken on by the GNWT, and that's added a bit more to the total cost. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Are these new assets that will be consistently

insured from here on in by the GNWT, or is this a one-time thing? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I think these would be incoming assets that are now here to stay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The environmental liabilities one for the 2020-2021 Actuals were substantially higher than the expectation of kind of the consistent number year after year. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to why that doubled in the actuals for 2021-2022? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I might direct that over to the deputy minister and see if he can speak to that change, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: No, I can take it, okay. Oh, I'm sure he -- Mr. Courtoreille could as well. But I will. I'll take this.

So Madam Chair, the Member -- the amount is just an estimate of \$2 million. So we estimate that based on a year review with departments, and then the actuals at the yearend are based on departmental reviews. So that's basically how we determine it. It's similar to what we mentioned with the Heritage fund. We estimate the amounts going into the Heritage fund for budgeting purposes at a \$7.6 million but the actual amount turns out to be something more or less every year. So thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I guess a similar for the increased under corporate and administrative costs, and it seems to be a million dollars lower now, and I know that's a couple years later for the prediction -- or the I guess estimate is a million dollars lower. And I'm just wondering if the Minister can speak to that as well, please. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this is -- this is certainly an area

where there are some estimations that need to take place in terms of what taxes will be owing at any particular time. You know, I would commit everyone to looking at the public accounts which is where you would see the reconciling of what amounts are estimated versus what action comes in. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sorry, which -- did you want me to -- did you have any further questions? Oh, okay. Well, I wasn't sure if you were done or not. Okay. Be more clear. Okay, thank you. Are there -- oh, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So the -- on page 157, asset retirement, there's a couple of new entries here. Something called "accretion." I don't even know what that means. And then amortization. Are these things going to be like annual ongoing charges or expenses of some sort? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There were -- both of these items relate to changes in the public sector accounting standards. Accretion is the present value of a future liability. And then of course amortization, a little more commonly seen in terms of understanding the value of assets. And this is something that will now be here going forward. It doesn't -- as I said, it's just the fact of having to account for these assets which wasn't being done before and we'll now see them going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. The short-term interest took a big jump from 2021 to the next couple years. Is -- is that because of our overspending on capital projects and the need to go to short-term borrowing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, the actuals in 2021 were lower than anticipated because of sustained low interest rates and -- but we shall be seeing, of course, where -- where the future of the economy goes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Is any of that, though, due to overspending on capital? Is that what -- part of this increase as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, Madam Chair, this isn't -- that's not really the relationship here. This is with respect to the values. Again, as I'm saying, it's related to the amount that comes in under actuals as compared to what is budgeted. We wound up spending less on insurance -- or I'm sorry, on interest than what was expected, again due to the good fortune of having low rates. But the budgeted value assumes something that will be higher based on the long end depending on what those rates are. Madam Chair, I can certainly perhaps direct it to the deputy minister, but I'm mindful of time. So I'll pause if there's another clarification, then I'll -- I'll send it there. Thanks.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just going to leave it at there.

I do want to turn, though, to accounting policies if I could, and I guess this is the section of the budget where this kind of stuff is actually set for how we do accounting and so on.

So in our entire budget for 2022-2023, there's not one reduction anywhere, and I'm actually looking at the main estimates that were now made available to the public. All of the schedules have been made available to the public as well. And there's not one reduction using the -- I guess the Department of Finance classifications anywhere in the budget. Why are we not making use of that category? Everything just kind of gets lumped under FMB approved adjustments or budget reallocations. Can I get an explanation, please? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would want to invite the deputy minister and then possibly Mr. Courtoreille. Again, I want to be mindful there's six minutes. But, you know, at the end of the day, it's how we're figuring -- it's ensuring that we're providing information about the total spending of the government. For example, there's a lot of sunsets. So programs that had certain dollars attached to them, and if those dollars that were restricted for a certain purpose come to an end, then they are sunsetted, and they may or may not see those dollars come back into that program or into that department. More often than not, there are other cost pressures that a department might be facing. So when the matter comes to the Financial Management Board and there's a recognition that, you know, for example -- I mean, it's the example that's come up

so I'm going to go ahead and use it. It's the example of OROGO where a request was made to review the functioning of that department. That review was done. It was determined that there was more allocated there than what was necessary. At the same time, the department knows it has year over year cost pressures where they're unable to meet targets or they're having to fund from within and so immediately we're able to say well, we know that there's money that we're going to take away from OROGO but we can add it to areas that have been traditionally underfunded.

So there's travel reductions in this budget, Madam Chair. There's -- you know, then that's -- you're seeing that show up under every single department. It -- it comes in as, you know, an FMB adjustment because it was something directed by the Financial Management Board, and it's an adjustment that happened outside of the main estimates process, and so it shows up as an FMB reduction. And -- yeah, thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I've been through the -- the schedules very carefully. There's not one reduction anywhere in the entire budget. So, you know, for somebody like me or for the -- someone from the public who looks at this, I just don't think that that's a very transparent or accurate way of reflecting what happened. You know, even the travel reductions are shown as budget -- sorry, other FMB approved adjustments. Like, that's just not an accurate way to display this for public or -- I don't know how accountants do it but that's not the way I would do it.

But can the Minister undertake to look at this and try to find a way to make this a little bit more transparent as part of our efforts to -- towards open government and so on to -- if there is a -- if there's a reduction that's been made, it should actually be shown as a reduction. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I -- yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So I'm -- again, the example here that's kind of coming to mind is the travel reductions and the -- the fact that that wasn't part of the main estimates process. It was agreed to -- you know, Madam Chair, I -- maybe I'll pause. Mindful of time. Let me send this over to Mr. Courtoreille who is sort of our resident accountant and see if he can provide some explanations as to how this was put together. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think I agree with the Member that it -- it could be presented differently for sure. And I -- I think with the added cost pressures that the government sees within its main estimate process, generally budgets are increasing. And agree with the Member that you're not seeing any -- any dollar amounts actually decrease necessarily. But in the case of the travel reduction, that was actually a reduction that was agreed to in the 2021-2022 budget, and it was agreed to through the SUP process. So what we had to do in terms of carrying that reduction forward to future years is we brought -- a paper forward to the Financial Management Board for their review and approval. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Yeah, I appreciate that. And if there's a way to show this stuff more accurately in the future, that's what I'm looking for. But on the issue of OROGO, it's clearly shown in the schedules as a budget reallocation and that's I just think a totally inaccurate way to treat and present a reduction in their budget. To characterize it as a budget reallocation just shows that -- if anybody looks at this and they just think, wow, independent -- they're not an independent regulator, they're just part of the Department of Justice. And they get -- their budget can be reduced, shuffled around, reallocated to other functions within the Department of Justice. It's not independent. It's just an arm of the Department of Justice. And I'm just going to leave it at that. I just think that that is a totally nontransparent, inaccurate presentation of that specific reduction. And I just -- I -- you know, I think it's disgraceful, quite frankly. So I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I listened today and, you know, I was trying to be very patient and I wasn't going to say anything but I just feel that -- it's not very often I agree with the Member on my left here but, you know, accountability and transparency is top priority for me and that's all I've lived for all my life, and figures are my thing. So with that, I just -- the first question that I want to -- is the internal audit bureau.

The internal audit bureau is the oversight for the office of -- in Finance in general and the office of the controller general. So I -- and that is \$1,189,000, which is, you know, looking after all the financial information throughout this whole government, and if there is any fraud or anything that's done, the funds there -- it's not much of an oversight when you -- when the funds are -- when you look at all the other things that go in -- on these columns. And to

me, the internal audit bureau is probably one of the most important lines on this -- on the -- on the program detail. And I know I asked a question in the mains about the -- the relationship with the internal audit bureau and how they -- if there was fraud given and happened and they investigated and they had to go to the RCMP and the RCMP always say that they -- they don't have enough staff for white collar crime and forensics. So I just want to know how that is dealt with, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this work is not done exclusively by the internal audit bureau. There is also the internal audit committee, which has five deputy ministers that sit on it. So there is a fair bit of effort across the GNWT that is involved. But in terms of the actual, you know, work that -- that does happen, I can say that the experience that -- that's been relayed to me on behalf of the comptroller general's office is that they have a good relationship in dealing with the RCMP. They also will, if there's a concern around there being assets that are put -- GNWT assets that are in jeopardy or allegations of corruption or other forms of fraud, then there's consultation done with labour relations, with Department of Justice legal counsel, and certainly, obviously, individual departments as may be necessary. Then, of course, contacting the RCMP, as I've said, has been thus far positive for our -- every time that that's come up. There's, you know -- [Audio] -- associated, a process involved, Madam Chair. And -- but it's not -- you know, it's not this line item alone that is -- that is responsible for that. It's a much more whole-of-government approach when it comes to dealing with fraud or the loss -- a potential loss of assets. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, the internal audit committee of five deputy ministers is part of the oversight for internal fraud within the Government of the Northwest Territories. Do you think that is appropriate and arm's length and neutral? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just want to make sure we're not talking about different things. I mean, there's the internal audit bureau and internal audit committee, which is looking at ensuring the, you know, risk management and functionality and, you know, propriety of processes within the Government

of the Northwest Territories. And then there's, you know, protection of -- of -- against corruption, fraud, and difficulty with assets. You know, so -- yeah, I mean, there's different things that are -- that are potentially going on here. And, yeah, I -- Madam Chair, the internal audit bureau does offer -- operate, you know, on its own and independently. The comptroller general's office, these are folks that have professional obligations as professional accountants, just as lawyers would have professional obligations under the Law Society. So I know there is work being done right now at the committee level to evaluate its composition, to include potentially an external member. But even independent of that, Madam Chair, the folks that are on that committee and the folks that work in the internal audit bureau are doing so at a high standard of professionalism and in keeping with their own professional obligations that they have to maintain their standards. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: So Madam Chair, so in the last, say, ten years, I'd like to know the -- how many cases have been reported and how many were expedited? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, cases of fraud? Yeah, Madam Chair, we can get that. I can make that commitment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: So you don't have -- Madam Chair, the information's not available now?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam chair, I do not have a ten year listing. I mean, I have details here about the expenditures over the last couple of years for the purposes of the budget. I do not have a ten-year listing of things committed or reported to the internal audit bureau.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Years then.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thanks, Madam Chair. I mean, again, I mean -- again, I don't have reports in front of me of audits -- or of -- sorry, of potential fraud. I have a couple of examples in mind.

But to be assured that I am not missing anything that's been reported -- they get reported every year. Whenever I've met with the Auditor General of Canada, in fact I'm asked expressly about that. So I don't have that with me tonight. But I can provide that to committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you for that commitment, Minister. Minister of Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Okay, so I want to go before my time runs out here regarding the interest on the Deh Cho Bridge. So every year we're paying about \$9 million just for the interest. What is the term of that agreement since it's a P3? Is it [Audio] years? Is it a hundred years? What is the term of that agreement?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right, deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The -- yeah, the end of the agreement is -- expires at 2046 is when we stop making payments on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: So I don't want to lose time here but I also want to ask about contract services. You know, the expenditure goes from double for this coming year. What does that entail? And the other question I want to ask is about the interest. There's -- there's an interest line there of expenditure of 20 million 462 and I want to know what that's -- that entails, those two, before my time ends.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The contract services change between main estimates and here, this is the change, the accounting standards that I've mentioned earlier shown up above under the asset retirement obligations. So that's -- you're seeing it here. This is put under the contract services category.

Madam Chair, I've just lost my finger on what the other item was. Maybe the deputy minister did not do that. So let me see if I could send it to him for the other question. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the first was as the Minister mentioned, there was a contract for increased adjustment to the liability count due to newly identified sites and reevaluation of existing environmental sites. So we were determining what the future liability were of those environmental sites.

And then the second was a -- we spent less than we expected to on credit consultation services. So those were services provided by people that give us advice on how best to borrow money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have any further questions, Member for Thebacha?

MS. MARTSELOS: No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the office of the comptroller general?

Seeing none, Finance, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$93,835,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we have information items on page 160 to 162. Are there any questions from Members on these -- can you just let me know how many of you want to ask questions on this? Okay. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So on the Heritage Fund on page 160, the legislation requires a ten-year review, and I think we're coming up to that pretty quickly. And that the ten-year review requires consideration of how to gather public input on potential expenditures from the Heritage Fund, independent oversight and management of the fund, special majority requirements for amendments to the act or transfers of the money and any other amendments that might be considered.

So I just would like to know what, if any, preparation the Department of Finance has done for the Heritage Fund Act review. And I guess I'm mindful of this because we contracted out the Heritage Fund management to a private bank. We don't do anything with it. It's basically just a bank account. So what, if any, preparation has the department done for this ten-year review? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, it was shifted over

to an independent bank to manage rather than being managed in house. You know, and not -- not to make -- not to be trite about it, but it -- you know, managing this size of a fund by the Department of Finance, that's not necessarily our expertise. Those in banking do better than me trying to manage my own investments, for example. So -- and it has done better. It has done better in terms of its return since being put out to a bank.

And in terms of the -- the review that is to take place, I believe that that will be at the first session after August 1st, 2022, if I'm not mistaken. I'll certainly correct myself at -- if I am. So that's -- it's coming but it's not here yet. The preparations are, you know -- I think the department's aware of it, but nothing formally has -- has come through yet. Obviously, we'll -- we'll put that information out as that date draws closer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I think the other thing that changed, as I recall, was the regulations under the -- the Heritage Fund Act would change to allow for a slightly more, small "L", liberal investment regime -- or criteria, because the fund was actually losing money against inflation, if you can believe that or not. And that was when rates were pretty low. But yeah, look, I was involved in making submissions around this when it was first set up ten years ago or more -- 12 years ago I think, and people at that time wanted some kind of public governance of it, some investment criteria, some accountability, and that's not what we got. So that's just a heads up to the Minister, that I expect that those will be main themes coming out of the -- into the ten-year review to try to get some greater accountability and oversight of these funds as they grow, as small as they are, you know, we're I guess up to, what, \$48 million after about 300 million -- 300 billion, I think, where dollars worth of diamonds have left the Northwest Territories. So it's not a great return or not a great nest egg to leave our future generations. But the ten year review's coming up quick. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I got.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. So I didn't hear any questions in there. Okay. Are there any further questions under the information items on page 160 to 162?

Seeing none. Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 137, and revenue summary pages -- there's revenue information on 138. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have one question. This is where that \$20 million in interest shows up again, which I believe is the total

interest we're paying on our \$1.6 or 7 billion in debt. Can I just get an updated figure on what our total debt servicing amount is? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I have a round number in my head, but let me see if the deputy minister has the exact number available, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the debt servicing is -- is around \$20 million, as the Minister mentioned, that's at 1.6 percent of the total budget, which is within our -- within the -- that's in compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy. As for the exact number, other than percent, I don't -- does Mr. Courtoreille have the number? No. Okay.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, maybe I'm wrong, I thought our debt servicing was \$50 million, but I could be wrong. Or no, maybe that's the cap. Anyways, could I just get a clarification.

So this line where it says "interest" is not true interest on the debt as we would interest and principal, it would be the total amount we are paying each year of debt servicing? Is this essentially the exact same figure as debt servicing even though it's called interest? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, let me direct that over to Mr. Courtoreille, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, this line item is interest only. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe can I just get a commitment to get back what the debt servicing number is, because I believe the financial responsibility policy is a limit on debt servicing. So, you know, it says \$20 million interest plus what we're paying the principal amount as, or however that works in public accounting terms, if we could get that figure back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I had a feeling that we weren't comparing the same things. We'll provide that breakdown; it's not a problem.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North. Nothing? Okay. Are there any further questions on the departmental summary? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask about the corporate income tax line here. You know, last year, we were going to pay corporations \$8.4 million for something, and then all of a sudden -- or by the year end, they're owing us \$24.5 million. How does that happen? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, if I am not mistaken, the -- the anticipate in the estimates -- right, that there, yeah. So in the main estimates, Madam Chair, in 2021-2022, it was certainly anticipated that there would not be as good a year for a lot of those entities that are paying corporate income taxes and so the assumption in terms of the estimates was that we would not be receiving as much from corporate income taxes. As it turned out, things were not quite as dire over the course of the year, and so that number has done obviously a little better than that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I think I heard, then, from the Minister that these are predictions made by CRA, Canada Revenue Agency. Do we give them any background information? Do we have any influence/input into how these projections are done? Because they don't seem to be very accurate. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this is information that is also -- there certainly is supporting information that comes from the Department of Finance's fiscal policy office, and -- I mean, simple fact is that in the last couple of years in particular, you'll -- if you look back to the 2021 Actuals, they're quite down around \$3 million. Again, there was a significant drop in -- in revenue across the board at the beginning of the pandemic and through the summer and spring, and that's again where, you know, with the volatility there, it was quite obvious that we were anticipating things to not recover as quickly as they did.

It is difficult to predict, Madam Chair, and the fact is that we have a fairly small -- at the end of the day, this is actually a very small number to be -- and a small number of payers from whom we're trying make those predictions. So they don't come out in the wash as they might if it was a larger economy with more people paying. It would kind of even itself out. That's not the economic situation that we are in. And companies that are doing poorly might well have been, you know, finding -- or looking at opportunities to -- to use, you know, past years credits in bad years in the last couple years. So all of which is to say it's difficult to predict, but we do certainly do our best between both ITI and Finance working on this and in conjunction with information with Canadian Revenue Agency. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, just I'm going to make a comment. We've got to find better ways to stabilize our revenues. If they bounce around like this like yo-yos, that's not good in terms of sound financial management. I raised this probably now five years in a row. We need to find other more stable forms of revenues other than corporate income tax, like a capital tax, resource tax, capital investment tax. There's other mixes that we need to be looking at to better stabilize our revenues. And I keep saying this and nobody listens. So I'll just say it again. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the total -- or the departmental summary?

Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call departmental summary Finance, operations expenditure, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$1,926 million -- where am I? That's the total. Sorry, my script is, like -- it's way too late. This is how I start to end the night every night, with a giggle.

Department summary, Finance, operation -- or sorry, yeah. Main Estimates, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$335,239,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed?

COMMITTEE MOTION 202-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 561-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2022-2023 - FINANCE - DEFERRAL
OF DEPARTMENT,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Finance at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion in order. To the -- yeah. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Consideration of Department of Finance 2023 -- 2022-2023 Main Estimates, operations expenditure, total department, is deferred.

--Carried

Thank you, Minister. Thank you to the witnesses. Thank you to the interpreters and all the staff that stayed late with us today to get this done.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

What is the wish of committee, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Tonight, thank you. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

--SHORT RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Order. May I please have the Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 23, 29, and 38; Committee Report 24-19(2); Minister's Statement 202-19(2); Tabled Document 561, 567, 578, and 579-19(2), and would like to report progress with two motions. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

--Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, March 11th, 2022, at 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to 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 Motions
16. Motions
 - Motion 50-19(2): Extended Adjournment of the House to March 28, 2022
17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 47: An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, No. 2
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Bill 38, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021
 - Committee Report 24-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report
 - Minister's Statement 202-19(2), Annual Status Report on the Mandate of the

Government of the Northwest Territories,
2019-2023

- Tabled Document 561-19(2), 2022-2023
Main Estimates
- Tabled Document 567-19(2), Annual Status
Report – 2019-2023 Mandate of the
Government of the Northwest Territories,
February 2021-January 2022 of the
Government of the Northwest Territories,
2019-2023
- Tabled Document 578-19(2), Supplementary
Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No.
3, 2021-2022
- Tabled Document 579-19(2), Supplementary
Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3,
2021-2022

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House
stands adjourned until Friday, March 11th, 2022, at
10 a.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

