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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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(Frame Lake)

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(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

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Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
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Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

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Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 18, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, 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 Finance.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 268-19(2):
2023-2024 CAPITAL ESTIMATES

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates, which uses a revised approach in budgeting that better aligns the GNWT's planned spending with actual project delivery. Overall, the proposed capital estimates include \$328 million in total spending, comprised of \$292.5 million in departmentally managed capital, and \$35.5 million for Housing NWT.

Over the last nine years, the GNWT has proposed capital plans averaging \$405 million per year but the actual average spend was only \$226 million per year. Put simply, the GNWT does not have the capacity to develop all of the projects we have been putting into the capital budget for the past few years, nor can the Northwest Territories' economy supply the labour and materials necessary to build assets on the schedule and scale proposed in previous GNWT capital plans. This creates unrealistic expectations among residents and communities, does not encourage good planning, and necessitates an unnecessarily large borrowing plan. This revised approach puts a \$260 million funding cap on departmental capital spending beginning in 2023-2024, and brings the capital budget closer in line with the actual expectations. Infrastructure contributions for community governments and funding for Housing NWT are not included in this cap.

As part of this process, we asked departments to go through their planned investments and

reassess what can actually be accomplished within this new funding cap and recognize that previously approved cost estimates and timelines of projects that have not advanced are now dated and will need to be revisited. This approach was reviewed by an interdepartmental working group and the new assistant deputy ministers working committee tasked with overseeing the capital planning process. Going forward, any new project estimates being proposed by departments will be reviewed by a peer review committee, which will provide technical oversight on project planning.

In some instances, we adjusted our investment timeline to move some projects back to the planning stage on the recommendations of the assistant deputy ministers review committee. Once unresolved issues that may have been delaying these projects are addressed, these projects will come back through the annual capital planning process for inclusion in the capital plan. We are moving, not cancelling, previously approved projects from long-term planning and have included \$8.7 million in the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates to assist with further project scoping and design such as the Great Bear River Bridge currently proposed as part of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Colville Lake school, and a number of long-term care facilities. In short, projects that have lingered on the books, but are not advancing, will now see a better focus placed on problem-solving and planning so that they can in fact be ready to advance.

We are transforming our capital budgeting to encourage sound planning and refocus on projects that will be delivered. Our stronger emphasis on sound planning will also benefit local industries and businesses by allowing them to realistically plan to help deliver GNWT projects. To be clear, funding for smaller capital projects typically delivered by local businesses was not impacted by the \$260 million cap in the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates. This includes small capital projects, retrofits and biomass funding, funding for highway bridges, culverts and chip sealing, and information management and technology

equipment, as well as deferred maintenance. What has changed is that the more rigorous planning process for large capital projects will help businesses be assured that large capital projects proposed in the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates are truly ready to be built.

Our capital planning process is guided by a process handbook that prioritizes projects based on the protection of people, assets, the environment, and financial investments. Our needs list includes all the projects we envision for our future and reflects our priorities, combined with a long-term vision that extends well beyond any single Legislative Assembly. The additional funding included in the capital budget for planning and design will help decision-makers evaluate when projects should be included in the capital estimates for review and approval by this House.

This more realistic approach to capital planning provides a more accurate borrowing plan and more transparency with the Fiscal Responsibility Policy. The policy requires that at least half of GNWT capital investments are financed by an operating surplus. When capital budgets are larger than what can be delivered, we end up approving a borrowing plan that is too high for our needs which, in turn, sends a negative signal to financial stakeholders, and the users of the information that is published in our budgets.

Mr. Speaker, the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates align realistic spending and achievable timelines and continue to advance mandate priorities agreed to by the 19th Legislative Assembly. The new approach that resulted in these proposed estimates will encourage fulsome planning, support more realistic fiscal management and, importantly, focus attention and accountability where it should be - on the delivery of those projects that are in fact shovel ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 269-19(2):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES UPDATE

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to this House, and residents of the NWT, on the progress we are making to transform the child and family services system to better serve children, youth, families, and communities. We want to create a system that provides services that are culturally safe and anti-racist.

Initiatives under the 2019-2021 Quality Improvement Plan are helping us reach that goal. I want to share a few details from the annual report of the director of child and family services, which I will table later today. Prevention services now account for 50 percent of all the services delivered. The Family Preservation Program has continued to expand throughout the NWT and now supports 86 families. A total of 75 percent of children who receive services remain in their home while a further 17 percent remain in their home community. Foster placements are being replaced with family placements, primarily extended family.

Mr. Speaker, that doesn't mean our job is done. Indigenous children continue to be overrepresented for both prevention and protection. Much of the need in this area is driven by poverty and housing insecurity. Access to safe housing, mental wellness supports, recreational opportunities, and pre- and post-natal care are the building blocks to support families and communities.

Another area of concern flagged in the director's report is youth in permanent care of the director who age out of the Extended Support Services Agreement. In the last fiscal year, only 23 percent of youth chose to continue services that would help them to transition to adulthood following their 19th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, these changes are possible because of our robust Quality Improvement Plan. A few of the plan's highlights include:

- 56 new positions focused on frontline capacity, family preservation, placement services, supervisory support, as well as training and cultural safety;
- Creating and filling two positions to support the integration of principles of cultural safety and anti-racism as part of the child and family services reform;
- Developing and implementing the Family Preservation Program I just referred to. This program provides families with wraparound support and promotes family unity and well-being. It also includes new funding to hire family preservation workers in every region of the NWT; and finally,
- Expanding prevention support offered to expectant parents throughout the pre- and post-natal periods.

Mr. Speaker, the need for system reform has long been in play to begin addressing the

impacts of colonization within the child and family services policies and practices. The department, and the health and social services authorities, recognize that Indigenous voices must guide the process of reconciliation within child and family services. Our goal is to acknowledge their experiences and answer their calls for a more culturally safe and anti-racist approach to the delivery of child and family services. We will also continue to work with Indigenous governments and communities by sharing information, keeping an open dialogue about service delivery, and supporting Indigenous governments in planning for children and youth.

The Standing Committee on Social Development's Report on the Child and Family Services Act called on all of us to work together to provide a broader continuum of care to meet the needs of children, youth, and families in the Northwest Territories. That is a goal I wholeheartedly share. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1182-19(2): RESPONSE TO HAY RIVER FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Disaster Assistance Policy was established for a reason; that being, to provide financial support to those impacted by natural disasters that may not be covered through standard insurance policies. The flooding in Hay River is one of those occurrences where that financial support was required, and that support has been well received and appreciated by residents and business owners.

Mr. Speaker, it has now been several months since flooding occurred in Hay River. As we know, many residents have been displaced from their homes, with many continuing to live in temporary accommodations. – this is extremely difficult for many and more so for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, some residents are in commercial accommodations while others chose to be with family or friends. Due to a shortage of contractors, untimely processes, and communication issues around DAP claims, some residents are concerned that they may be unable to return to their homes before next summer, or the summer after.

Mr. Speaker, residents say they continue to wait on clear answers from this government on home replacement, home repairs, and mitigation solutions. They are finding the requirement to jump through ever-changing government policy, rules, and forms, is causing additional stress and worry. Mr. Speaker, it is not just the residents, but also the contractors and local suppliers that are facing additional issues such as labour and material shortage which is not unique to the NWT. Impacted residents are waiting extended periods for quotes from contractors. Contractors are just too busy to quote and do not want to give false hope to residents that work can get started.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that prior to the damage caused by flooding, many of the local contractors had a full slate of work on their plate. The addition of taking on flood damage remediation forced each to refocus and rearrange existing work which will result in some government and private projects falling behind.

Mr. Speaker, what is required from this government is additional support for the pathfinders, professional services, technical support, and access to contractors. We must streamline the process to move remediation of homes along. As winter approaches, it is time for the Minister of MACA and his staff to visit Hay River to hear ongoing concerns from those impacted by the flood. He needs to provide reassurance to the residents and businesses that his department is listening and willing to take the necessary steps support remediation efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1183-19(2): BARGING SERVICES TO NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to the issue of barging services in Nunakput riding. Since the GNWT, Mr. Speaker, has taken over barging six years ago, our communities continue to be at risk of barge schedule and weather, and they always run out of supplies in the communities which is costing our community members more to fly in materials off the airplane and whatever is needed.

Mr. Speaker, the barge schedule is set every year. So why are the community resupplies not the first priority to be complete? Why do our communities consistently wait to the end of

shipping season and hope their supplies will arrive? The GNWT, Mr. Speaker, is a public servant. We are all public servants that serve the people of the Northwest Territories, and the people of the Northwest Territories should be put first.

This year in Nunakput, communities of Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok that we got barges got in but the month prior to the month and a half prior to that they were flying in flat Pampers because the store shelves were obsolete. They were deleted. And so is the government willing to see if we could do some sort of -- if the people were to bring back a receipt from airline or something like that to help the residents of those two communities that had great bare expense to try to survive, are they willing to come and work with us to get funding back to the people that had to pay so much?

Mr. Speaker, does the Department of Infrastructure not establish a schedule in collaboration with the communities' leadership when coming up in the next weeks to come. It arrives in the community and meets the needs of the residents.

In October 2018, while shelves in the communities were depleting, MTS cancelled the barge resupply in Paulatuk. This year we're good to catch it. Ice was impassable. The mayor of Paulatuk at the time, the community was never given clear delivery dates besides the original forecast, and the barge arrived early September. And while the barge did not arrive that season, Mr. Speaker, it was late. The residents bore the whole cost of buying supplies for the community. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1184-19(2):
INCOME ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC
HOUSING

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the vicious cycle a person must go through to remain in public housing, or their rental home, is often enough to make anyone's head spin. Often I hear about housing clients in arrears that receive no help. Their income support is insufficient, and they are subjected to overly rigorous and often invasive data collection. Income assistance clients living in our government-funded housing still cannot afford to live, or ever get

ahead, as any income, help, or gift-in-kind, lowers the amount of money they will receive down the line, and then they cannot afford to pay for food or other items. Mr. Speaker, you can't even win a small Bingo jackpot on income assistance without that being deducted from your next cheque; Something that hardly seems worth the administrative burden it creates.

I have to wonder, has the cost benefit analysis been done to see if the amount of money saved is more than the administrative cost it takes to go after an elder in Deline for attending a bingo. As the Premier said yesterday, people are in situations where choices must be made between food and paying their bills.

Basing current rent on the previous year's income makes no sense, and rent based on affordability and current living situation is what a person needs. If clients have arrears, they have difficulty getting caught up. The couch surfing homeless are generally those on the GNWT housing waitlist. If they stay with family who resides in a public housing unit, that family member is then penalized for the additional income of the couch surfer and the rent is increased. Why? They are covering a gap in service as this government does not have enough housing for all residents that need it. This causes overcrowding and unhealthy living arrangements, a burden to the family member that is only trying to help and yet we find it acceptable to charge them more for this.

Cabinet's response is always people can appeal decisions made by the departments. However, many are unaware of their rights to ask for a reassessment or an appeal. Plus, this all takes time, mental energy, and resources these already marginalized clients cannot easily access or afford. They are afraid of engaging with government offices as they ask for help and are made to feel like a burden and not worthy of government time or money. Often people describe their interactions with the GNWT as being made to feel like, quote, "a criminal or a beggar", and I have to ask how does that fit into our 19th Assembly priority of truth and reconciliation? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is that it doesn't. And nothing that is being said by this Assembly is more than lip service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1185-19(2):
HUMAN RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1948, the right to adequate housing was made part of the United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The right to adequate housing is relevant to all nations, and all members of the international community have ratified at least one treaty, declaration, plans of action, or a conference committing themselves to the right of adequate housing.

The United Nation's committee on economic, social and cultural rights has underlined the right to adequate housing should not be interpreted narrowly. Instead, it should be seen as a right to live somewhere in security, peace, and dignity. Mr. Speaker, in case you're wondering why I'm citing international treaties in our territorial legislature, I'm doing my best to impress the importance of the rights to housing in this government. I spent the opening days of our legislative sitting bringing real and personal stories of my constituents' struggles with inadequate housing and in barriers put up by inflexible policies, decisions, that undermines their ability to live in secure, peace, and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, the mandate of this government has modest goals for housing that are entirely achievable. The mandate promised to increase the stock of quality, energy efficient, affordable housing, especially for vulnerable people, by 100 units over a four-year period. In a transition, 100 individual families to income to homeownership has been three years since these commitments were made and, by the GNWT's own math, 75 percent of these targets should have been met.

It will be foolish not to acknowledge that unprecedented global pandemic and subsequent economic downturn has affected this work. But for the Minister, who I will remind stated not too long ago "housing is my passion", housing should be the first and foremost priority of existing resources, not to mention the federal government has been generous in affording billions of dollars towards national housing infrastructure programs. \$30 million has been received by the GNWT to build homes and support local housing strategies for the first year and the next fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's no shortage of resources that could make a difference in the lives of my communities. Instead, I see serious lack of political will to push harder than ever before to ensure our

people have access to homes that allow them to live in secure, peace, and dignity. Mr. Speaker, this challenge would not be so great if there were more collaboration at the regional and community level. Of course, I'm speaking about partnership with Indigenous governments, both settled and unsettled, that are far better to equipped to determine their own housing needs and implement resources to build and repair homes. The current approach seems to be keeping this money and putting it through the policy rigor at Housing NWT where we know, for the last 50 years, there are red tape barriers to assisting homeowners even today. Instead, why does the Minister not consider reallocating these critical funds that are \$30 million from Canada for the next two years with no strings attached through a contribution agreement with Indigenous governments and housing programs and strategies immediately? This way we have insurance that the resources are getting to the ground and being used effectively to promote and provide for adequate and affordable housing in Indigenous communities.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to find solutions to problems, and what I have learned is that sometimes less government is better option when faced with poor track record of the learning results for the last 50 years of the Housing NWT. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for, at the appropriate time, mahsi, for the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1186-19(2):
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know the saying squeaky wheel gets its grease? Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there's enough grease available for your wheels, my wheels, the Minister of Infrastructure wheels, Member for Nunakput's wheels, and many of our constituents who travel the Dempster Highway from the Beaufort Delta.

Mr. Speaker, the Dempster Highway is the lifeline, as I said in this House many times, for Inuvik and the Beaufort Delta. The highway is so well used by our people that it's one of the main things that brings all our necessities to the North, from food, energy, building materials, to tourism, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of living in the North is already high. High costs are unfortunately a

part of living because of our remoteness. But we as a government have a duty to do everything we can do to drive down costs for our residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon portion of the Dempster Highway is the worst conditions we have seen. I've heard from many constituents and many of other constituents from the region that, from the corner to the border, it's horrible. It's horrible, it's horrible, it's horrible. And when it rains, don't even bother trying if you don't have 4-by-4.

There's also been multiple long closures that are not only on the winter road due to weather but landslides and damages to bridges, just to name a few, that left the closure for days this summer.

Mr. Speaker, companies are now starting to charge extra to drive up that road, and those costs are being passed on to my constituents and your constituents and the many other constituents of the Beaufort Delta. This means higher costs for food, groceries, energy - everything that comes up that road.

Mr. Speaker, today I will be asking the appropriate Minister, which would probably be the Minister of Infrastructure, what our government is doing to push the Yukon government to do its part in terms of maintaining the Dempster Highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1187-19(2):
INCOME SUPPORT POLICIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot predict when and where the next pandemic will occur, but I believe we should have learned some lessons from the past pandemic to protect the vulnerable people. First, let me begin with the financial support.

We all heard stories, all of us heard stories, about people having to pay back emergency and recovery payments received from the federal government during the pandemic. We also heard stories about people who received federal COVID support dollars and became ineligible to receive territorial or provincial income assistance. Mr. Speaker, it does not seem right that we create hardship after we have come through a pandemic.

The federal COVID support was not meant to replace the territorial income assistance, yet it

seems that both the federal and the territorial government want to claw money back and save ongoing assistance payments. Mr. Speaker, we can do better and create support programs focusing on those in need. We can avoid this boom and bust effect and allow for respectful pay schedules and accurate information. We cannot punish people with low incomes for having received assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I heard of confusion between a loan and income. I hear that if the federal COVID support, like CERB, has to be paid back, then it should be considered a loan. And if it is being paid back, it cannot be considered income and count towards territorial income support assessment. Mr. Speaker, doing both punishes our most vulnerable. The federal government requests the repayment of COVID support while the territorial government considers the received amount as income when determining income assistance eligibility. Mr. Speaker, I can have a unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, we need to focus on how our income support program works and improve them to avoid people getting poorer and becoming homeless. Mr. Speaker, we need to help the clients. Mr. Speaker, good intention do not always lead to good results. We see people unable to pay their rent, falling behind in utility payments, and sliding into food insecurity because on the one hand the federal government requires repayment; on the other hand, the territorial government seems to consider past federal COVID support in assessing eligibility for income support. I will have question for the Minister of education at appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1188-19(2):
LIQUOR LICENSING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of reviewing things is to eventually do something. And we have conducted a What We Heard report on the Liquor Act. We now have a report with a number of recommendations. And so my question to the Minister of Finance is when are we actually going to make some changes?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware that there is probably no issue more divisive in this House than alcohol. We have communities with literal prohibition in this territory, Mr. Speaker. So it's fair to say that some of us aren't going to

agree with how to approach this. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Finance has at least tried, and I commend her on her efforts. The department did the report, they collected a wide variety of opinions, and they came to some sort of compromise.

Heaven forbid I was ever the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, because I would throw that report in the garbage, and I would bring forth my own changes to the Liquor Act which would allow many things that the department wasn't willing to do. But I also know that another Minister of Finance might go in a completely opposite direction. So it's on this Minister while she has that portfolio to bring changes forward, Mr. Speaker, to actually get something done.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few things in the report that I -- recommendations that I was quite happy to see. They recommend removing the prohibition on the sale of alcohol on election day. You might have noticed there was the usual 100-person lineup at the liquor store yesterday in Yellowknife. Many people going through withdrawal, their symptoms already been there, because we had made it illegal to sell alcohol for almost 48 hours in Yellowknife. I think this is cruel and completely unnecessary and archaic law. Gladly the Minister's recommendation was to get rid of that. We'll have to talk to our authorities and rules about getting rid of it in the Elections and Plebiscites Act, but it's a step.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the report recommended allowing special event permits to be granted them yearlong. Folk on the Rocks has been selling beer for 40 years and every year there's this deadline where they're unsure whether they're going to get their licence. I think we can just give them a special event permit, Mr. Speaker.

There was a number of other changes, Mr. Speaker, allowing manufacturing facilities to set up a hospitality area. I know if you start a brewery, one of the key ways you actually make money is being able to sell beer at that brewery, which is currently prohibited, Mr. Speaker. That being said, we have a stack of changes, some require legislation, some can be done right now. My question for the Minister of Finance is what is she going to accomplish with the Liquor Act in this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1189-19(2):
EDUCATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to note yesterday's incident during oral questions to the Minister of Education of his claim that everyone goes through university and his claim that he's a lawyer; his dad's a lawyer; I don't know how many others he would have referred to, and the biggest thing is all of Cabinet applauded him. This was during my statement of the plight of education in the small communities.

Many times I've said I have those lived experiences; I'm from a small community. Education levels are dismal. I've been at this since 2019.

I don't know if the education minister would like to apologize to all the small community students who achieve to even try to get out of grade 12 with a grade 12 level so that they can attend university. And many do. We have leaders, many leaders who go to make speeches and tell them to follow their dreams, you know, their dreams is as high, their success is as high as you want it to be. They're naive. They don't know that. They can't make that dream a reality. And I've stated that many times.

There is a big problem in our communities with education. It's being ignored by this government. We need some actions happening to improve education in our small communities, and we need action now.

As I speak passionately about this education in the small communities, the Minister's not from a small community. He doesn't know. He's young yet. You know, he hasn't been around the block in Education for very long. We've been trying to educate him, to work with him. But I'm just getting brash answers and it's constantly, and a lot of showboating lately.

So I'll have a question -- maybe a question for the Minister of Education at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1190-19(2):
REGIONAL STUDY UNDER THE
MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT ACT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In June 2021, the Tlicho government wrote to the federal Minister of Northern Affairs requesting a regional study for the area known

as the Slave Geological Province pursuant to part 5.2 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It took some prodding in May, June, but the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources supported the idea of a proposed regional study including participant funding. The review board held a workshop on a regional study in June 2022, and there is further correspondence on its website on this matter, including an interesting letter from GNWT.

I support such a regional study and wrote to the federal Minister of Northern Affairs on July 15th. That was a table I -- or the letter I tabled yesterday in the Assembly, and I recommended that a better name for this initiative be developed to avoid the colonial underpinnings of the name associated with this area; at a minimum, the historical range of the Bathurst caribou range within the NWT and Nunavut needs to be used; a regional study should be conducted by an independent group with representation from both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut; engagement with all interested parties to develop goals, principles, alternatives, scenarios, evaluation criteria, consideration of opportunity costs and trade-offs and modeling; cumulative effects assessment and intergenerational equity should be part of any regional study; results of any regional study need to be implemented through land use planning and subsequent project assessments; and, finally, there needs to be sufficient participant funding for Indigenous governments and civil society to bring added value to the process.

I will have questions for the Minister of Lands later today on what the GNWT position is on a regional study and how this government intends to engage residents and regular MLAs in putting forward any positions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1191-19(2):
EULOGY FOR THERESE BERTRAND

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Therese Bertrand was born on March 1st, 1934, at Fisherman Lake. Her parents were Marie Angele and Laurent Deneron. She passed away on May 22nd, 2022, at the age of 88. Therese was raised at Fisherman Lake in the springtime, and during the fall, her parents and siblings spent time on the land in Yunaa, also called "across the river".

She met her husband Phillip Bertrand in 1949 when she was 15 years old. They moved to Maxhamish where they raised their nine children.

Therese was brought up in the traditional Dene lifestyle by lakes with lots of fish, birds, animals with her parents and siblings. Phillip and Therese raised their own children the same way, making sure that their children were taught these same skills.

She was known for being ready and willing to help her children with the task of providing and help looking after her children when needed. As it could be seen, she loved each and every one of them.

Therese Dene's name was Amah. Everyone called her that. The family tells a story that one day she heard a knock on her door. When she opened it, there was an RCMP member there, and he asked her, Amah, where is so and so. She replied in Slavey saying he was over there. The RCMP stood and replied, Mashi, Amah. As the member left her house, she turned to the visitor and said, I have a lot of people call me Amah, but I did not know I had a son who was an RCMP member. They both laughed. But that was how people thought of her. She will always be remembered for her bannock, dry fish, dry meat, and tea she would share when people come to visit her. On top of the great food, she would tell stories and share her laughter with them. As well, she had an amazing sense of humour which people still hold on in their hearts.

Therese was predeceased by her parents, husband, five brother, four sisters, one son, and two daughters. She leaves behind one brother, one daughter, six sons, and many grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and other nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, she will be forever missed by her surviving family and friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community. Members' statements. Member for Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1192-19(2):
EULOGY FOR TOM WILLIAMS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour former deputy minister and public servant Tom Williams who lost his battle with cancer just this past August. Born and raised in the Northwest Territories, Tom dedicated his life to the North and was a

well-respected member of every community he lived in. Tom started his career in the public service over 30 years ago as a personnel officer in Inuvik. As a proud Metis, Tom earned respect from Indigenous people and leadership across the North.

In 2001, he was appointed Chief Operating Officer of the Gwich'in Tribal Council where he spent seven years advancing priorities of the Gwich'in people and supporting leadership.

In 2008, Tom accepted the position of associate deputy minister for the Department of Human Resources. In August 2009, Tom was promoted to deputy minister of Human Resources with the Government of the Northwest Territories, a long journey from the personnel officer position that first brought him to public service.

Tom was appointed as deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs in 2011 and in September 2016 became the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation where he would end his storied career serving residents of all 33 communities.

I remember working with Tom when I was the housing minister and the incredible work we got done during that time. I will miss him.

Mr. Speaker, Tom was not only a dedicated public servant but a family man who cared deeply about those closest to him, especially his grandchildren who he talked about often.

He also loved hockey and invested his free time over the years in the hockey rink coaching youth across the Northwest Territories the game of hockey. He was also a goaltender who played until his knees just wouldn't let him anymore, this after almost 48 years between the pipes.

Tom has left a lasting legacy on the Northwest Territories and is an example of just what one can do with hard work and dedication. Mr. Speaker, Tom Williams will be missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Pam and the family, also his many friends that he had throughout the Northwest Territories. I remember when Tom was our CEO at the Gwich'in Tribal Council, and it's like we became a big family at the time, you know, over the years. He'll be greatly missed by many. Mahsi.

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colleagues, I'm pleased to recognize the oral health professionals from the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Department of Health and Social Services. They're in Yellowknife for an oral health conference to increase their knowledge in health promotion and preventative services. We have with us today, Adama Stevens from Inuvik, Julia Erasmus from Fort Simpson, Valerie Herring from Fort Smith, Travy Bowser, Lana de Bastiani, and Zoe Ignacio-Pacunayen, and Meagan Smith working out of Yellowknife. Thank you for all the work you do, and thank you for joining us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize Julia Erasmus. Her parents live across, and I've had the pleasure of knowing Julia for a long time. She did a lot of dental work with my kids. Not saying they had dental problems, but.

As well, MaryJane Cazon, our translator who speaks Dene Zhatie here, as well Jamie Koe, deputy minister for Lands, as well Pam. Thank you very much for being here. Sorry about your loss. Tommy was an amazing individual and when we'd talk about being in his pipes, he'd always sit there and laugh at me and say, you're never ever gonna score a goal on me. And then he'd just sit there and laugh at me as the puck would go in his gloves. So thank you for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a Range Lake constituent and the wife of Tom Williams, Ms. Pamela Williams and his daughter Aurora. My heart is with you. And call me if you need me.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize my constituent and neighbour Lana de Bastiani, and I appreciate that the Minister said your name because I don't know that I would have been able to pronounce it properly. And I'd also like to recognize Natalie Preston with the CBC

who has been here with us this week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Ms. Pam Williams and her daughter Aurora as well too. And my work with Tom as well and looking at what we created and what we're working towards within the portfolio is his legacy. People of the Northwest Territories was his priority, and we continue to work within that mandate. Mahsi for his work, and mahsi for being here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Welcome. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying our proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience with us. Mahsi.

Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 33-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 52 - ELEVATORS AND LIFTS ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Report on Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act. Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is pleased to provide the Report on Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act, and commends it into the House.

Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, Bill 52 Elevators and Lifts Act.

Introduction

Bill 52 Elevators and Lifts Act is the creation of a stand-alone Act aimed to align the NWT legislation with other jurisdictions. Bill 52 deals with regulation of the installation, use of, inspection of, elevating devices, including lifts and amusement rides.

Engagement Process

The bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (committee) on May 31st, 2022. Public notices were provided to solicit

comments on the bill. None were received. Committee held a public hearing and clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister and departmental officials on September 28th, 2022.

Committee Concerns

Section 68 of the bill describes a report to be provided to the Minister from the chief inspector. Committee is concerned that the details of this report are vague and there is no requirement that the report would be publicly available. During the public hearing held on the bill, the Minister agreed that the annual report should be made available to the public and that all the contents and details would be prescribed in the regulations.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT make the report as described in section 68 of the Act publicly available including details not limited to number of permits issued and in good standing, number of approvals, orders issued, prosecutions and fines, and inspections, etc.

Section 13 of the Act describes the registry content. The bill outlines committee was concerned about the lack of clarity around the type of information collected in the registry, and how it may be made publicly available. During the review of the bill, it was stated that there is already a registry in place and plans are being developed to make it public. The Minister also committed to share draft regulations with committee to implement the new legislation.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT proactively disclose the information contained in the registry described in section 13 of the Act by making it publicly available without any fees for access.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act. Committee would like to thank the Minister and

departmental officials in committee's review of the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE
REPORT 33-19(2) AND MOVE INTO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the honourable Member from Deh Cho, that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report, Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act, to be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Report on Bill 52 will be moved into Committee of the Whole.

Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE REPORT 34-19(2):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2020-
2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OMBUD

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud and commends it to the House.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud.

The Ombud Act requires the Ombud to prepare an annual report. The report includes information on the number of inquiries and complaints received. It can also include recommendations. The Speaker tables the report in the Legislative Assembly. Once tabled, the committee reviews the report. As part of the review the Ombud, Ms. Colette Langlois, appeared before committee on February 11, 2022.

The committee commends her user-friendly approach in her annual report. The strong visuals, plain language, and ample statistics provided an excellent template to understand the Ombud's activities. The committee report follows up on previous recommendations from the Ombud and from committee to improve the Ombud Act – work that the Government of the Northwest Territories has declined to pursue in the life of the 19th Assembly.

The committee also makes two substantive recommendations in this report:

- First, that the GNWT review and amend the Ombud Act by Fall 2025; and,
- Second, that the Speaker amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Assembly to allow annual reports of statutory officers to be made available to the public sooner. The committee is pleased to submit this report to the Legislative Assembly and looks forward to its earnest consideration.

I'll now pass it over to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In October 2020, the Speaker tabled the Ombud's first-ever annual report for 2019-20. The Ombud's report made 14 for legislative changes to the Act. The recommendations were informed by:

- The Ombud's review of legislation in other jurisdictions;
- The advice she received from other Ombuds and legal professionals; and,
- The issues that arose when responding to individual complaints in her first year in the role.

The Ombud made her recommendations "with the intent of ensuring that my office is fully enabled to fulfill the purpose and vision with which the Legislative Assembly created it."

Committee endorsed many of the Ombud's recommendations in our subsequent review report. That report was tabled in May 2021 and discussed in Committee of the Whole.

The Legislative Assembly ultimately adopted seven motions that recommended changes to the Act. At the time, Members hoped that the GNWT would put forward amending legislation in the remaining two years of the 19th

Assembly. In this regard, the GNWT's November 2021 response was disappointing. The GNWT agreed to reconsider certain recommendations but only in the context of "full review".

On other recommendation, the GNWT expressed caution or reluctance for future consideration. The GNWT ultimately declined to pursue any legislative changes in the life of the 19th Assembly, determining that the timing would be "more appropriate" in the 20th Assembly. However, the GNWT has not committed to pursue changes to the 20th Assembly either. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Previous recommendations still stand. Some are high priority

At her February 2021 appearance before committee, the Ombud confirmed that the outstanding recommendations in her first 2019-2020 Annual Report are still relevant. She reported that "the recommendations really haven't changed" and that she would "certainly repeat them before the end of her mandate to ensure they are still on the record." The committee believes it is important to reiterate the Ombud's recommendations, as long as they remain unimplemented, before the end of her mandate.

Her recommendations for changing the Ombud Act are:

1. Broaden the definition of "authorities" to include territorial government offices that are excluded from the current schedules.
2. Include the authorities created under the Human Rights Act in the schedule.
3. Remove references to "judicial review" in section 17.
4. Amend subsection 17(2) to remove the requirement that the Ombud consider whether a complainant's failure to exercise a right of appeal or objection was "unreasonable" before accepting a complaint.
5. Replace subsection 17(3) with a provision that authorizes the Ombud to investigate matters that occurred before into force of the Act, without any limitation period.

6. Remove the reference to the director of human rights from section 23.
7. Amend subparagraph 22(1)(g)(i) so that it applies before an investigation as well as during the course of the investigation.
8. Amend paragraph 22(2)(a) to remove the requirement for the Ombud to notify the authority any time the Ombud refuses to investigate a complaint.
9. Replace section 29 with a provision similar to subsection 25(7) of the Ombudsman Act (Saskatchewan) to remove potential barriers to investigating some complaints where complainants cannot provide written consent to disclosure of their information, or where third party information is required.
10. Amend the Act to include a new provision ensuring that authorities are permitted to provide information to the Ombud voluntarily.
11. Amend the Act to include a new provision preventing the disclosure of information originating from the Office of the Ombud.
12. Remove the requirement for the Ombud's policies and procedures to comply with administrative policies of the clerk.
13. Replace the term "authority" with a term that would be more recognizable to members of the public.
14. Revise subsection 15(1) for clarity.

In her remarks, the Ombud placed the highest priority on recommendations dealing with her jurisdiction to investigate complaints. This topic corresponds to recommendations number 1 through 6.

The Ombud's jurisdictional recommendations are important because they impact the public and whether they can make a complaint.

I'll now pass it over to MLA Semmler. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: The Ombud described several ways the Act, as it is written now, prevents the public from making complaints and why this is problematic:

1. Housing Associations

The Act allows the Ombud to investigate housing authorities but not housing associations. In practice, this means the Ombud can investigate a public housing complaint from a tenant Yellowknife (Sombaa K'e) but not the same complaint from a tenant in Fort McPherson (Teet'it Zheh) or in the other ten communities where the local housing organization is defined as an association. The jurisdictional restriction on investigating housing associations raises an equity of access issue. Residents in certain generally smaller communities are unable to request investigations and pursue remedies to matters related to their local housing association.

Committee wants to see this equity of access issue resolved as soon as possible.

2. NWT Rental Office

The Ombud reported that she has heard concerns about the NWT Rental Office but she cannot substantiate those concerns because the Act leaves out the NWT Rental Office from her jurisdiction. A number of other offices also fall outside of her jurisdiction: The Assessment Appeals Tribunal, the Social Assistance Appeal Board, and the Staffing Appeals Officer, among others.

The Ombud indicated that the NWT's Ombud Act "is an outlier, in terms of legislation, across Canada. Everyone else has a broader provision." This means that NWT residents have less scope to seek administrative fairness in government administration and services compared with other Canadians.

Committee wants to see Northerners' complaints treated the same way as they would be in other provinces and territories.

3. Temporal Jurisdiction.

The Act restricts the Ombud from investigating matters that occurred before January 1, 2016. This restriction has, in practice, prevented the Ombud from launching investigations into some complaints. The Ombud has reported that complainants found the cut-off "arbitrary and unfair" and "hard to accept." This means that complainants who may have experienced a historical unfairness cannot access a remedy through the Ombud's office. The committee wants to ensure that all substantiated complaints from Northerners are investigated regardless of when the matter occurred.

Recommendations

The committee finds that the Ombud's recommendations to amend the Ombud Act well researched and aligned with statutory

standards elsewhere. The recommendations have merit and should be considered for implementation with the shortest delay. The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and within the first two years of the 20th Assembly, review each of the Ombud's recommendations in her 2019-2020 Annual Report in the context of a holistic review of the Ombud Act and amend the Act accordingly. The committee also encourages the Ombud to convey the continued relevance of outstanding recommendations in each of the annual reports.

I will now pass it over to the Member for Yellowknife North. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON:

Releasing Annual Reports Sooner

It is important for the annual reports of statutory officers, like the Ombud, to be released in a timely manner. Timely release allows for any problems identified by statutory officers, and recommendations to fix them, to be addressed sooner. The Committee's review process is also more relevant when annual reports are provided shortly after the year's end. Ultimately, timely release enhances the effectiveness of the committee's oversight of government. The Ombud's Annual Report is not currently released to committee or the public in a timely manner. The Ombud's first two annual reports, for 2019-20 and 2020-21, were released only once they were tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Tabled in the fall session of the Assembly – six to eight months after the fiscal year-end in March.

The delay is not the result of the slowness on the Ombud's part. The Act requires the Ombud to prepare and submit her annual report to the Speaker "no later than July 1st. The Speaker must then table the report" as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Tabling a document has the effect of making it available to the public. Historically, the Speaker only tables a document during session, the period of time when the Legislative Assembly holds its meetings. In most years, the next instance after July 1st when session is held is in the fall. This implies

a period of three to five months during which the annual report is complete but not available for committee or the public to review.

The annual reports of other statutory officers, such as the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Languages Commissioner, are also typically available to committee and the public in the fall session. Committee wants to see the annual reports of statutory officers, and of all public entities more generally, released in a timelier fashion.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 2

That the Speaker of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, and before the end of the 19th Assembly, review and amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, to allow annual reports of statutory officers to be released publicly once they are received, and before they are tabled. This rule change should, in effect, allow the Speaker to make available to committee and to the public the Ombud's annual report upon receipt or shortly thereafter.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud. Committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of standing and special committees.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE
REPORT 34-19(2) AND MOVE INTO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

The report of the Ombud will be moved into Committee of the Whole later today. Thank you.

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1184-19(2):
BARGING SERVICES TO NUNAKPUT
COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I'm bringing up again that barging in Nunakput how we -- I wouldn't say how we failed but how we're working together to try to provide service. You know, like I told you in my Member's statement earlier today that all of our -- the people that were having to fly in goods, groceries and the young families having to fly Pampers in and that into Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok, Mr. Speaker, is there any way that we could work together with them if they brought receipts back from that certain timeframe, would the Minister be able to entertain that we'd be able to help them in refunds from MTS? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 2022 has been like no other year in the operation of MTS. I mean, we've had many factors, barges being late, buoys being placed a month, weather factors. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. I hear the Member's concern about working with the residents to try and have a look at some of the stuff that's been brought in and perhaps -- I mentioned yesterday that we are working on contingency plans. So that will be part of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I thank the Minister for that. I just want a commitment in regards to being able to hand in a receipt if it's possible to MTS in regards to

getting funds back to the constituents as my constituency is the most northerly constituency, and it's highest cost of living besides yours, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know what? I've been saying "yes" all week so this is going to be one of those that are probably going to be "no." I can't commit right now, Mr. Speaker. I mean, there's a lot of number of things we need to look at. We are taking responsibility for the goods that are affected by the barge going in. So we are looking after those. To the extent of what means and how much that would cost, that's still underway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess this next week I have my leadership coming down, of my mayors from the communities in regards to the go-forward on a barging plan to work with the Minister and the department. I really think that in the talks I think something like this should be brought up anyway. And I just wanted to make sure that we get commitment from our Minister in regards to working together to try to compensate everybody that's been affected. It's not their fault that what happened. And we should be -- if they had to fly goods in, they should be compensated. And I want the department to think about that and they got a week to think about it because I got my leadership coming down to work together with the government to get this sorted out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned to the Member that I would be working with the Member and the residents -- the leadership, sorry, in Sachs Harbour. So I do want to note that the Department of Infrastructure's undertaking a post-season evaluation. So what that means it would be examining what occurred, what additional mitigation can be considered in the future so we don't have this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, us being, I guess, laid up or tied up, I guess, for the rest of the season, say for instance in Paulatuk, will there be any employment opportunities for security or watching the vessels and stuff like that for community members and -- because I did get a call from a young man that was looking into something -- doing something like that to

provide that service for MTS; is that possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course, you know, with all the equipment that is waiting to get in the community, you know, it's our responsibility to be able to ensure that they're kept secure. And that's something that we need to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1185-19(2):
RESPONSE TO HAY RIVER FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been a few months here since flooding occurred in Hay River, and people want to get back in their homes. So Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister what is the staff complement and duties of those persons currently assisting residents and businesses affected by the flood in Hay River? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is presently eight MACA declared solely to the 2022 flood recovery effort. We have a director and a finance officer in Yellowknife, and we have six pathfinders; four in Hay River and two in Yellowknife. In addition, there's excessive support being provided by several staff at Yellowknife, or headquarters, and the South Slave Region as well as other GNWT departments, including Environment and Natural Resources, Infrastructure, Housing NWT, and Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that. It's interesting that, you know, we have eight people really on the ground looking after \$200 million roughly, which is probably bigger than some departments. So either we're going to have to reassess how we're managing things internally.

Mr. Speaker, what restrictions have been -- I'd like to ask the Minister what restrictions have been placed on disbursement of funding under the DAP program by the federal government? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Municipal and Community Affairs is providing disaster assistance recovery from the 2022 flood consistent with the GNWT Executive Council Disaster Assistance Policy with two federal government programs. The disaster

Assistance Policy is a government-funded program that may be implemented after wide-spread disaster to ensure essential community functions and covers the essential basic needs of residents and businesses. Disaster assistance is limited to essential items, the loss of which was either preventable or noninsurable. It is not an insurance program to recover all losses and provide assistance to restore eligible items as per pre-disaster conditions. The GNWT policy is modeled on the federal government's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, or the DFAA, and is designed to help maximize financial assistance available for the DFAA.

There are numerous requirements that MACA must follow laid out in the GNWT's Disaster Assistance Policy and the federal program. Our pathfinders are in place to help residents and businesses with the process to assist disaster assistance and to answer their questions about their requirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounded like that was just kind of a generalization so there wasn't any really specific answer, I guess, with respect to, you know, any restrictions by the federal government. But I'll move on.

Mr. Speaker, residents and businesses are concerned that they are required to cover the cost above the advanced payment received for damages and then submit receipts for reimbursement for the other half. The only way for many to accomplish this is through a loan as many do not have the funds available. I'd like to ask the Minister is this a federal or GNWT requirement, and what are the options if one does not have the funds and cannot obtain a loan? Thank you

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, residents and businesses may receive an advance up to 50 percent of the damage identified in the damage assessment that were completed with each resident and business. Those who have unique hardships, where they are required to pay specific costs in advance or are unable to access other finances and have no other options, may be eligible for an advancement up to 100 percent of their anticipated costs for repairs. GNWT pathfinders have been working directly with those individuals who have indicated that they meet the criteria in additional assistance. Individuals should contact GNWT pathfinders' assistance for their unique situations. Mr. Speaker, again, if the situation's unique, please have them reach out to our pathfinders, and we're more than willing

to work with these individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the problem with that analysis is that, you know, you may have a group of people who were able to get loans and ended up paying -- having to pay interest, and, you know, and then you've got another group that get turned down and they won't be stuck with any interest. So that's something I'd like the Minister to think about.

Mr. Speaker, here's a million dollar question: Will the Minister with technical staff commit to coming to Hay River and meeting on site and in an office setting with residents and business owners who are working through the DAP process? And October 27th and 28th of this year would be acceptable dates. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Wow, the Member's telling us when we can do it, and it's really good. I think there may have been an email exchange back and forth between the Member and myself. But just so people are aware, MACA has been meeting frequently with residents in Hay River office and on site, on their properties. These meetings are occurring on an ongoing basis with our pathfinders as well as senior management for those individuals who completed situations.

Mr. Speaker, I have to applaud the Member from Hay River North, Hay River South, and the Deh Cho for reaching out and working with us, and having these conversations and inviting us to that. So as the Member has said, that date works for our technical staff on the 27th and 28th. We will work with the three Members to set up what type of meetings we'll have with them so that we can meet the requirements of impacted residents on that.

As for myself, with my schedule, I'll work with the Member when I can get into the communities. And again, I really have to stress I have to thank the three Members. I've had displeasure of dealing with floods myself last year, and I applaud them for the work they're doing for the residents. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1186-19(2):
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said before, squeaky wheel gets the grease

so I'm going to keep up this until I hear some good answers, if it takes me, I don't know, how long. If I have to keep running.

What is the Minister doing to raise the issue of such a rough terrible -- I guess I could say horrible Yukon section of the Dempster Highway to the Yukon government? I did raise this in May, and I know she mentioned that she was going to have talks with them. So I'm just wondering where we are with those talks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, squeaky wheels. I want to reassure the Member from Twin Lakes that both of us are advocating for this. We also have some of the Indigenous groups that are also advocating for this as well, and I know some of them have reached out to the Yukon government to be able to have further discussions on the border side to the Yukon.

And since the Member brought this up in last session, I've met with the Minister. We've had discussions on a path going forward, and I'm actually going back down to meet with the Minister in December. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister -- I think it's Vandal came up or was supposed to come up. I told the Premier I'd make the drive to Inuvik with -- up the Dempster Highway with him. But I'm just wondering with the Minister have they had these -- any of these discussions on this section just because it affects us as residents of the Northwest Territories but it doesn't really impact whether or not that road is upkept in the Yukon for their residents. So I'm just wondering where this Minister has had those talks with the federal minister. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do want to note that this summer, the Minister Vandal was in Inuvik, and I had an opportunity to travel with him up Tuktoyaktuk and we had a meeting there with the hamlet, the community corp, and it was a really good meeting and during that time, I also stressed concern about the Dempster Highway. You know, we are looking at investing into the Inuvik-Tuk Highway, and that we need to engage collaboratively with everybody involved to be able to have those discussions for the rest of the highway too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to pushing the federal government to fund in full the Mackenzie Valley, and I think this is not just for this Minister, I think it's for the Premier, we need to fund the Mackenzie Valley Highway, especially if the Yukon will not keep up their end. So if the Minister meets with the Yukon and they're not going to commit to anything tangible while we are in the 19th Assembly, then I suggest we move on and we start to work on our own highway. Mr. Speaker, the residents of the Beaufort Delta can no longer be ignored by this government, the Yukon government, the federal government. We cannot be stranded in the Beaufort Delta with this type of a highway just because it doesn't impact their residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do want to mention that the Mackenzie Valley Highway is one of my mandate items to be able to advance that project. And Mr. Speaker, we are advancing. We are looking at ways to be able to get this project going. For example, the developer's report is due in the next couple months. That kind of indicates what we need to do to be able to look at advancing the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, advancing on paper or advancing on the ground; that's what I would like to see. I would like to see if the Minister will commit to pushing hard on this because I'd like to see it just like the Tuk Highway. I'd like to see it coming from -- you know, from the North and the South and let's meet in the middle, and let's get this highway done. Let's quit talking about it. I don't want to be dead and, like, you know, this is something that I know our previous leader from Sahtu talked about the Mackenzie Valley, and, you know, I think this government and the future -- the next government owe it to complete this highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do want to stress the developer's report and some of the work that kind of advises us on a path going forward. So this is something that we are looking at and working with Indigenous groups up along the valley as well, looking at a number of things. Northern, local businesses, and the list goes on. So, yes, this is something that -- and the Member knows that, I mean, we want the

Mackenzie Valley Highway so bad. So that is something we're advancing. Thank you. So bad.

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

QUESTION 1187-19(2):
HOUSING POLICIES AND PROGRESS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 2019-23 GNWT mandate, in that mandate, they promised to build 25 new units each year from 20 to 23. Can the Minister update the House on the status of this work, and where are we -- are we on track to achieve this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister to Housing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well too. And, yes, we are on track for the 25 units annually. We actually do have a 90-unit delivery. We will also -- Housing has also submitted an application to the federal government for an additional 12 seniors duplexes. That would be submitted hopefully on the ground with construction starting in 2023-2024.

I also just want to, just for the Member for the 90-unit delivery, for his riding, he would be receiving two units in Dettah, four units in Lutselk'e, two in N'dilo, and six in Fort Resolution. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mandate document promises to implement a new policy to allow seniors and disabled individuals to access housing repairs by the summer of 2021. Can the Minister update the House on how many people have been helped with home repairs due to this policy change? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well too. And we are wanting to increase our programming and the dollars as well too. Within this government, we had increased our homeownership repair of \$3 million for the Northwest Territories. I don't have the exact number on hand but we do see a significant increase. Also we did receive an additional \$60 million over two years from the federal government. And a portion of that funding will be going towards public housing repair and homeownership repair throughout the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mandate promises a lease-to-own policy for the winter of 2020 with an average of 25 leases to own homeownership agreements signed per year for 2020 and 2023. Can the Minister update this House on how many leases have been signed to date? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homeownership is a priority of this government. As of to date, I want to say approximately 42 of those leases have been signed over. And I also just wanted to also reflect on our mission and our values as well too is that we did have a document that was tabled this year. And the values that I just want to identify is we are committed to be client-focused, working in collaboration, coming up with innovative programming, and looking at how we are going to be more accountable, looking at reconciliation, and looking at more of a stability for programs throughout the Northwest Territories. And I appreciate the questions coming forward because it really contributes to the changes of the way we are going to be doing business within Housing for the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned earlier that I was in the community of Lutselk'e for a constituency meeting and I had mothers came up to me that were crying and with a baby and couch surfing in the community. And it's really disturbing and hard to hear that from the community when you go there, and it's right throughout the whole Northwest Territories. You know, I'm just thinking, you know, this year we got \$30 million from Ottawa, and next year as well. I'm assuming this money that has been already allocated, and probably even next year, but I'm just thinking in the spirit -- in the spirit of the document that I mentioned, the mandate letter, if there is a way that we could work with Indigenous governments to build new relationships. So given the difficulties of housing the NWT is having delivering these results, would the Minister commit to reallocating the recent \$30 million of federal housing monies for this fiscal year and next fiscal year to no -- with no strings attached through a contribution agreement to support Indigenous governments leading housing strategies and programs in their own governments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the

question. I also want to highlight that with our work with the federal government, and I specifically want to mention Minister Vandal, Minister Hussen, and MP McLeod, together we were able to work very strongly in collaboration, recognizing the housing needs in the Northwest Territories, also highlighting that we have not had a replenishment of new public housing stock within the last four decades. We were successful in receiving to the Indigenous governments throughout the Northwest Territories \$500 million. Housing NWT continues to work in collaboration with the Indigenous groups.

The other that I'm very interested in accomplishing is we've just signed an MOU with the Tlicho government on housing issues for their region. Also just recently with the Sahtu. And also we are in talks with the Gwich'in as well too and hopefully we're able to come to a common understanding on how we could further work together in addressing those housing issues in the Northwest Territories.

But I also want to take this time that Housing is trying to work very strongly in such a short time, also recognizing that we did work through COVID and we were still able to accomplish these successes for the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1188-19(2):
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
WITH THE CANADIAN RED CROSS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the Northwest Territories Association of Communities AGM, it was announced that the territory had an intent to sign an MOU with the Canadian Red Cross. Can the Premier please give us an update on where this MOU is at? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that when we met with the Association of Communities, it was brought up. I do want to say a shout out to the Red Cross; their work has been phenomenal. I know that I've made a commitment to meet with them, and I do believe that the departments are in discussions with them. But I will need to take notice on where exactly we are at with that discussion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the Premier's update on the territorial MOU, and it is my hope that it will be a territorial MOU and not a health and social services MOU or a MACA MOU.

Given that the flooding occurred -- the Red Cross first got involved with us here this time around during the 2020-2021 flooding, can the Premier explain why she's taken so long to meet with the Red Cross given that I believe they made that request through the Minister of MACA about a year ago. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question on notice so I can get the information that the MLA requested. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1189-19(2):
REGIONAL STUDY UNDER THE
MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT ACT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Lands.

The Tlicho government asked for a regional study of the so-called Slave Geological Province Corridor over a year ago, and a large workshop was held in June of this year. Can the Minister of Lands give us an update on the current status of proposed regional study? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this going to be a little bit longer answer because it's that much important question the Member asked.

As mentioned in my August 2022 update with SCEDI, the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board hosted a workshop introducing participants the concept of regional studies and started a conversation on potential regional studies and how it should look. The GNWT responded to CIRNAC requesting for feedback on the July 29th -- or sorry, responded to the July 29th. The response did not articulate a GNWT position but outlined some of the GNWT's key interests and consideration. As previously communicated, GNWT's position on a potential regional study will not be confirmed until after the GNWT has heard the views of Nunavut, Indigenous governments, and sought input from MLAs.

CIRNAC has not yet communicated its process, next steps, or the time of the federal decision. Under the MVRMA, the Minister of Northern Affairs makes decisions on whether to conduct a regional study. Lands staff will continue to engage CIRNAC on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. But surely to goodness we have some sort of sense of whether this is a good thing or not before we have to go and consult with everybody. But I know that the time decision's up to the Minister of Northern Affairs. You know, geographic scope and name for this initiative are probably still up for grabs but hopefully we can avoid the colonial and racist term "slave."

Can the Minister tell us whether GNWT's taken a position on the name and geographic scope of a regional study? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT has not taken a position on the name or geographical scope or the regional strategic environmental assessment. Crown-Indigenous relationships in Northern Affairs Canada has authorized authority for regional studies under the MVRMA, and they have been gathering perspectives and views regarding potential regional strategic environmental assessment. Our message to the federal government has been that if the federal government moves ahead on this, it is important that they hear the views of governments, Indigenous governments, and other stakeholders in the NWT and Nunavut before decisions are made, and that they provide adequate funding for participants. If a regional study does proceed, the GNWT would like to see it completed in a timely manner and provide guidance to how future development in the region has responsibility of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Look, our government just can't hide in the weeds forever on this. As several Indigenous governments and the Chamber of Mines have already written to the federal minister, I've written to the federal minister with views on the regional study, and I think it's fair to say that all the parties actually support this in one way or another. So, you know, and the Minister said that our government supports participant funding; that's great. But in the letter that was submitted, it also said that no ongoing projects should be affected while a regional study is in process.

So can the Minister explain why our government continues to steamroll ahead with a Lockhart all-season road while the Bathurst caribou herd is still in decline and a regional study is being discussed. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not steamrolling ahead. We're advancing the Geological Slave Corridor Project as it is a mandate commitment of the current Legislative Assembly. All 19 of us agreed to our mandate. Some of them may not agree with every one, and I didn't agree with all the mandates on there, but we collectively all agreed with it, that we would have a mandate and that was one of them.

So, Mr. Speaker, with the federal government -- federal funding secured to advance Lockhart all-season road to a shovel-ready state, along with planning, engineering, and environmental baseline collection of remaining proposed alignment to the Nunavut border. So that's going on right now.

As the Geological Province Corridor Project is likely to undergo environmental assessment, concerns related to Bathurst caribou will be assessed through that process. So, again, we are going through it -- that environmental study will be in there, and that will be about the Bathurst caribou. Trust me. Caribou are on my radar every day. I see it. I look at it. I'm dealing with it. And I'm working with Indigenous governments on this.

So the GNWT believes that planning and environmental baseline work relates to the corridor project will benefit not only the project but the information should also support a regional study if one proceeds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. It's a very interesting position. It's okay to plan and build roads into the range of the Bathurst caribou herd while the herd is in a precarious state but it's not okay to pause this work while we look at the future of the entire region. You know, I'm worried, Mr. Speaker, that this government is going to go ahead and file this project for regulatory approvals, land use permit, water licence, no matter what. We're heading straight for another Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment that is now over nine years long, full of project splitting, delays and, quite frankly, wasting public resources.

So can the Minister tell us how this government is going to avoid such a mess while saying it supports a regional study? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Environmental assessments, in general, are specific to a project. While a regional strategic environmental assessment is much broader than looking at a single project and, in this case, a proposed much larger geographical scale. A regional strategic environmental assessment is designed to assist with the potential environment, social and economic effects, including cumulative effects are alternating strategies initiatives, policies, planning or programs for a particular region. Environmental assessments and regional studies processes do not compete with each other. They can be seen as working hand-in-hand. The GNWT continues its work to advance environmental baseline planning and ensuring work to advance the corridor project. This information's also benefits a regional study if one proceeds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1190-19(2):
LIQUOR ACT CHANGES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I spoke to in my Member's statement, the Department of Finance has come forward with a number of recommendations, changes to the Liquor Act. One of the ones I was specifically happy to see was four changes to special occasion permits. These are the permits that, you know, festivals often have to get and special events such as weddings. One was to streamline the process. Another one was to perhaps allow an annual special occasion permit for those events that happen every single year. And another one was to allow, in certain cases, whole site consumption. So not necessarily to have a beer garden but to be able to just sell alcohol on the site of the festival or event. My question for the Minister of Finance is when will these recommendations be done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process of getting a significant piece of legislation like this together requires, firstly, that there be a legislative proposal. I can certainly commit that

that is going to happen in the life of this Assembly. It then does go over to committee and then would back and then go out for drafting. So it's a more complex and lengthy process than what perhaps a lot of folks realize. I would say, though, some good news, Mr. Speaker, out of the four items that are listed as four recommendations, the first of the four, to streamline processes, streamlining a process should always be a priority and while, you know, the other recommendations should form part of a cohesive legislative proposal, I can say that certainly looking at ways to streamline that process now doesn't need to wait for that, and I will certainly look at doing that in an expedited fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to hear that we will be streamlining the process. I know it has been quite difficult for many and, you know, it's not fun to have a special occasion and then not be able to sell alcohol. And in many cases, the non-profits running them is -- it's how they actually fund the entire festival.

My question, I guess I'm still a bit confused about whether this is actually going to happen. I heard we're going to get a legislative proposal. And another one of the examples in the recommendation report was that the recommendation to remove the requirement for retail outlets to be closed on Sundays, holidays, and election days. So I guess my question to the Minister is, is this actually going to happen; are we going to see that requirement removed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the actual question is whether we're going to see requirements removed or not, it's really not a final decision that rests with me to pass the legislation all on my own. I am going to bring forward the legislative proposal. As I've said, it then goes to committee, and upon committee's recommendation is when the drafting instructions do go out. But I think really what we're getting at here is the time that it does take to craft, firstly, complex legislative proposals; and secondly, to do the drafting instructions for complex pieces of legislation. I mean, the Liquor Act itself is almost 70 pages. The regulations are well over 70 pages. And they have been modified piecemeal over the years. We don't want to do that again. We want this to be modernized. We want it to be cohesive. So, again, the LP's going to come forward -- sorry, the legislative proposal will come forward, and I certainly will, and am now, do whatever I can to ensure that we have

processes in place to see that it does get where it needs to go in the life of this Assembly but some of those timelines will be out of my hands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, and, you know what, I've read through all of these recommendations and sometimes they're identified as legislative; sometimes clearly we can just do them. Specifically one that caught my eye was the recommendation to allow hospitality rooms in manufacturing facilities. That is if a brewery decides to open, they could be able to sell beer there. I'm just wondering if the Minister could give me a timeline on when this is going to happen, or is this also tied to a legislative proposal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, the ideal here is to not wind up piecemealing the act or the regulations any further than what they have been already historically. And so the intention was to take all of the recommendations as a cohesive unit, put them together, and to develop a new piece of legislation and regulations that would support it. So now that said, there's really only the one brewery that I'm aware of and so perhaps they should be, you know, looking to work with the current licensing board if there are existing pathways by which they could achieve their goals now while we are getting to the place where the new legislation, hopefully in whatever format it finds, is ready to be passed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I just want to give a bit of an explanation to the public here, that the legislative proposal goes to committee but the legislative proposal does not mean we will see legislation in the life of this Assembly. And I know that some of this is out of the Minister's hands but I believe with proper political will and, you know, some working with committee, we could pass the Liquor Act in the remaining year of this Assembly. And I really believe it is what we should do or else we risk all of this work just simply being a waste of time and not being done by the next Assembly because different Assemblies have different priorities. So my question for the Minister of Finance is will she bring forward amendments to the Liquor Act in the life of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also was relieved in some ways when I had received the

recommendations and the report. And the reason I say that is that the fact of managing and dealing with liquor and the sale and production and transport of liquor can be divisive but the report does do, in my view, a good job of finding that balance and operating in a way that, you know, encourages safety, encourages consumption. So I am certainly committed to seeing those recommendations come forward.

I had the pleasure of appearing in front of committee quite recently, and the message of finding a way forward was received loud and clear. And as I say, I am doing my best to find a pathway by which we can achieve that goal collectively. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1191-19(2):
EDUCATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through this education fiasco, I guess, we're forgetting about the district education authorities or councils in the small communities. I've been speaking to my DEA chairman for the last couple days, and they don't know what's going on in education. They're not provided any information. I think I made a statement about this before, how the DEAs and the supports they need, because I find that it's very lacking. They don't have workshops for them for roles and responsibilities or any new documents that come out, like performance measures like the Minister alludes to. They don't know that stuff. So they're asking me to meet with them. So I'm asking a few of my colleagues from the small communities to reach out to their DEAs also, see if they're running into problems. And if any that are listening, we can pass the message to their district education council that they can reach out to me. I'd appreciate that very much.

Mr. Speaker, when a business is running, the businesses usually get a general financial audit done when their business -- when they run into problems or facing bankruptcy, they ask for a forensic audit. So they dig deeper and find out the problems that are in there. And with the education in the small communities, we can look at it that way. The Auditor General did their broad general reports and recommendations and whatnot, and we can look at perhaps going deeper into the small schools' education systems by having something like an audit, a forensic audit. I'm wondering if the Minister is -- would warm up to that idea? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has identified a number of things that are issues. He speaks about data collection, the availability of data. He talks about the ability to audit education bodies. These are all things that we are proposing to change by amending the Education Act. So the Member has great suggestions, and I'm definitely open to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that answer, and I'll hold him to many things, as I'm not done with small communities' education fiasco, and I appreciate that. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister responsible for ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to take this opportunity to clarify. I've never claimed to be a lawyer. I've never said that all students go to university. What I said is in Hansard yesterday and I apologize if I appeared as though I was showboating. I will say I was getting a little frustrated but I never intend to showboat. I think about an elder I spoke with in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, when I was there, and they were talking about how they watch the Legislative Assembly and they appreciate the level of decorum in here, and I always try to maintain that. So I apologize to the House if I appeared to be showboating. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1192-19(2):
INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND
POLICIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Can the Minister explain the purpose of the income support program? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we have a number of income support programs. I believe the Member is referencing our income assistance program, which is a specific income support program. The purpose of that program is to provide residents with enough funds to be able to procure the necessities of life. It's not the type

of program where people can save money or earn -- you know, earn a living doing that. It is to help people who are at the point where they can no longer, you know, keep a roof over their head, have food in their fridge, things like that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the income support, what does the income support program means, it's right here. It says the program provides financial assistance to the Northwest Territories residents to help meet basic needs and enhanced needs. The program encourages and support greater self-reliance to improve the quality of life. Okay, that's -- yeah, that's what it says on there.

With that in mind, I want to ask the Minister, I know that with the income support, when the person earns some money from part-time employment or any money earned are usually clawed back. And it seems like from -- with the program that exists, it seems there's no incentive, no incentive for people to work. Therefore, can the Minister explain what is the productive choice program? Does it help to get people off the income support program? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The productive choice -- productive choices are something that are in the legislation, the income assistance regulations. Individuals who are collecting income assistance are required to participate in a productive choice unless they are seniors or persons with disabilities I believe.

The productive choices, there's a variety of them. But currently everyone is enrolled in the wellness productive choice which we instituted at the beginning of the pandemic where people were required to take care of themselves and their families. And so that is what people are currently enrolled in.

The other productive choices include things such as parenting. They include things such as work, volunteer work, things like that.

Reviews are mixed on productive choices. In some communities, they see the value in them. It gives our communities service officers and an ability to work with someone and help that person maybe perhaps gain employment, get some volunteer experience, go out on the land, do things like that. And then other communities people see them as a burden. We have individuals on income assistance who instead of, you know, perhaps bettering their lives or doing what they need to do to better their lives, they are busy trying to fulfill

this productive choices in order to get income assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay. Well, that's good, thank you. Okay, well, I think he explained a little bit here. My next question is that so he said some, you know, how, but I just wanted to ask how is the department helping people get off the income support program? How is the income support working with the people on income support so that they make -- so that they are -- that, you know, we help them be self-reliant, because I'm sure some of those people do not want to be on income support and they would like to help themselves be productive in their communities, do something good for themselves, so I just want to know how is the department helping some of these people get off the income support?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there's a number of ways. First I'll speak about ways outside of the income assistance program. We have the small Community employment funds. \$4 million go into communities every year to help create jobs which helps people, you know, get jobs and earn income. We have labour -- we have funds for employers to hire people who might need additional training, people who the employers might not otherwise hire. And we have a number of different programs like that. I recommend that everyone read the recent report from the Ombud on income assistance. They talk quite a bit about how actually the client service officers work with the income assistance applicants. And you can tell from reading that that there's a real desire among the client service officers to spend time with those clients. But they just don't have enough time. There's not enough hours in the day to do that work. And so sometimes clients feel like they're rushed through the system, and they're not supported in the way they would like to be. But the fact is the system is just -- it's stretched to the limits right now. And so we are undergoing a review of the income assistance program and making changes so that those client service officers have more time to spend with each client. And this is the first step towards moving towards a more integrated service delivery model where the income assistance client service officer can help a client access other programs. So labour market programs, perhaps housing programs, and things like that, so that we can actually work more closely with the clients because I -- you know, I'm in agreement with sort of what the Member's getting at, is that we are working with these people, how can we help them help themselves better. And that's what we're doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, has the Government of the Northwest Territories saved income support dollars due to the federal COVID emergency and recovery benefits? Can the Minister explain how ECE assists income assistance eligibility for those receiving CERB or receive CERB or CRB payments? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories saved zero dollars due to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB. We exempted that. So if you were collecting income assistance and you received CERB, we did not count that against your income. When the Canada Recovery Benefits, CRB, came out, that was counted as income. Notices were sent to income assistance clients. There was an advertising campaign. We let MLAs know that that was the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1193-19(2):
IMPACT OF NEW FEDERAL BENEFITS ON
INCOME ASSISTANCE CLIENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to pick up where my colleague from Monfwi just left off almost in terms of income assistance. But so my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

The federal House of Commons announced two cash benefits to offset the impacts of the large increases in the inflation rate. These were passed I think about ten days ago in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker. Benefits include the one-time doubling of the GST rebate to low income citizens and a one-time \$500 benefit for low income renters. So I would like to ask the Minister if he and his staff are aware of these newly-approved benefits and whether they're going to be clawed back from income assistance? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the first reading by the Senate was on October 6th. So I don't think that those benefits have been finalized yet. I understand that the federal government should have them finalized and money should be flowing perhaps by the end of this month.

When that happens, I can say that we will be exempting the additional GST that clients may be receiving. So currently GST rebates are counted as income against someone's income assistance. But understanding that the reason this is being doubled is because of the record inflation that we're facing, we are not going to count that additional GST rebate against income. So income assistance clients won't see their income assistance reduced because of the additional GST rebate.

There is the housing benefit as well, and that is money for rent. Income assistance pays the actual cost of rent and utilities. So it's sort of a nonissue so I don't think people need to worry about that. If you're getting money for your rent from income assistance, you wouldn't get the money for rent from Canada. Or if you get it from Canada, that will be deducted by income assistance.

And there's also a dental benefit, for children under 12. I believe it's over two years. And because that is a benefit for children, that will also be exempted from the calculations. We don't include funds received for children as income. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1194-19(2):
SMALL COMMUNITIES EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES AND DATA AVAILABILITY

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is for Minister of education. Can the Minister provide data on how many small community graduates directly enter university as compared to larger regional centres? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I don't have that -- I have it in my hands but I can't flip through this document and find that information at the moment. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, I did do a written question. I submitted a written question back in December. How many people in the Northwest Territories have a grade 12 education and are on income support assistance program, and the answer was that -- this is not the answer I was looking for. This data is not tracked by the Department of Education as the input is not a requirement to qualify for the assistance.

So what I'm asking here is that if the education system was good, I don't -- it's more of a comment. I don't -- if he wants to answer, but I already asked the question. If we had -- if the education system was good, we would not have many of these young people walking around in the small communities because we hear from the community leaders and community elders, community are saying why are -- why do we have all these young people with grade 12 education walking around doing nothing? And I'm sure you heard that too, in your ridings too before, Mr. Speaker. So I'm just asking the Minister that if the education system was good, we would not be having this. And can the Minister provide the number, how many grade 12 graduates that are on income support assistance? We need data so that maybe they can make a good decision in the future to improve the education system, especially for small communities. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I don't have that. When a client goes to apply for income assistance, we don't ask what their level of education is. And, you know, I think as a government we need to always be mindful of how much information we are requesting. However, I get the Member's point; it would be useful information. I think that we're at a point, though, where we have a good sense of what the education system is like across the territory in communities. We have a lot of data out there, and we just need to start implementing or continue to implement some of these new initiatives to help address the issue because we all know there's issues in education. It's no secret. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions, colleagues. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 723-19(2):
2023-2024 CAPITAL ESTIMATES

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: The 2023-2024 Capital Estimates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 724-19(2):
 INUVIALUIT WATER BOARD 2021-2022
 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL
 STATEMENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 725-19(2):
 THE NATURAL RESOURCES
 CONVERSATION TRUST FUND FINANCIAL
 STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
 MARCH 31, 2022

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Inuvialuit Water Board 2021-2022 Annual Report and Financial Statements; and, Natural Resource Conservation Trust Fund Financial Statements for Year Ended March 31st, 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 726-19(2):
 DIRECTOR OF CHILD AND FAMILY
 SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Director of Child and Family Services Annual Report 2021-2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

TABLED DOCUMENT 727-19(2):
 WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
 COMMISSION 2023 CORPORATE PLAN

TABLED DOCUMENT 728-19(2):
 WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
 COMMISSION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 729-19(2):
 WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
 COMMISSION PATH TOWARDS SAFETY
 STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: 2023 Corporate Plan Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission; Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission 2021 Annual Report; and, Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Path Towards Safety Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

TABLED DOCUMENT 730-19(2):
 DOCUMENTS RELATED TO SEWAGE
 ISSUES IN HOMES IN LUTSEL K'E

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the document of a private home of Lutselk'e. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Hay River South.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 63-19(2):
 REAPPOINTMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF
 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two motions. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 20th, 2022, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the Legislative Assembly recommend the reappointment of the following individual to the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission effective immediately for a term of four years:

- Mr. Yacub Adam of the City of Yellowknife.

And further, that the Legislative Assembly recommend the appointment of the following individual to the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission effective immediately for a term of four years:

- Mr. Norman Yakeleya of the City of Yellowknife.

And furthermore, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of these appointments to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Notices of motion. Member for Hay River South.

MOTION 62-19(2):
 REAPPOINTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
 ADJUDICATION PANEL MEMBERS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on

Thursday, October 20th, 2022, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the following two individuals be recommended to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for reappointment as members of the Human Rights Adjudication Panel, effective immediately, for a term of four years:

- Mr. Colin Baille of the city of Yellowknife; and,
- Mr. Paul Parker of the city of the Yellowknife.

And further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of this appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, 48, 52, and 53, Tabled Document 528-19(2), Tabled Document 654-19(2), Tabled Document 723-19(2) with Member for -- oh, one second here.

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

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 528-19(2), 2021 Review of Member's Compensation and Benefits - Northwest Territories; and, Tabled Document 654-19(2), Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report. Mahsi, madam.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---BRIEF RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 528-19(2), 2021 Review of Member's Compensation and Benefits - Northwest Territories. I'll go to the deputy chair of Caucus for any opening comments. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on this matter as deputy chair of Caucus.

On October 20th, 2020, an independent Commission was established by the Speaker to review Members' compensation and benefits. This review is a requirement of section 35.1 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and routinely takes place within the first two years of an Assembly.

The 19th Assembly's Commission was comprised of three Members, Mr. Joseph Handley, who was Commission chair, supported by Ms. Janet Toner and Mr. Glen Tait. In August 2021, the Commission submitted its report to the Speaker who then tabled it on December 7th, 2021. The Commission made 29 recommendations.

The Commissioner recommended no increase to MLA compensation basic salary amounts except for the allowable automatic adjustments based on Canadian consumer price index as per the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Our debate this afternoon will publicly review and consider each of the Commission's recommendations. The recommendations adopted by the House today will be considered by the Board of Management who will use them to draft and introduce legislation and amend existing regulations and policies.

Any changes to legislation will be brought back to the Assembly for consideration, hopefully later this sitting. Changes to regulations or policy resulting from the recommendations will be tabled by the Speaker consistent with legislation. All changes to MLA compensation and benefits resulting from this process will take effect at the commencement of the next Legislative Assembly.

This concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. Once other Members have offered general observations, I am prepared to introduce motions to consider the Commission's recommendations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

further opening comments from Members? Thank you, Members. We will now proceed to the consideration of the report's recommendation. The Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 262-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – MEMBER
ORIENTATION,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendations 1 to 3 address how the Legislative Assembly can support Members through the orientation process at the beginning of a new Assembly. They propose that the initial Member orientation be revised so it can be scheduled over a 30-day period. They also propose a full review of the orientation content and that the Members' handbook be updated prior to the next Assembly and be kept up to date.

Committee motion number 1, I move that this Assembly recommends that the initial Member orientation be revised so they can be given over a 30-day period. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, this Assembly will be establishing a special committee on transition matters that I believe is best positioned to consider this recommendation; therefore, I recommend that this motion be accepted.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, first off, I'd like to thank the members of the Commission for their thoughtful consideration of the issues that were brought before them. I know I spoke to them personally a couple of times as well during their deliberations or during their fact-finding part of their mission.

Yes, I served on the transition matters committee on the last Assembly. I'd be happy to do so again. That's an opportunity to look at

how the orientation for incoming MLAs might be changed or improved. And we did that last time around, and I suspect we'll have some additional advice, suggestions, about how to improve it next time. So I support this, and I am happy that the transition matters committee look at how we might improve that process. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Seeing that there's no one else.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions?

You guys aren't voting? To the first motion? So all those in favour of the first motion? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 263-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – REVIEW OF
ORIENTATION CONTENT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that a review of the orientation content be completed to ensure information is comprehensive and adequate for the Members to fulfill their jobs as an MLA.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, like the last recommendation, this Assembly will be establishing a special committee on transition matters that I believe is best positioned to consider this recommendation; therefore, I recommend that this motion be accepted.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Anyone abstaining? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 264-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – UPDATED
 MEMBERS' HANDBOOK,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Members handbook be updated prior to the next Assembly and be kept up to date so that everyone is working from the most current version.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. 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? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 265-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – FUND FOR
 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Recommendations 4 and 5 relate to the establishment of a professional development fund for sitting MLAs. I move that this Assembly recommends the establishment of a fund of \$30,000 annually, \$120,000 for the Assembly, that MLAs can apply to for ongoing professional development.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 266-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – TRAINING
 FOR ALL MEMBERS,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Board of Management, if the Members agree, may use some of this fund to provide training for all Members in a specific area of interest. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This recommendation is related to the last, and I support it.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Just for the benefit of the public, if this fund is established I guess it will be up to the Board of Management to develop some rules around how it's allocated and, you know, ideas around whether it's first come first served, or there's some set aside for each MLA on application. I have confidence that the Board of Management will develop some rules around those, and those will come back to the MLAs to have a look at. I do want to make sure that access to this is done in a fair manner and that, you know, those that may not be -- that there might be some assistance in terms of filling out applications and so on, if it's to be that kind of a process, but I do have confidence that the Board of Management will develop a fair and transparent way of allowing Members to reasonably access these training funds. And that some of it could be for, like, group training as well. I know in the last Assembly, we did some training around legislative drafting and interpretation, which I found quite useful, and I suspect that there will be further opportunities along those lines that new MLAs will benefit from. And of course, this is only going to -- yes, I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 267-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES
PARTICIPATION,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendations 6 to 10 are about participation on standing and special committee by Regular Members.

Committee motion number 6, I move that this Assembly recommends that all MLAs, excluding the Speaker, Premier, or Ministers, are expected to participate on a minimum of two standing committees, not including the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at least one special committee, if there are special committees. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So the purpose of this motion is to ensure that there's some equitable sharing of the duties and responsibilities within the Assembly amongst the Regular MLAs. We have a number of committees. There's no requirement currently in the rules for Members to actually sit on committees. So this will create not just an expectation but, I believe, a requirement that, you know, Members will serve on committees in the future. And that just ensures that we have a better distribution of the work amongst us all and that the work gets done as well. So that's the purpose of this, is to put in place some rules to make sure that those kind of expectations and requirements are clearly laid out at the beginning so everybody's on the same page. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion. It makes it clear that all Regular Members are expected to share the workloads of standing and special committees equally. I should note that membership on the Board of Management will be considered as membership on a committee for the purposes of this recommendation.

The next motion I will introduce will add financial penalties for Members who choose not to sit on at least two committees other than the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 268-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – BASIC
INDEMNITY REDUCTION,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I move that this Assembly recommends that the basic indemnity payable to every Member, with the exception of the Speaker, Premier, and Ministers, be reduced by \$4,000.

And further, that Members, with the exception of the Speaker, Premier, and Ministers, receive a stipend of \$2,000 for each standing committee they are a member of, to a maximum of \$4,000. If a Member sits on more than two committees, there will be no additional stipend paid. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion. This does not increase any Member's pay above current levels but it will reduce a Member's pay if they refuse to sit on two standing committees or the Board of Management. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 269-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – COMMITTEE
 STIPENDS,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that if a Member is removed from a committee, the \$2,000 stipend would be removed and prorated to the date of removal. If they become a Member of another committee, the stipend would be reinstated once they become a Member of that committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 270-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – STANDING
 COMMITTEE WORKLOADS,
 DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Board of Management review the workload of all standing committees every two years and, if necessary, reassign Members to rebalance the Members' workload. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Board of Management does not assign Members to committees or review their workload. This work is done by the committees themselves, Regular Members, and Caucus. As such, I

recommend that this recommendation be defeated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I think this was probably the result of perhaps just a misunderstanding on the part of the Commission Members. The Board of Management doesn't determine committee membership. And the balance, that's really up to the Regular MLAs ourselves to do with regard to the standing committees. We do that work, and we do it -- you know, we've done it a couple of times, more than that even in the lifetime of this Assembly, where we've had Members -- new Members arrive as a result of by-elections and we just kind of assess people's interests and then assign people. People can volunteer to serve on various committees. And the Board of Management, though, is a different creature. There's representation from both Cabinet and the Regular MLAs on there, and they're the ones that create the rules for us and look at how the building and the institution itself operates. But it's really up to the Regular MLAs to determine membership of our own standing committees.

With regard to special committees, sometimes they include Cabinet representation and where they do, those are discussed at Caucus, and then nominations come forward to the floor of the House. So that's another area that the Board of Management really doesn't get involved in. So I agree with my colleague from Hay River South that I will vote against this. But I know that the work is still done by the Regular MLAs themselves and through Caucus. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Anyone abstaining? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 271-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – DEPUTY
 CHAIR STIPENDS,
 DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the deputy chair for all the committees, with exclusion of the deputy chair of the Committee of the Whole, receive a stipend of \$3,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, the deputy speaker is the chair of Committee of the Whole. The deputy chair receives a stipend for that position and does not receive any additional stipend for chairing the Committee of the Whole. There are two deputy chairs for the Committee of the Whole who are each entitled to receive a stipend for their roles as deputy chairs. I disagree that the workload for deputy chairs of standing committees is enough to warrant additional compensation. This is the only recommendation that calls for an increase in Members' compensation, and I recommend that it be defeated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm a bit conflicted on this one. I don't agree with us giving ourselves raises during a time such as now, when we all talk about our bad economy; however, given the nature of this Assembly and the fact that there's been so much unprecedented turmoil that oftentimes chairs have had to, you know, step aside, and I know that my colleague -- some of my colleagues have really stepped in as deputy chairs to fulfill that role. I will disclose that I am a deputy chair, and I have not had to step in too much because my chair has been very present for the social development committee. So I will support this motion. Hopefully people will not see that as being self-serving but more so that I believe some of my colleagues actually deserve this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm not going to provide any comments on turmoil; I think those are probably best left to folks outside of the House and their own views. But just to be very clear, this is not about increasing or decreasing the wages of any of us sitting in this Chamber. This is about setting the rules for the next Assembly. And that's what the implications of all of these motions

are. It's about changing the rules for the next people that come in after us so none of this is about us, quite frankly. So I do have some sympathy with deputy chairs and the work that they've done, and I've served as deputy chair and I've chaired many meetings even though I'm not even a deputy chair, in the course of this Assembly. But that's just part of the workload and expectations that we set for ourselves. So I will be voting against this motion. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is defeated.

---Defeated

All right, Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 272-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – INCREASE
BASIC HOUSING ALLOWANCE,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendations 11 and 12 seek to increase the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife, otherwise known as a capital accommodation allowance for Members who live outside of Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam chair, this recommends that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife, if required, should be increased from \$31,000 per year to \$32,000. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion. This amount has not been adjusted in many years and is intended to more accurately reflect the increased cost of living. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 273-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – ANNUAL
REVIEW OF BASIC HOUSING ALLOWANCE,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife should be reviewed annually by the Board of Management to ensure it remains in line with the current rental market. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 274-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – MEMBERS
WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendation 13 looks to replace the current child care travel allowance with a family responsibility allowance. I move that this Assembly recommends that an amount of \$2,000 per year be paid to all MLAs with dependent children regardless of the number of dependent children they have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, since this Legislative Assembly began reimbursing

Members for child care expenses at the beginning of this Assembly, I have heard that some Members with children are reluctant to claim reimbursement for child care expenses under the existing program. I think the existing program is a good one, and I encourage all Members to make use of it when they're required to attend meetings outside normal working hours or when the Member's child or children are required to travel with the Member while the Member is performing constituency or Legislative Assembly business. I recommend against adoption of this recommendation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I was also surprised to hear colleagues mention that perhaps they weren't feeling comfortable accessing this amount of money and just also wanted to clarify that it is the trip money for child care; it is not regular everyday child care, which I think sometimes gets confused. I did try to get it so that I could have my cats covered under this but that wasn't -- wasn't something that Caucus bought into, but I do strongly also encourage everyone to take use of this, and if anything, I would like to see us providing more support to families. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. So I would encourage members of the public to actually read the report from the commission, particularly on this area. You know, we budget \$30,000 a year as an Assembly to provide child care expense reimbursement for those Members that have children. And we worked very hard in the last Assembly to try to make this place more family friendly and to encourage young people to run for office and to make sure that they had the ability to participate and, you know, get child care expenses covered given the duties and the time and travel that it takes sometimes to be an MLA and odd hours working and so on. So we set up this, you know, \$30,000 allocation each year in our budget to help cover those expenses. But so far, only \$1,358.50 has been claimed, after three years. So it's not working. And I think the commission actually made, what I consider to be a reasonable recommendation, to try to address this. And I don't know what the problem or the issue is. I don't have kids that are young enough to claim any expenses. But, you know,

having been here seven years now, I know what this does to family life. So I think this was a reasonable recommendation from the commission, and I encourage those Members of the House that do have kids, and that do have expenses because of their duties, that they should be claiming those be back. That's just part of making sure that we all get the work done. And I'm not blaming anybody or anything, but clearly the current system is not working. And I think what the commission proposed is a reasonable approach, and I support it because the current system is not working. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I do want to echo some of the concerns that I -- it certainly has been my experience with two children who are under the age of 12 that this is a difficult job. It's a difficult job for a parent. It doesn't matter of your gender. But I worry that it becomes a barrier. I worry that thinking of an advance about whether to run, as people may well be doing in the next year, they will worry whether or not this job is barrier to them if they have young children who are of that age.

This week alone, I have eight different family member -- eight different families in this city helping me get my kids where they need to be this week. There's no child care expenses that I'm charging for that. I also have two different child care arrangements between yesterday and today and Wednesday when I will be on work duties up until 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock at night. And, you know, would have more, but I have a spouse who comes back into town just in time to cover the last night. So, you know, the child care expense, it doesn't change that reality for people but it acknowledges the reality. And I am someone who has tried to make those claims, because I actually want to make use of the facilities that are available to us. I want to make the point that we do need it. I hope other people will use it. I appreciate the effort here. I think what they're trying to do is take the stigma away. Take the stigma away of having to be someone who says, I can't always travel, having to be the person that says I can't always go to the event, having to be the person that's having to make those arrangements and walk out of the meeting to take phone calls from their children, I think there's a stigma associated with that. And that's why I have used the fund that's available on the days that were appropriate for me to do so. I'm glad it's there. I think this is a conversation that's good to have. I also don't

think that making a blanket amount is the solution. This won't cover the cost of having to fly someone's child for folks who are from outside the community, from outside Yellowknife. I don't know how those of you who are outside of Yellowknife are managing; I really don't. But \$2,000 won't do it. I hope people access the funds that are here now so that it makes it a little more palatable to them. And I hope this discussion reminds us the fact those funds are there and that there shouldn't be stigma associated with using them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. In principle, I support the concept of what we're trying to do here and I was in the last Assembly, and we did try to make it a family friendly place. However, in practice, I can't support this because it's saying that everyone shall get \$2,000 no matter how many dependent children you have. That, Madam Chair, is -- I can't accept that because I come from a family of eight children and, you know, my only flight with my two children that might do but if you have eight children, and some community members have large children, how is that fair, Madam Chair? It won't cover the cost. So in principle, I support the concept but I cannot support this motion because I think it would be punitive to large families that have dependent children. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 275-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – TRANSFER
OF PENSIONS,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendations 14 and 15 are about the Members of the Legislative Assembly's pension plans. I move that this Assembly

recommends that a reciprocal agreement with other registered pension plans, including Public Service Superannuation and Northern Employee Benefits Services, NEBS, be negotiated so pension amounts can be transferred. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, from a Member's perspective, reciprocal agreements may allow the Member to seek an elected position without it adversely affecting their retirement savings. The issue is that if a reciprocal agreement is set up so that the Member's lifetime pension is not adversely affected, it usually means that the plan suffers additional cost. Or, if the reciprocal agreement is set up to be cost neutral to the plan, it likely will provide little to no value to most Members. Therefore, I recommend that this recommendation be rejected.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I actually support this recommendation. I think it -- you know, that's without a lot of knowledge or understanding exactly what the reciprocal arrangement could or should look like, but I think this is another way of trying to encourage people to run for office. And if they knew that their pensions could be brought forward to include the service that they do in this House, then I think it could encourage more people to run for public office. And that's why I would support this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? It looked pretty close. So it's defeated. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 276-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – ACCESSING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLAN,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I MOVE that this Assembly recommends that the MLAs be advised as to when they are approaching 60 days within being sworn in so they have time to decide about whether to access the supplementary plan to ensure they do not inadvertently miss the deadline. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, the motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I've been here for two Assemblies, and I can tell the public that this already happens. This is the case. You know, in the orientation Members are made aware of their options for pensions. There's a deadline. You get a reminder. This already happens. But I'm okay with accepting this but I can tell you from practice it already happens. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 277-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – TOP-UPS,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recommendation 16 speaks to Members leaving politics. I move that this Assembly recommends that Members receive a top-up for every year they were in a position as Speaker, Premier, or Minister regardless of when they served in that position.

And further, that this top-up not exceed the annual basic indemnity at that time.

The Member will receive one month of the Speaker, Premier, or Minister allowance for every year served in any of those positions with the top-up calculated based on the

current indemnity allowance paid to a Member holding one of those offices. The time served in any of those positions is to be rounded up to the next full year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this recommendation relates to the transition allowance that former Members are entitled to when they leave office. While I understand and appreciate the intention of this recommendation, it would make the calculation of the transition allowance unnecessarily complicated and may bring it out of line with the cooling-off period that applies to all Members when they leave office. I think the transition allowance is fine as it is and therefore I recommend defeat of this motion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 278-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – REFERENCE
TO PREMIER,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the word "Premier" be added to any clause in section 79 where reference is made to the Speaker or Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, this recommendation is related to motion 16 about the transition allowance, and for that reason, I recommend that it be defeated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 279-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – CLAUSE
REGARDING TRANSITION ALLOWANCE,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends the following clause to section 79, page 48, of the Members' handbook be removed: For a Member who is a former Speaker or Minister, the transition allowance is equal and limited to their annual indemnity at the time of eligibility. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, again this recommendation is related to Motion 16 about the transition allowance and, for that reason, I recommend that it be defeated.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 280-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – FINANCIAL
PLANNING SUPPORT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that Members be advised that they can access financial planning support from an independent advisor when they leave office. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion. The transition for Members out of politics and either back into private life or retirement can bring with it complex financial considerations. This is a service currently provided to Members. We just need to communicate it better in the run up to and after election. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Towards the end of last Assembly, I did participate in a one-day seminar with a financial planner along with at least one other MLA and our partners. I found it to be very useful. And I understand with COVID, it's not as easy to access these services as it was before but I expect that that will improve. So this already happens, and it actually happens across the GNWT, I know, for other employees as well, that they are offered similar opportunities for training and advice. So I agree and support this recommendation and knowing that it already happens. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 281-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES –
CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANT SALARIES,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that while each MLA continues to negotiate the salary level for their constituency assistant, the minimum hourly rate should be not less than \$25 per hour. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Legislative Assembly's current constituency assistant hourly rates range from \$25 to \$46 per hour. The average is approximately \$35 per hour. No one is below \$25 per hour. Members prefer to have some flexibility in terms of how they manage and compensate their constituency assistant so I recommend that this motion be defeated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, no one is paying the constituency assistant less than \$25 an hour right now, and I guess I'm in favour of this so that no one ever does. You know, hopefully one day in this territory we get to minimum wage of \$25 an hour, but. And well, and if inflation keeps up at this rate, we might get there a lot sooner than we expected. But I think we should lead by example, and I don't really see any harm in setting this as at least the bare minimum floor going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. I agree with my colleague from Yellowknife North on this. In the last Assembly, we worked pretty hard to ensure that our constituency assistants, they're now eligible for, you know, different kind of benefits. And we worked hard to try to promote them as employees here within the -- they're not within the civil service but trying to make sure that we could find some ways to keep our constituency assistants as well. I can tell you that I pay my constituency assistant more than \$25 an hour, and I think they deserve a living wage, and this is probably in about the neighbourhood I would expect that a living wage would be for somebody in Yellowknife. I have no problem setting this as a floor as this recommendation is suggesting. So I will vote in favour of it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My problem is it's not the minimum wage. My problem is it isolation allowance? You know, we give -- I know my CA's getting more than \$25 an hour but we should be giving them isolation allowance. That's what we should be doing. So this motion here doesn't address that, especially for our constituent assistants outside of

Yellowknife. So that there is where I'm -- you know, I'm already paying more than \$25 an hour but isolation allowance is where the impact on -- in my riding, I have staff that, you know, my CA works with me but he could work for the government and get the same amount of money plus get the isolation allowance. So that there I think the Legislative Assembly needs to look at that for the next time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Oh, abstentions? None. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 282-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – BUDGETS
FOR CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANTS,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the budget amounts available to MLAs for constituency assistant salaries be increased by the Canadian consumer price index annually. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, Members' constituency expense allowances are increased annually by the Canadian consumer price index. So funding available to extend this increase to constituency assistants already exists and it is at the discretion of the Member. I recommend that this recommendation be defeated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Oh, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This is something I already do as a Member, and I'm just trying to weigh whether this is something we want to put into the rules or not, in one way or another. But that's what I do already. Well, I guess given that I generally try to come down

on the side of workers, I am going to support this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I don't think anyone in here -- well, I know no one in here pays their CA less than \$25 an hour. We know that from the previous motion. And I think people in here understand that if you want a good CA, you have to pay them. You know, that's the market across the Northwest Territories, across Canada right now. If you want good people, you have to pay them. That's why I voted against the last recommendation. I'm voting against this one because we're getting to the point now where the Assembly is really controlling how I run my constituency office. And I think that, you know, it's a bit of a slippery slope before we move it to something -- you know, something less flexible, something where it is the Assembly, not the MLA who is managing their office. And so that's my concern here, is that we're encroaching a bit into the independence of MLAs and their ability to operate their constituency office and work in their constituency in the way that they best see fit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I spoke to the other one too but this is kind of in the same concept, I guess, is that my issue is that we have people that are making minimum wage in society and currently, at this point, they don't get a CPI increase although I would like to see that. I know that we are looking at changing that. But at this point -- and the other thing is that some Members have more than one constituent assistant, Madam Chair. Some of them have two, one in their riding and one here in the capital is what I've noticed as well. So I think in the spirit of fairness to Members that may have more than one or two people in lower income bracket, then I'd have to vote against this. But I do want to stress to all MLAs that your constituent assistants are valuable; they're doing hard work; and so again, I would recommend that all of them get -- you consider increases to them on a regular basis. But I can't support it on the principle that we don't allow that for all people. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 283-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – SHARED
OFFICE SPACE FOR YELLOWKNIFE
MEMBERS,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that a shared office space for Yellowknife Members of the Legislative Assembly be established that is located in a central part of the city that is accessible to all the Yellowknife constituents and others who are seeking information or support. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, as MLAs we have to be accessible to our constituents; therefore, I think the Members' handbook should be amended to allow the Board of Management to consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. I support this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't agree with this. We have offices in this building. This building is open to the public during regular office hours and failing that, we can go to a common space in the community such as a coffee shop. I feel that this \$90,000, or a total cost \$160,000, could be better spent than on yet another office for government services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Madam Chair, I am also not supporting this. We're getting to the time that post-COVID, or in COVID, that people are making tough choices and inflation is hitting people. And as the previous Member stated, we have offices in

this Assembly. So at this point, with what's going on in society and the struggles that people are facing with inflation, I cannot justify spending taxpayer money on another office. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too don't support this. I think that we are all independent and therefore we can make our own decisions on where we have our constituency offices. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I hear the words from my colleagues who are Yellowknife MLAs and, okay, both in the last Assembly and in this Assembly, I tried to get the Yellowknife MLAs to work together to actually open up an office outside of the Legislative Assembly. Clearly I was unsuccessful. The Yellowknife MLAs did not want to work together to do that, and I regret that decision. But, you know, I think this building is quite intimidating to come into. You have to clear through security. You have to set up a specific time to come and see your MLA. This is not exactly a user-friendly place for our constituents. And I think rather than have this motion defeated, I would like to get an amendment to the motion to do as my colleague from Hay River South suggested, which is get a change to the rules to allow for -- as I understand it, the rules now, there's a prohibition on Yellowknife MLAs having an office outside of the Assembly. I would like to see a rule change to at least allow an application be made to BOM for an office for Yellowknife MLAs outside of the Assembly. So Madam Chair, if I could just ask maybe for a short recess to get an amendment to make to the motion. I think that's probably the best way to do this.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I think, from my understanding, that this motion is based on application on a case-by-case. So by passing this motion, it's not saying that you're automatically getting one but on a case-by-case, that it can be applied to, to open an office. So if you still are in favour of this motion on a case-by-case, I think that's -- but if not, then, you know, you can vote against it, so.

We could take a break, though. We'll take a five-minute break. Let's take a five-minute break and then we can discuss it, get clarification and then we'll come back.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION TO AMEND COMMITTEE MOTION
283-19(2),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madme la Presidente. I move that Committee Motion 283-19(2) be amended to read as follows: That this Assembly recommends that the Yellowknife Members of the Legislative Assembly be permitted to apply to the Board of Management to establish an office in Yellowknife outside the Legislative Assembly building as is the case with all non-Yellowknife Members. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I think the way that the motion had currently read was that it was a requirement that it be established, and it might require as much as \$90,000. What this does is amend the Members' handbook, which currently reads, in section 114, and I'm just going quote this, "Members representing constituencies in Yellowknife are not entitled to a second constituency office in addition to the one provided in the Legislative Assembly building."

So with that current clause in the Members' handbook, there's a prohibition on Yellowknife MLAs having an office outside. So the purpose of this motion would be to change this to at least allow that as an option for future Yellowknife Members and that really the decision would be up to the Board of Management. And I think this is a better way to approach this, at least leave open that option for Yellowknife MLAs.

And I think really what this is about is making sure that people in Yellowknife have an opportunity to bring forward their concerns, not necessarily to the MLA in the Assembly but in other ways. So I am hoping that my colleagues from Yellowknife would support this to at least leave this open as an option for the future. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the amendment. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I support the idea of this motion -- or the amended motion. I wouldn't

want to be forced to do something but I do think Members should be allowed to decide for themselves, and I take the point of my colleague that for some people this might be an intimidating building. I do find, though, that my constituents are kind of excited to come here generally and the parking is free, which helps. But I guess my only concern with this is that would this then become cost and money that comes out of our constituency budget, could then maybe be used in other areas whereas here, our constituency offices are provided free of charge. So that would just only be my concern is if there is sort of, any sort of -- not abuse of it, but where there's an unprecedented amount of constituency budget funding going to rental outside of this building that maybe isn't being utilized that much and maybe that money could be used better elsewhere. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Just to clarify the out of -- Members who have offices outside of Yellowknife, it comes out of the ledge, it's not out of the constituency budget. So it's added to the legislative budget. So I'll come back to you. To the amendment. Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am in favour of the amendment. I was not in favour of an automatic or a presumed automatic incurring significant cost. It's not thus far been my experience that generally residents of Yellowknife South are struggling to find myself or my constituency assistant by virtue of having our office here or through all other manner of opportunity. But nonetheless, that just may be tradition and it not necessarily a reality. So certainly we'll take that back.

But I will just say, Madam Chair, in reviewing this proposed motion, both originally and the now amended one, I would just note for folks in Yellowknife that although the rules do say that we are not entitled to a second constituency office, the rules also imply that Ministers are not entitled to any office automatically. So there's a bit of a challenge with the rules. And I actually had some difficulty getting an office at all. And of course, I draw -- I try to draw a very strict line between the facilities and what I use to support my office as a Minister as opposed to not incurring or using any of those facilities to support my work as an MLA. So this does -- in that sense, I'm happy to now have this option because if that becomes a challenge again, it may be that I would be the first one in line to ensure that I have some office available to me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the amendment. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also understand the intent of this one; however, as stated before, we are in a time of huge inflation and people are struggling and we have to be careful with taxpayer dollars, and I just don't think this is the time to be bringing this forward. We do have offices in this Assembly and this would cost tax -- if it was approved, would cost taxpayers extra money. And so I cannot, in conscious, support this motion at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the amendment, I do think the amendment does improve on the previous recommendation. Once again, the previous recommendation -- or the main motion is very prescriptive. It's the Assembly encroaching on how Members run their offices. It's saying you will share an office in a central location. We've already seen a bit of that encroachment occur today, and so I'm happy that actually the Member reversed course and went a different direction on this one because I think it is an improvement.

I do have an office downtown in Hay River, a constituency office. I made sure that I had one that was easily accessible, so it's ground level. There's no barriers. It's in a public place. So people can see it and they can come by. People don't always want to seek out their MLAs. Sometimes they're walking by and they say, I'll just pop in. And that's when you can have some good conversations. You hear about things you might not otherwise, and I think that's important. So I don't really have an issue with the motion.

My only issue is this: You know, there have been other opportunities where we could discuss this and this could have been raised. So I don't know how much this would cost. I don't know what budget implications are. I don't know if there's going to be any assessment of whether or not people are ever in their offices. Maybe someone rents an office and the CA and the MLA are here all the time in the Legislative Assembly, and that office is vacant.

So if this does -- you know, if we do approve this recommendation, there's going to need to be guidelines developed regarding how BOM approves places. We need to determine whether or not it's actually worth it in the long

run. So the idea itself is not a bad starting point but I think we need to put some meat on the bones. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River North. To the amendment? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually I was just going to clarify that it wasn't clear to me that this meant that the money would not be coming from our constituency budgets rather from the Legislative Assembly. So then, yes, in both matters, I don't support it for the reasons mentioned by other MLAs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the amendment? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, I look at this and I listen to the discussion and I think about the people out there that will probably never come to this building, don't feel welcome in this building and, you know, will probably never talk to some of you as MLAs here. And, you know, I guess coming from Hay River, coming from a -- you know, a community -- again, my office is on main street. I get people in there that -- again, that walk by and just come in. And I probably get, you know, 20, 25 people a day coming through there. Some of them just to drink coffee and other ones to actually -- you know, with issues. And you've got people that are, you know, in suits. You've got people that are -- that are on the street. And I think that it's important that we don't forget that we're here to represent everybody, like all our constituents, not just some of them. So I guess that's my big thing is that I'm concerned is that, you know, I just want to make sure that, you know, everybody's looked after and this is an opportunity to, you know, to consider it. And when it comes down to financial costs, I would hope that we would find some, you know, some financial support outside the -- you know, the monies allotted to the Yellowknife MLAs to fund something like this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the amendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour of the amendment? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the main motion as amended, all those in favour? Yes, all those in favour to the main motion amended? All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 284-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – UPDATED
REFERENCE DOCUMENT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend the reference document "So You want to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly" be updated and revised to ensure the information is current, visually appealing, and easy to read. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion. This is a useful document for those thinking about running for office, and it should be updated in time for the next election. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. This one I am 100 percent in support of. I know that when I first considered running for politics, I had no idea what I was getting into. I didn't know anything about this building nor the procedures at all. So I think that the more that we can do to actually ensure that all people understand how this structure works, the better off. And especially for people that are lower income and people that feel that they don't deserve to be here. I think everyone needs to know that they all deserve to be here. So I am 100 percent in support of this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 285-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES –
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WEBSITE,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the document referenced in Motion 23 is more easily found on the Legislative Assembly website. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion..Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstention? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 286-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – 'A DAY IN
THE LIFE OF AN MLA' VIDEO,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I MOVE that this Assembly recommend an awareness and information video "A day in the Life of an MLA" be created by following and interviewing Members and Ministers about their work in the Legislative Assembly. It is important to show the difference between the role of a Minister and a Member. This would assist with awareness not only for potential candidates but the public in general. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this recommendation and feel a video like this would be useful for both the public and anyone considering running in the next election. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not really opposed to this. I think it's fine for people to watch; I'd probably watch it.

I guess this came out of a bit of an ongoing concern at committee where people don't really realize what, I think especially Regular MLAs do. And I think the solution to that problem is we stop having the vast majority of our meetings in-camera. We do business plans in-camera. We just spent three weeks doing very tedious review in-camera. And if people want to know what MLAs do all day, that's -- well, they can't see what we do. So I think it would just be much easier to review what we do in-camera. I'm not too sure that people have as many doubts about what Ministers do, but maybe they do. They also do the vast majority of their work behind closed doors as well. So I think this is actually a transparency issue, and I'm not really sure that a little video is going to get us there to explain what we do behind closed doors all day. I think a good -- you know, if people want to know what MLAs do, they could probably watch this last hour of Committee of the Whole, and that would give you a sense of how most of our meetings look. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried. We'll have some movie stars in here.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 287-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – PUBLIC
INFORMATION ON LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND MEMBERS,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that clearly articulated and publicly available information about the purpose of the Legislative Assembly and the work and roles of an MLA in the NWT be created so individuals can become more informed and engaged in the political process. This could

include such things as educational and information resources, fact sheets, classroom activities, workshops or webinars. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion. Our public affairs and communications team are doing great work and recently published two excellent videos along these lines. The more the better when it comes to helping the public understand what we do in this place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I too will support this. I just don't think we do a very good job explaining what we do here and anything we can do to improve our way and means of telling people what we do here, I am in support of. And I think there's some reasonable ideas and suggestions here, and I know that some of this work is already underway by our public affairs folks. So I have no difficulty supporting this motion and the work that our staff are already doing. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also support this for the same reasons as the MLA. I think the more that we can get out to the public about what we do here in making this a viable option. In the last Assembly, the Regular Member and myself as Minister spent a lot of time trying to get women in leadership and a reality was is they often didn't know what was going on in this building. So the more that we can get to the public, the more it opens doors for those who do not think this building is accessible to them. So I'm supporting this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 288-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES –
 PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that a campaign to advertise and promote the purpose of the Legislative Assembly and the work and roles of an MLA, along with messaging about how important it is for the public to be informed about how government is created. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, along the same lines as the previous recommendation, I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 289-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – PAY AND
 BENEFITS WEBSITE INFORMATION,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this Assembly recommend that the information about pay and benefits be moved to a standalone tab in the side bar under the "Members" tab on the Legislative Assembly website. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion. I understand that the Legislative Assembly has started a major overhaul of its website. A redesign project will help improve users experience through an easier searchable platform, navigation, and

enhanced administrative capabilities. This will allow the public to have easier access to detailed and accurate information about their MLA's compensation and benefits. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 290-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 528-19(2): REPORT
 ON THE 2021 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – TIMING OF
 MATERIALS FOR FUTURE INDEPENDENT
 COMMISSIONS,
 CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that an electronic package of any relevant materials relating to the work of future independent commissions to review Member's compensation and benefits be delivered to the Members of future independent Commissions as soon as they are appointed to allow them time to read, review, and prepare for the work they will conduct and complete. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Members, that concludes our consideration of recommendations of the 2021 Independent Commission to review all MLA compensation and benefits. On behalf of all the Members, I'd like to thank the commission for their hard work and thoughtful recommendations. It is an important principle that we rely on the advice

of independent outside experts when we make changes to our compensation and benefits, and that any changes we make do not take effect until the new Assembly is elected.

We are now less than a year out from the next election, and I hope this report and the recommendations we have adopted will clarify things for the public, especially anyone considering letting their names stand for public office.

Committee, do you agree that the consideration of Tabled Document 528-19(2) is now complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. We'll take a break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call committee back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 654-19(2), 2021-2022 Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report. I will go to the deputy chair of Caucus for any opening comments. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on this matter as deputy chair of the Caucus.

As required by legislation, the House appointed an Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2021. The Commission published an interim report in December of 2021 to generate public input and discussion. Public consultations were hampered by COVID-19 but three virtual public hearings were held from February 14th to the 18th, 2022. Three residents appeared at these public hearings, and 12 others provided written submissions to the Commission. The commission's final report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on May 27th, 2022, and included five recommendations.

Our debate this afternoon will publicly review and consider each of these recommendations. The recommendations adopted by the House today will be considered by the Board of Management who will use them to draft and introduce legislation. Hopefully later this sitting, any changes resulting from these recommendations will take effect at the start of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

This concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. Once other Members have offered general observations, I am prepared to

introduce motions to accept the Commission's recommendations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further opening comment from Members? Thank you, Members. We will now proceed to the consideration of the report's recommendation. Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 291-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 654-19(2): 2021-2022
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL
REPORT - MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES,
DEFEATED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first recommendation is that the total number of electoral districts of the NWT remain at 19. The Commission is recommending some adjustments to the electoral boundaries in Yellowknife and Inuvik to balance the size of the constituencies in these multi-Member communities.

I move that the existing electoral districts be maintained subject to necessary adjustments to boundaries between electoral districts within Yellowknife and Inuvik as recommended by the 2021 Electoral Boundaries Commission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I recommend that this motion be accepted. I know that even minor adjustments to the electoral boundaries can be problematic for both Members, candidates, and most importantly residents. But some of the ridings in Yellowknife have grown much more rapidly than others and rebalancing is required. The same is true to a lesser extent in Inuvik. We strike independent Commissions to do this work for us to try and keep politics out of these important decisions. Madam Chair, I support the recommendations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too understand the reason for this work, and I thank the commission for doing so and especially during a difficult time when engagement is next to impossible.

I have to say and express my disappointment on the changes to my riding -- or district that

will coming in the sense of I have really connected with a lot of my constituents in areas that I'm now no longer, or if I am successful in my reelection, I would no longer be their MLA. While that is unfortunate, I do understand that the evening out of the ridings is very important. So while that is a personal disappointment, it is something that I will be supporting in this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm in favour of this motion as well which, it just means for Inuvik, it's equal representation, which means based on the new motion, it would be one extra block that will be given to Inuvik Twin Lakes MLA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and thank you again, Member. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. If maybe you could help just clarify for me in regards to the minor amendment for the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I think, according to the information in the document, is that the residents living on the Dettah Road will now be part of the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh -- I think they always have been, but I think it's just now documented, the people that are living on that road are a part of the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. Did you have any further questions, comments? Thank you. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee, please indulge me, I plan to speak for a while here.

I think when we gave this to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, many of us expected to see the addition of Yellowknife seats, which have long been underrepresented and have moved well past the 25 percent threshold established by both the Supreme Court of Canada and Justice Charbonneau in the last judicial review where Yellowknife was ordered to be given more seats, as well as an additional seat for the Monfwi riding, which now under this new formula is also well beyond that threshold and is the most underrepresented riding in the Northwest Territories.

I do not support this drawing of the boundaries. I believe they should have dealt with the question.

What they did here was creative; I'll give them credit for doing that work. They essentially created two types of ridings - urban, which include Hay River, Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and then the remaining seven are all special ridings. I don't think any of us in this House have issue with special ridings. There are ridings that are small in population, and I think always should warrant one MLA, and we can live with that. But when you look at the map, and it is a creative map they have done, Yellowknife's going to have to get to about 26,000 people, which is, you know, an increase of -- well, I don't know, about 20 percent or so, to get another seat. So it basically we've locked in under this new formula, the underrepresentation of Yellowknifers for the coming decades, assuming we accept this formula. As well as Monfwi, being a special designated riding, will never get another seat. They can gain another thousand people and it just doesn't matter. They're special, and that means they get one MLA under this formula. I don't think that's fair.

The commission should have done their job and presented an option that is in compliance with the current law. I recognize that this committee, it was chaired by a former judge, a Supreme Court judge, and if this is judicially reviewed, there's probably a pretty strong deference to recommendations made by former judges and passed by Legislative Assemblies, so I don't know whether this will survive judicial review. But I think perhaps we should have had the fight that was meant to be had about what to do about this fundamental question of as the population of Yellowknife increases, it gets underrepresented by MLAs.

It's not an easy question. I believe there was a political compromise probably to add one more seat to Monfwi and one more seat to Yellowknife and bring us to a 21-Member Legislative Assembly. That's the option I would have favoured. But, you know, that's not even a great option. I don't think any of us are all that excited about more politicians in this territory. So there are no easy options.

But the way I see it the commission did not go out and do the hard question of bringing us something that is in compliance with the previous court cases on this issue, and I am concerned that whether people from the Tlicho region or people from Yellowknife bring a court case that we will lose that, and we will put that all into chaos.

All that being said, I have one more other comment. I find it very odd that the Ingraham Trail is being moved from Yellowknife North to Range Lake. Ridings tend to develop a bit of a

culture over time, and Ingraham Trail was part of the Weledeh riding before Yellowknife North riding was created, and I think those residents are better suited to remain in the Yellowknife North riding. I think they have a lot of similarities. I just don't think it makes sense to move that over to Range Lake. It's only a couple hundred people, most of whom are illegally living in recreational leases anyway so they shouldn't even be there.

Yeah, for those reasons I'm just not prepared to accept this motion and the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I thank all of them for their work. It's not an easy job. They were faced with one of the hardest political challenges I think we have, which is what to do about this underrepresentation of Yellowknife issue. It certainly doesn't make anyone happy. But I don't think they faced it head on, and I think they've left us some legal risk. And ultimately, I can't support it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I agree with a lot of what the Member for Yellowknife North has had to say. I am looking now also at the results of the proposed changes to the ridings and the results that that leads to which, as noted already, does not resolve the chronic and historic underrepresentation of Yellowknife residents. I understand that there's a number of factors, everything ranging from geography to language to historical connection and that, you know, the right to being represented doesn't mean, you know, that it's a perfect number that you draw down and that everyone has exactly the same amount of representation percentage. And in fact, there's quite a wide variance accepted anywhere in Canada under law and that in addition to that, we add sort of what we say are the special ridings. And I agree, there's a good reason for that. That makes perfect sense in the Northwest Territories; if we're going to do things to best suit the residents of the Northwest Territories and some of the unique circumstances of the Northwest Territories. But much has been said by my colleague here.

I struggle with the fact that we just aren't facing this issue. We just aren't facing the fact that there are some ridings where there are many residents of the Northwest Territories who simply do not have the same level of representative voice in this room as others.

Is this the best solution? You know, Madam Chair, having basically not faced the question, this redrawing of the electoral boundaries, you know, subject to hearing other comments here, I'm not opposed to the redrawing that they've done, but I -- again, I'm simply putting on the record that I do agree that right now, the people that live in Yellowknife South will be having the least amount of representation next only to Monfwi. And that these two ridings will have the most residents in them and pushing 20 percent or more over -- or underrepresentation compared to all the other ridings. So, you know, again, what we're really voting on at this point is just a redrawing of the boundaries. So be it. But it is unfortunate that a better solution that is more representative simply can't seem to be found or that we can't have the better debate about it, so. But there we are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also agree with the Member from Yellowknife North. I do think that for many years I've been hearing about the underrepresentation, and I do think that it should have been addressed. I'm not a hundred percent sure why the committee didn't address that or give it a solid explanation of why not. I think that kind of a disservice was done. But, Madam Chair, so therefore I'm going to vote against this motion.

But Madam Chair, if it does go through, one thing I did hear on the campaign trail is there's a lot of confusion on the Ingraham Trail. People were telling me that they believe they were in my riding of Range Lake, and I knew that they weren't. So if this motion does pass, I think that we need to do a huge advertising campaign so that the residents know who their MLA will be because that's an issue that I've been seeing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I would like to thank the members of the commission for the work that they undertook. I did review the interim report, and again the final report. I didn't make a submission as I think there's always some risk in sitting MLAs actually participating in these kinds of processes. But, you know, I think, as I've heard some other Members speak, that the difficult decision of the number of MLAs and how the boundaries should be drawn has largely been kind of put off to eight years in the future when the next Electoral Boundaries

Commission would sit and consider these matters. And I'm not sure that that's a great idea. I guess I'd hoped that they would -- I understand their reasoning and their creative way of trying to address, you know, the linguistic cultural diversity of the Northwest Territories and the rural/urban dimensions. And I think they really tried to avoid tinkering with some of the balance issues that, you know, even the courts struggle with. So what they have come up with is redrawing of some of the boundaries within Yellowknife and Inuvik. And, you know, I don't know enough about Inuvik to say anything about those boundaries but the Yellowknife boundaries, the way that they've been presented in the report and will -- you know, what we're talking about is actually now adopting the recommendations from the commission which would then have to be put into legislation in time for the next election. So we're kind of up against a time constraint here, and it's kind of like a "take it or leave it" approach right now where if we accept the recommendations from the commission, there is time to get this put into legislation in time for the next election. If we reject these recommendations, I'm not sure that changes can be made in time for the next election. And I'm not even going to go anywhere near a court challenge.

I've looked at the changes that are proposed for the Yellowknife ridings. Frame Lake is not my riding; it's the riding that I represent now, and there may be another MLA here in the future representing that riding. So I don't take any issues or I don't have any concerns about the redrawing of the Frame Lake boundary. I'm here to serve the people wherever they live in the riding. But the one area, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, that does cause me some concern is the Ingraham Trail. Traditionally they've been part of the Yellowknife North riding, and I don't think people on the Ingraham Trail even know this is happening and that by accepting the recommendations here this evening that they are going to be moved into the Range Lake riding. I don't think they know that. And I don't think they've had the ability to express their concerns, if they have any about that, because nobody really knows. So that's the one thing that I'm particularly concerned about. And, you know, I guess the option would be that we don't accept these boundaries or have somebody else look at it and redraw them in some way. But for Yellowknife MLAs to be seen tinkering with the boundaries themselves, gerrymandering; we don't want to go there, that's just not a good thing. So I don't know who, you know, we would even ask. Could we refer this back to the commission, or ask the -- I don't know -- Elections NWT to

look at this issue? The bureau of stats? I don't know. But I have been mulling this over for a while, and I'm just not sure that I can support this, the recommendation the way that it's been framed. So I'm just not sure what I'm going to do at this point. But this is a difficult topic and we're under some time constraints, and I'm just not sure what to do. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know -- well, it is frustrating, you know, because if we get a seat -- if Tlicho get a seat, then Yellowknife automatically get a seat. I mean, that's -- well, it doesn't sit well with us because for a long time we've been asking for an additional seat, you know, in Tlicho region, since 2011 that I can think that -- you know, that I can think of, that we've been asking for an additional seat in Tlicho region because being -- Behchoko being the largest Dene community, second by Tuktoyaktuk, Indigenous community. So it's -- like, oh okay, it's just that it's not right what's happening here.

When Inuvik got their additional seat, when Hay River got their additional seat, Tlicho region should have got their additional seat as well because in Behchoko alone, we have -- it's, like, close to 2,000 population. And we are underrepresented. And people do get frustrated in my region because of underrepresentation. And it just -- yes, it is frustrating because if we get a seat, then Yellowknife gets a seat. We should be separate from that, you know. If we were alone with our population size in the regions, we should be standalone and give the seat that is greatly needed in my region.

And the chiefs -- well, I talk to my community leaders, or I talked to a leader. They said they did get a letter from the Commissioner -- Electoral Commissioner. So they did get the letter but what they wanted was some kind of an engagement with them, to talk to them, to meet with MLAs so that you can hear their view on this important issues, this important issues where it's just that it's -- like, should we go on another, you know -- for another -- for 20th Assembly with only one representation from my region? But we know where it's going. I know what's going to happen. I know this will -- you know, regardless, it's still either -- you know, it's going to go ahead.

So I just -- for that, I will not support this because Tlicho region is very underrepresented, and we do need additional

seat. And even my colleagues have said that here too. So I do really -- I will not support this motion at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This issue here has been brought up while I was doing my door to door last year, and there were issues even then when I was listening to my constituent members. And the Yellowknife North used to include Dettah and N'dilo before. And then their recent -- in the last review of the electoral boundaries changed and they included N'dilo and Dettah in the new riding Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. And so when I was going door to door, some of the members were talking about, you know, they were -- they really didn't want to see that happen mainly because their language and culture. And, but they went ahead. They talked about this. And so now today in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding we have four communities.

Even though this minor amendment to include Dettah Road in this amendment in this motion, the people that live on that Dettah Road already were voting in the last election. So, you know, I'm also concerned that, you know, we got to talk about consultation accommodation, and I'm not -- I don't see that here because of, you know, what happened in the pandemic. And there's some concerns there. And, you know, if we go ahead with this, I'm going to see -- I could see a judicial review happening because a lot of people were really never consulted when this whole Commission was happening during the pandemic, and I think it's something that may come back and haunt us. So Madam Chair, I cannot support this motion at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. Raise your arms high because I am going to have to count this one out. All those in favour?

Again, raise your arms high so we can count. All those in favour? So I need all those in favour. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I request a recorded vote.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The Member for Hay River North has

requested a recorded vote. Just give me a second here.

Members, I'm just going to call a short recess, like, three, five minutes. Okay, three to five minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Members, the Member for Hay River North requested a recorded vote so we will go ahead with the recorded vote. So all those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Member for Hay River South. Member for Great Slave. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Hay River North.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Deh Cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Those Members who are abstaining, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Frame Lake.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Members, the results of the recorded vote is six in favour; seven against, one abstention. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 292-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 654-19(2): 2021-2022
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL
REPORT – ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
ELECTORAL DISTRICT NAMES,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Legislative Assembly considers striking an advisory committee for the appropriate compensation to review all existing names on electoral districts, take into consideration culturally and historically appropriate factors, and to make

recommendations, if any, for change. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, this recommendation is a little confusing as one of the duties of an Electoral Boundaries Commission laid out in legislation is to recommend the names of electoral districts. As we will see a little later, the commission has recommended a minor change to the name of one district. I am not certain that we have adequate time to complete this review and change legislation prior to the next election, Madam Chair, but I support the recommendations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, when I first decided to run for this Assembly, I ended up joining a group on social media that was for women in leadership, etcetera. And then when I won, I made quite a -- what I thought was a great post about myself in that group saying I was part of this amazing gender equal Cabinet, not realizing that this international group was going to jump down my throat for the name Great Slave of my riding. So that was a bit of a first reminder of myself of the connotation of the name "slave." And when I came into the -- and albeit knowing that there is a different reason for that name here in the Northwest Territories, it does carry a bad historical connotation.

When I came in, I did want to put forward a private Member's bill to change the name of my riding, and I was told that there would be an Electoral Commissioner's report this term, and so I thought well, I'll just wait for that.

I am a disappointed that this is as slow as it is. I would have actually liked to have seen actual recommendations for the name of my riding to change and to be more culturally inclusive of the area that it incorporates. Unfortunately, this is just saying let's start looking at that and the GNWT loves to plan to plan. So I guess that's where we're at for this one. But I do support this motion, and I look forward to, I hope, a good extensive engagement with Indigenous organizations and governments in order to determine what these names will be. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I too agree with this motion. I think we do need to change the names of at least one riding in Yellowknife, and I'm not even going to use the word because I earlier today called it colonial and racist, and I'm trying to consciously not use that word anymore, so. But I see that, you know, this piece of legislation, and if I can get the name right here, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act, and I think there's an advisory committee established underneath this act if I get this right, or if -- sorry, Northwest Territories Honours Advisory Council or -- I think we have another thing to do with symbols. I think we do need to have independent advice on getting some potential changes to some of the riding names. And even if it doesn't happen in this round of changes to the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, if we set this up in a timely way and get the recommendations back and passed through the House, I think we probably still have time to get the names out of one, two ridings maybe, changed in time for the next election. So I do think there are some time constraints here but I think it's doable, and I really would encourage that we collectively support this and get that piece of work done. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 293-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 654-19(2): 2021-2022
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL
REPORT – INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT AND
ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITES ACT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly consider amending section 9(c) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act and for sections 54-55 of the Election and Plebiscites Act to clarify any inconsistencies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support this motion. This is a housekeeping item to ensure that future independent Commissions have access to information into the register of electors to conduct their work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 294-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 654-19(2): 2021-2022
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION, FINAL
REPORT – REFERENCE TO FEDERAL
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly consider deleting from section 9 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act any reference to the federal Northwest Territories Act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Madam Chair, I support this motion. The NWT Act used to set minimums and maximums for the number of electoral districts in the NWT but this was removed in 2014. This is a housekeeping item, Madam Chair, and I support the recommendation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

COMMITTEE MOTION 295-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 654-19(2): 2021-2022
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL
REPORT – CORRECT SPELLING OF DEH
CHO ELECTORAL DISTRICT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this Assembly consider correcting the spelling of the Deh Cho electoral district in schedule A of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Commission heard from residents during its public hearings that in the South Slavey language "Dehcho" is one word, not two, Madam Chair. I support this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Members, this concludes our consideration of the recommendations of the 2021 Electoral Boundaries Commission. On behalf of all Members, I would like to thank the Commission for their hard work and thoughtful recommendations.

Committee, are we agreed that consideration of Tabled Document 654-19(2) is now complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Member for Frame Lake, what is the wish of committee?

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and none debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: 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 Tabled Document 528-19(2) and Tabled Document 654-19(2) and would like to report progress, with 27 motions carried, and that Tabled Document 528-19(2) and Tabled Document 654-19(2) are concluded. 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 Yellowknife Centre. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 19th, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1163-19(2), Homelessness
 - Oral Question 1188-19(2), Red Cross
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022
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 48, Arbitration Act
 - Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act
 - Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act
 - Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates
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 Wednesday, October 19th, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:17 p.m.