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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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Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for Youth

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Finance
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 27, 2023****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 339-19(2):
INTRODUCING THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

MR. SPEAKER: Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in May 2022 our government announced the merger of the Departments of Lands and Environment and Natural Resources. Post-devolution, the merger is an important step to evolve the resource management, regulatory, and security responsibilities that are linked but currently split between the two departments.

Mr. Speaker, we have been hard at work since May 2022. Leadership in both departments have worked with staff to develop the merger organization structure for the new department. In mid-November 2022, the high-level organization design was approved; and, on March 9th, the establishment policy for the new department was approved. Leaders continue to work with staff through workshops and information sharing sessions and regular engagements to make sure we collectively make the merger a success.

Managing change is crucial to maintaining a strong public service. To this end, we have contracted experts to help guide us through the first year of change. This process will create a resilient and focused organization ready to tackle the current and future priorities of our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Erin Kelly will be the deputy minister of the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Dr. Kelly is highly qualified for the role, with 21 years of experience in the environmental science and management sector, including nine years of progressive leadership within the environment and natural resources directorate. Her extensive knowledge and dedication to public service makes her an ideal fit for the position.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure we get this right. That is why the merger will be moving forward in two phases. April 1st will conclude the first phase of the work to align complementary program areas within both departments. During phase two, the new department will continue to enhance organizational structures to make the best use of human and financial resources so that we provide the most efficient programs and services to the residents and organizations of the NWT. This work is intended to align with the government's renewal initiative.

Mr. Speaker, with change comes uncertainty but it also provides opportunity. As we build the Department of Environment and Climate Change, we will take every opportunity to create an organization which will connect this territory's land, water, air, wildlife, and forest resources and continue to strengthen our leadership on climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 340-19(2):
ACCELERATED DIGITAL ADOPTION
PROJECTS FOR TOMORROW FUND

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation, or BDIC, is excited about business development and digital transformation opportunities in the territory. As

we shift to a digital economy where consumers are purchasing more goods and more services online, looking for e-commerce convenience and expecting vendors to personalize offerings, there is a greater need to support businesses to establish or increase their online presence. I am pleased to announce the introduction of the Accelerate Digital Adoption Projects for Tomorrow Fund, or ADAPT, at the BDIC.

The fund is a revamp of the BDIC's contribution program to assist businesses with digital adoption. This fund can be used in combination with the Canadian Digital Adoption Program, for a total of \$5,000 to get online, increase online presence, boost e-commerce or digitalize operations. The federal Canadian Digital Adoption Program provides qualifying NWT small businesses with up to a \$2,400 in grants and e-commerce advice to help businesses build their digital capacity. The Accelerate Digital Adoption Projects for Tomorrow Fund is designed to complement the federal funding program with up to an additional \$2,600 available in grant funding for a total of \$5,000. To deliver its mandate to help create and develop business enterprises in all industries and promote economic development in the Northwest Territories, the Business Development Investment Corporation is committed to finding ways to create value for entrepreneurs that are entering the digital market or expanding their digital presence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1469-19(2): LAND LEASING POLICIES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Lands is currently running an ad campaign on the benefits of leasing. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the main benefit of leasing, which is one we all tend to ignore in this territory, and the main benefit is that at the end of a lease, a lessor can take the land back, Mr. Speaker. And, in fact, in the Northwest Territories, not only do we take the land back, we require the lessee to tear down any structures and remediate the land, Mr. Speaker. And yet everyone I talk to who has a lease does not seem to think this is at all a possibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves - are we actually going to take back any of the land and the structures that people live in under these leases? And, Mr. Speaker, if the answer

to that question is no, there is a very simple and obvious solution. That is to give those people their land, Mr. Speaker, that we have no intention of actually taking back. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time we get out of the leasing business.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to start with the hunters and trappers who are exercising a traditional right. I say the easiest and most simplest solution here is to identify their cabins, give it to them in fee simple for a dollar, and leave them alone, Mr. Speaker. No more inspections.

However, Mr. Speaker, if we're not willing to do that, I think there is an elegant solution in some sort of tenure for Indigenous rights holders. May I suggest a 99-year lease for \$1, and then we leave them alone, Mr. Speaker. And we might just have to accept that our pages and pages of lease guidelines aren't the best fit. Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to meet our hunters and trappers where they are. The reality is they have cabins that are sometimes within the hundred meter set back from the high watermark, Mr. Speaker, and we might just have to accept that, Mr. Speaker, and give them some sort of tenure for \$1, Mr. Speaker, and stop charging them lease fees, stop charging them taxes, and stop taking them to collections.

Next, Mr. Speaker, once we are in community boundaries, why do we have any leases? The key role of community government is to set bylaws that speak to setbacks, the size of structures, and to administrate their land in community boundaries. It is time we take every single lease we have in the community boundaries and either give it to the community government or the individual who lives in that house. The GNWT needs to get out of the leasing business and stop doubling down on the benefits of leasing if our intention is to not actually take the land back at the end of the term. I'll have questions for the Minister of Lands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1470-19(2): YOUTH LEADERSHIP GATHERINGS

MS. NOKLEBY: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be back in the House after the Spring Break, and I rise today to praise the efforts of young leaders in our territory. Over the last few months, youth from around the territory have been organizing and hosting summits in their communities. These gatherings brought future leaders together to discuss the

challenges they all face, to learn from each other and experts, and to share their solutions and ideas for a brighter future. Gatherings have been held in Behchoko, Dettah, and Fort Providence, to name a few, and saw youth gather, not only from the NWT, but from the Yukon and Nunavut as well. Events involved traditional hand games, crafts, and drumming, as well as workshops on communication skills and mental and physical health and well-being. Youth had the opportunity to try new things and make new friends, building relationships that will last a lifetime; Relationships I know will be crucial when these young people take their seats in this House and at the consultation tables across the regions. These youth are our future, and it heartens me to see their strength and resiliency, to see them take the reins of their own destiny. For that, I want to thank everyone who helped organize these events that give voice and opportunity to the youth of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, it's no secret youth are facing challenges. The reports being tabled by the social development committee show that youth are crying out for help and want solutions and our government is failing them. Whether it is youth aging out of care, children trapped in the endless cycle of care which is akin to the trauma of the residential school system, boredom due to the lack of resources in communities, no youth psychiatric facility, and no youth treatment centre. Why do we have a Minister responsible for Youth when there appears to be little to no advocacy from them in this area?

Mr. Speaker, we need to invest in our youth. This means actually taking care of them and providing the resources they need. When Ministers tell me that a 16-year-old must find themselves a new home or go to the overcrowded youth shelter that is barely funded by this government, it shows me that they don't care. And more devastatingly, Mr. Speaker, it tells the youth that they don't care, and that breaks my heart. We are role models. The youth are watching and learning what works, what doesn't, and whose needs are actually being met. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1471-19(2):
ALBERTA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
TRANSBOUNDARY WATER AGREEMENT

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it should be clear that the current bilateral water management agreement with

Alberta is not an effective mechanism to protect our waterways. We have heard from the Minister that there have been two separate incidents at this oil sands mine between the 5.3 million litres of industrial waste spillover in February and then a separate incident where oil sands tailings ponds, with contaminants over the regulated guidelines, have seeped into the groundwater and surface water since May 2022. According to the news reports, the premier of Alberta has gone on record to state that the Alberta government, through the 2005 Bilateral Water Agreement, have no obligation to notify the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our ability to create stronger environmental protection mechanisms with other jurisdictions is very limited as noted with the current bilateral agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the impact to our watershed and aquatic life is at risk. Our way of life is at risk due to another jurisdiction's inactions to protect the waterways at all costs. The Alberta government do not believe that water is life and is sacred to the well-being of Indigenous nations that live on the waterways. The Indigenous nations have never been consulted nor have any meaningful consultations prior to the development of the tar sands for oil extraction. I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1472-19(2):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
MORTGAGE ARREARS

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT has accumulated \$16.5 million in arrears. Of that, \$4.9 million is owed in mortgage payments. The role of Housing NWT is to provide safe and affordable housing to residents. It is not to set up people for failure, entering into mortgages with people only to evict them later because they cannot afford the mortgage.

Mr. Speaker, I have residents who renewed their mortgage with Housing NWT when it was clear they were unable to keep up with costs of that mortgage. I agree that we need to promote homeownership, but Housing NWT must consider a person's fiscal reality and enter into realistic contracts when doing this.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT has a collection policy that it does not appear to use.

I have seniors who are being told they need to renew a mortgage they cannot afford to renew

when they receive a letter saying they are behind on their mortgage payment. We have Housing NWT refinancing mortgages with young adults in their 20s upon getting their first full-time job. This, again, is setting up our people for failure, Mr. Speaker.

The Government of the Northwest Territories needs to take responsibility and support our residents if Housing NWT mortgage arrears continue to grow. That means there is something wrong with the NWT Housing process for entering into mortgages or collecting payments or managing arrears. There is mismanagement on Housing NWT's side. This is not reflective of what residents need. Thank you. I will have questions for the Minister of housing. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1473-19(2):
REVIEW OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
POLICY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In the Finance Minister's budget address on February 8th, 2023, there was mention of a review of the fiscal responsibility policy. She said, quote, last summer, we evaluated this policy and its requirement that at least half of GNWT capital investments is financed by the operating surplus to ensure that it still is effective in meeting our debt management principles. We've already started changes in the reporting on the future debt implications in this budget, and in short order, we will be revising the fiscal responsibility policy to help decision makers better understand the implications of their budget choices, end of quote. The fiscal responsibility policy has failed to keep us out of growing debt. The 2023-2024 year-end debt projection is \$1.5 billion, \$65 million higher than that projected for 2022-2023. This policy also did not prevent the massive over-budgeting of capital projects that has finally been capped, at least in practice. I can confirm that there was engagement with Regular MLAs on the fiscal responsibility policy late last year. Unfortunately, I can't talk much about it, but I do think our feedback was amongst the best work we have ever done. It appears that the Minister has finally heard Regular MLAs' calls for the calculations associated with the determination of compliance or noncompliance with the fiscal responsibility policy that will now regularly be found in financial documents. We need more detailed financial reporting and accountability throughout the year to ensure that sound financial management continues. There needs

to be some consequences, though, for noncompliance and at a minimum a requirement for a plan to be made public to bring our finances back in order. I'm particularly concerned with this government's increasing reliance on public, private partnerships or P3s as a way to finance larger capital projects. There's been little to no analysis or disclosure of the impact this has had on our operating budgets as P3 services costs eat away into our ability to provide programs and services. There should be firm caps on P3 servicing costs just as there are on debt servicing as part of the fiscal responsibility policy. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1474-19(2):
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF
GOVERNORS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, on March 6th, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment announced the Members of the new Aurora College Board of governors. I was very pleased to hear the Minister's long-awaited announcement on this matter because I know that having a new board of governors for Aurora College is a vital step to advancing the transformation into a new polytechnic university.

Mr. Speaker, among the 13 appointees of this board, there are five people from the South Slave Region - two Hay River residents, two Fort Smith residents, plus one student representative from the Fort Smith campus.

I am very happy to see that the South Slave is well represented on this newly appointed board. On behalf of the constituents of Thebacha, I want to welcome all 13 new Members into their new roles as the board of governors for Aurora College. I know that this new board will provide valuable input into the transformation and overall direction of the future polytechnic university.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that with this new board, Aurora College will have a stronger northern influence, will work to decentralize, and will be in good hands as this process goes ahead.

Lastly, I would like to thank Denny Rogers for his service as the administrator of Aurora College for the last six years. I will have questions for Minister of education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1475-19(2):
SPORT AND RECREATION FUNDING FOR
BEAUFORT DELTA COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today before we start, I'd like to congratulate the Yukon Indian hockey tournament this past weekend and the K & D Outlaws from Aklavik for winning B Division down at the biggest tournament, the Stanley Cup of our hockey tournaments in the North, and I really want to congratulate Bodie and Johnny Elias. I was really proud last night, former -- our good friend Darius Elias, who passed away, former MLA for North Yukon. North Yukon Eagles won the A Division and Johnny's really looking like his dad and so when I watch -- we watched those kids grow up. So I'm really, really proud of them. So congratulations to all who participated in that tournament.

Mr. Speaker, today my Member's statement is on recreation funding. Accessing sport and recreation in my communities is not as easy as it is here in Yellowknife. My constituents travel from communities with larger centres is extremely expensive. Yellowknife will have Super Soccer shortly, Cager tournament, countless other tournaments in the South Slave, and being able to drive to Edmonton and Grande Prairie is very realistic for them. Mr. Speaker, the charter from my communities can cost up to \$30,000 round trip. A round trip ticket from Inuvik to Yellowknife is costing now \$1,400 on our local airline. Our current economic activity is crippling supporting our youth and ensuring the access of sport and recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I should not need to tell this House how the importance of sport is in building our youth - our future leaders. Sports programming helps our youth grow mentally to become more confident, developing skills, having a physical outlet. Sports gives a chance for meeting new friends, a positive environment, and being able to travel outside of our home communities. All this goes a long way. It's not about going out and going into communities as well. We are not seeing our territorial sport organizations supported. They are facing inflation, high costs of delivering sports programs. We're not giving the strong foundation for our youth to travel to meet other athletes and themselves and try to excel themselves in sport.

I was told by the Minister \$250,000 was budgeted for the Beaufort Delta, and MACA. That's not nearly enough as giving us what we ask for. The costs have been highlighted. I will

have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1476-19(2):
ALBERTA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS AGREEMENT
AND NATIONAL WATER STRATEGY

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I come to you with a message of great concerns regarding our waters. As we speak, the Slave water system, which is a lifeline for many small communities in our region, is facing serious threats of downstream water contamination originating in Alberta. This contamination is a result of industrial development and has the potential to cause irreparable harm to our environment, our economy and, most importantly, the health of our people in the Tu Nedhe-Willideh riding and all residents of the Northwest Territories as downstream users.

The current transboundary agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and Alberta lacks the regulatory means to address this issue. This means that we are at the mercy of those who are polluting our waters system south of the 60th Parallel and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act only addresses the commercial development north of 60 in the Northwest Territories.

We cannot allow this to continue. We need to take action, and we need to take action now. The Government of the Northwest Territories must lead a campaign with the federal government and provincial governments to create a national water strategy that ensures Canada's water system is protected for our future generation against any potential harmful effects as a result of industry development. We need to come together and demand that all government takes this issue seriously.

Our water is not just a resource; it's a fundamental right for all Canadians. And it goes without saying that for Indigenous people, water is life. Without it, communities cannot thrive and our way of life will be lost. We cannot allow harmful effects caused by industrial polluters south of the 60th parallel to threaten our health and well-being in my riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh and all residents of the Northwest Territories.

I urge you to all join me in the fight. Let us make our voices heard and demand that our government take the necessary steps today to protect the water system with the Government

of Canada. Let us work together to ensure that our children and our children's children can enjoy the same clean and healthy water that we have today. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1477-19(2):
IMPROVING GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
PROCUREMENT POLICIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the word "procurement" has been mentioned over 500 times in this House in the life of this Assembly, which is more than the previous two Assemblies.

Through conversations about procurement, we have advocated for increased northern procurement benefit retention, economic reconciliation, improved procurement transparency, and a general change in procurement accessibility. As elected leaders, we have all committed to making procurement improvements as requested by all Northerners.

In September 2021, the procurement review panel published its findings and 50 recommendations. According to the panel, this review provides the GNWT with an historic opportunity to establish a solid foundation for the strategic use of procurement and take full control of the opportunities to leverage public contracting to support economic and social objectives in the Northwest Territories.

This past fall, the GNWT tabled a work plan with a single table divided into four deliverable categories:

- Administrative updates to make it easier to do business with the GNWT;
- Actions to improve government procurements;
- Transparency and accountability; and,
- Efforts to increase the benefits of government procurement for Indigenous and NWT businesses.

But that is literally the extent of the work plan's detail.

Mr. Speaker, this work plan does not give certainty of whether or not the procurement review of the 19th Assembly will affect change or fall short of resident and northern business expectations.

In response to questions about the outcomes of the procurement review, this House has been told that, quote, "the work is underway, and we need to wait and see how it unfolds."

Mr. Speaker, we have limited time left in the life of this Assembly, and this Assembly needs the opportunity to review, question, and hold the government accountable to changes to the GNWT procurement policies. And as a Regular Member, I need the opportunity to advocate for the people and entrepreneurs I serve and ensure their voices, experience, and time given during the panel review are respected. NWT businesses continue to question why their businesses continue to operate north of 60 when significant contract dollars go south to where the cost of doing business is more affordable, and population decreases show that a significant number of Northerners are heading south. Northerners need certainty. Regular Members cannot continue to wait and see how long the work of the procurement review unfolds. This government needs to finalize this work and deliver it, along with certainty, to NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1478-19(2):
EULOGY FOR JACK LEE MOUSE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Jack Lee Mouse was born on May 15th, 1972, in Fort Simpson. He passed away on March 14th, 2023, at the age of 51. He was the son of Cecelia Mouse and Frederick Tonka. When we heard that he passed away, the family, friends and community were very shocked and saddened. Mr. Speaker, death has taken away a genuinely nice individual and, more importantly, a loving nephew, cousin, and brother. While the family and friends mourned the loss, they gathered in Fort Simpson to pay tribute and a celebration a life this past Tuesday. I can advise you that he had left a lasting impression in the minds of his acquaintances and others. People knew him as a pleasant, cooperative, helpful, and dedicated individual. Everyone at the service talked about how they always remembered his laugh and how it made them feel.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of knowing Jack in 1993 on the ball field in Fort Simpson when we played the Roadrunners team. He stood out because of several things. He has a reverse grip when he went up to bat on the left-hand side of the plate. He could spray and hit the ball into whatever location he wanted,

and he was very fast. He played right field and enjoyed the game. On top of those attributes, he always had fun and was an excellent sportsman on and off the field. His team gave him the nickname "Tamarack Jack."

Mr. Speaker, as time passed, and the more I got to know him, I had the pleasure of chatting with him off and on throughout the years, especially when he walked past my home when I was outside. I can tell you he was a very proud person who loved where he was brought up and his family. He was a very nice person that cared about his family.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this is a particularly difficult and painful time for his family. In extending to them my heartfelt condolences, I wish them courage and strength as they deal with their loss.

Mr. Speaker, I received a beautiful write-up from his cousin Angela, and I would like it to be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, the family would like to thank everybody for their support during this difficult time, especially Liidlii Kue First Nation and their executive director. He will be sadly missed by his surviving family and friends.

Hi Shane, Please find enclosed the letter about my cousin Jack, as promised. First off, we will miss him so very much, he was so young.

Growing up with Jack, he was no different than my brother Daniel. He was so funny, and his laugh was amazing. There were so many good memories of Jack that we all loved, especially how good he was at fishing and hunting. He would share the food he hunted for, and he'd give it to family. He was so kind and always cared about others before himself. We all are like Jack this way so much.

One of the amazing things I loved about my cousin Jack was how fast he was at running. We were at Grandma's cabin across the river, we were just little kids then, and I tried catching up to Jack as he was running from me in the bush. I called out for him but he was super fast and he was gone. I was amazed how fast he was, just like his nickname "roadrunner" like the cartoon.

Jack was so very traditional. He reminded me of my amazing uncles. He would always be speaking Dene, and this was so important to our culture and who we all are. Jack and my mom Elizabeth Mouse taught me, my brother Daniel, and my little sister Mary-Ellen how to go fishing the amazing way - tie some fishing string on a stick with a simple hook holding a piece of bread or a small fish and it worked big time. I

caught the biggest jack fish at ten years old with my amazing cousin Jack and my sister and brother.

Jack will be forever missed so much. Everyone loved Jack. He was such an amazing, good person. Thank you for the reading. Angela Elizabeth McGonigle.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community at this time.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 1404-19(2):
CHILD CARE FUNDING SUPPORTS FOR
TEEN PARENTS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Kam Lake on February 28, 2023, regarding Child Care Funding Supports for Teen Parents.

The department will take the Member's suggestions into consideration, particularly as we advance the Child and Family Services Action Plan and explore ways in which we can work with other departments to provide integrated services.

As the department continues to enhance the delivery of services, we recognize there is a need for options. Currently, child and family services has two types of voluntary support services agreement options available to teen parents that can include funding for child care: the Support Services Agreement or the Voluntary Services Agreement. The difference between the two agreements is that one directly supports the youth while the other supports the family who is supporting the youth.

To access these options, the individual youth would meet with a community social services worker to determine the services that best meets their needs. The community social services worker guides the youth through the program options. All agreements incorporate a philosophy of maintaining family, culture, and community connections and can include support from relevant Indigenous organizations.

Mr. Speaker, child and family services acknowledges that colonization has created systemic barriers for residents. All NWT residents, including teen parents, deserve to feel safe, free from discrimination and racism when accessing health and social services. We

are making some important progress in this area. For example, the cultural safety and anti-racism team tailored the existing cultural safety and anti-racism training specifically to focus on harmful historical and present-day child and family services policies that have contributed to anti-Indigenous racism and systemic barriers for clients. This training was delivered to child and family services staff in November 2022 and will be delivered again in November 2023. As a second example, the department is developing cultural safety and anti-racism principles in 2023 with guidance from the Indigenous Advisory Body. These principles will shape how we operate as a system, towards a culture of cultural safety. Child and family services continues to make improvements based on feedback from families, communities and stakeholders, and we are committed to continuing these discussions, no matter how uncomfortable they may be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 1411-19(2):
TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Great Slave on March 1st, 2023, regarding renewable energy.

Regarding the request for information about how much of the \$20 million in funding secured for Taltson Hydro Expansion has been retained with northern businesses and how much has been sole sourced to former Government of the Northwest Territories, or GNWT, employees, I can provide some information in addition to what is already on the public record.

To date, approximately \$11.5 million has been spent on pre-feasibility work for the project. This includes activities related to regulatory planning, commercial development, forming Indigenous partnerships, and establishing the technical parameters for transmission and generation components of the project. Of this amount, approximately \$6.2 million, or 54.6 percent, of spending has been distributed to northern businesses, residents, and Indigenous governments.

Regarding specific sole source contracts, a total of \$167,000, or 1.4 percent, was paid to a single contractor over a four-year term, from June 2019 to November 2022. The consultant was formerly an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories whose experience

was relied upon to build and coordinate working relationships between the parties involved.

The Taltson Hydro Expansion Project is being developed in partnership with the Akaitcho Dene First Nation, or ADFN, and Northwest Territories Metis Nation, or NWTMN. A key area of focus early in this project was the development of a guiding statement of principles and a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to advance the project. The success of a project of this scale hinges on collaboration and relationship building between the various parties at the table. Although it took some time to establish trust between the parties, this is a long-term project. An MOU was formally endorsed by the leadership of the ADFN and NWTMN at our first Taltson Expansion Steering Committee meeting which was June 2021. The consultant continued to support the MOU implementation until November 2022 and no further work is expected going forward.

Regarding the northern businesses, direct contracts have been awarded for services such as fixed-wing and rotary aircraft consulting. Thus far, contract work has been awarded within GNWT procurement guidelines, which includes guidance of the business incentive policy and adjustments for northern and local content on bids.

The reality of this project is that pre-feasibility work requires specialized and technical skills across a broad range of disciplines; accordingly, many technical aspects of this work are awarded to specialized southern contractors. We are seeing significant efforts by proponents to pull together teams that do include northern businesses wherever possible and expect northern spending to grow over time as we progress to a regulatory application and construction decision. This is good indication that the project is creating new opportunities for northern businesses, and the project will continue to prioritize the inclusion of northern businesses in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1466-19(2):
SPORT AND RECREATION FUNDING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living continues to rise across the North. Flying in and out of our communities are

expensive. It cannot prevent our youth from accessing sport opportunities in Inuvik or further south.

Can the Minister explain what funding supports are provided to territorial sport organizations and organizations like BDSRA given the impacts of inflation; is there any increases on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we give about \$1.561 million to TSOs to provide opportunities for youth and that. For the BDSRA, I believe it was \$250,000 we talked about it in the last sitting here. But I'll have to get back to the Member for the confirmation of that number. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, getting our kids out of the communities for sports tournaments and training camps are huge. We need it for our youth.

Can the Minister give us some background on current funding available for teams looking to travel from the communities to larger centres in sporting events; is there any funding available that they could access right through MACA? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do give funding to the BDSRA and then the BDSRA gives that funding to the community. So there is an application-based money allocated from the BDSRA for the communities to do that. Again, it doesn't give all the money that they need, but it's similar to the Mackenzie Rec Association that does the same thing in the southern part of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is doing to ensure the education authorities have access -- like, I brought up in the House before that we want a big regional tournament in Inuvik with nine Beaufort Delta communities all participating such in sports like, you know, hockey, curling, Arctic sports, Dene games, and they have a swimming pool in Inuvik. Some of those kids never get to see that swimming pool from the communities I represent. Is there any possibility that the Minister and the department can ensure that if we don't give that money to the education, Beaufort Education Council, and keeping it in MACA, I'm wondering if the Minister and this government would step up to the plate and put our youth first and give monies to do something like this sporting event which

was done in other years in this legislature? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have the after-school physical activity program that the Member talks about. That there goes to the schools and communities depending on who organizes the after-school programs. What the Member is talking about is regional events, and that was done and organized by the Beaufort Delta sport recreation -- Beaufort Delta Sahtu Recreation Association. Unfortunately, that organization defaulted. It's now talking to some of the leaders in the communities, especially the rec coordinators are trying to reactivate that, and that there does help develop the swim meets, the regional ball tournaments, hockey tournaments. But I can tell you right now that they have been working on one in Fort McPherson. They're actually working on a regional hockey tournament. This happened recently. They were working on that, and they're starting to work on those same types of opportunities, and they're getting money through the BDSRA, and we at MACA have given that money to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I still feel our communities that we represent are penalized because of where we live, in this government. Our youth don't have -- we have after-school sports in the community. No opportunities for those students to go to regional sporting events until they're older. Why can't this government step up to the plate and this Minister just give the funding that we ask for and put it in the budget? I mean, they always say youth are our future. They're so good at that. But nothing, nothing to back it up. They say -- and they put it all on the communities for the community mayors and everybody to stress out, to provide these sporting events for youth, when we should be doing it ourselves out of this place and supporting our youth, all youth across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I totally agree with the Member - youth are our future. That's our commitment, though. If you look at recreation funding, which is \$825,000, we give that out there. We also give \$450,000 to youth and child resiliency. We also give \$400,000 for the regional sporting events. We also give youth contributions of \$225,000. We also do \$500,000 for youth court. So we do put money into that. We also then have the Mackenzie Recreation Association and the BDSRA, when we put money to them, and they provide to the programs there. I'm more than willing to work with the Member. I'm willing to

work with the organizations, whether it's NWTAC - however we can work together to get this. As for the budgeting process, we are going through negotiations. We have a budget that we submit, and we are in the process of negotiating that right now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1467-19(2):
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF
GOVERNORS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the appointment of the new board of governors for Aurora College, can the education Minister explain how this will change executive decision-making at Aurora College and with the transformation into a polytechnic university? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So before the board was put back into place, the functions of the board were carried out by the administrator, at the time Mr. Denny Rodgers, and so that is still the process. The board will make the types of decisions that the administrator was making. So those are decisions related to policies, developing policies of the college respecting the administration, operations, programs, and priorities of the college. But in terms of the day-to-day operations, the management, that is it still an operational aspect that is handled by the administration. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, if the new board of governors wanted to make a change of direction with where the college is going and say it was different from the college president and senior management wanted, how would that be resolved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The president works for the board so the board can set the direction of the college. And I hope they do set the direction of the college. I hope they are engaged enough to set that direction. And based on the conversations I've had, I'm sure they will. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, does the board of governors have the ability to veto or overturn a decision by the college president and senior management? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Aurora College Act lays out the

responsibilities of the board and the responsibilities and authorities of the president. And it's quite clear -- I can't get into specific instances as there may be variables, but their roles are quite well defined. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, there are four positions within Aurora College that are currently being borrowed from Fort Smith. But they do not belong -- but they do belong to Fort Smith, and they must be returned as soon as possible.

Will the Minister commit to work with the newly appointed board of governors and return the four loaned college positions back to Fort Smith? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Aurora College Act states that the Minister is not supposed to get involved in the operations of the college. And I will say that those are positions of the college, not necessarily positions of a municipality or a region. So I'm sure the board will do whatever is best for the college. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1468-19(2):
TAILING PONDS SPILL

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are related to my Member's statement regarding the Kearl Mine tailings pond spills.

Can the Minister provide an update on impacts of the Kearl Mine tailings ponds spills for this House alongside the ongoing work of our government to protect our waterways? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, several meetings have been taking place with the Government of Alberta and senior representatives at Imperial Oil to receive the most updated information about the monitoring. I have also met with Minister Savage, the Alberta minister of environment and protected areas on this issue.

We have been informed that the water quality results have been stable and show no impact to downstream waterways or drinking water. Environment and Climate Change Canada's Fisheries Act direction was issued to prevent potential impact to fish not because impacts

were detected. Again, the monitoring to date showed no impact.

ENR, in conjunction with the Town of Fort Smith, Smith Landings First Nation, and Fort Smith Metis Council, have also initiated a precautional weekly quality sampling campaign in response to the incident. Based on the monitoring and information provided, we do not expect any effects in the NWT presently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister. I think he's already answered my second question. I provided all the questions to him ahead of time, so he's just about answered all the questions.

Mr. Speaker, we need certainty and confidence in our partners. Alberta needs to understand how their work in mining and the oil sands impacts our way of life.

Can the Minister apprise as to how we will ensure the future management of discharge regulations can be developed in a meaningful way? In a meaningful way, I mean meeting with all the Indigenous partners in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, he did give those questions and I can tell you I just answered your question one at a time so I still have other answers for the information that you asked.

So the Government of Alberta is currently conducting assessments and scientific studies to fill knowledge gaps provided to decide on whether to develop regulations that would allow the release of treated tailing water. Alberta has agreed to give us significant time to critically review the reports and discuss our concerns with them before they make a decision to develop regulatory guidance.

The GNWT has received five technical reports that address these gaps. Four have been reviewed with the help of external experts, and one is under review -- presently under review. The federal government is planning to engage with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations in NWT this year through a bilateral process. The GNWT has and will continue to advocate to Alberta to consult with the NWT Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations near the NWT-Alberta border, as well as the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. The Minister mentions consultations but it's a bilateral

process he's mentioning. I'm wondering if he could elaborate on that. Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we're in the process of the Alberta government and Canada government is working to develop an arrangement where the bilateral -- they'll have the engagement. We've reached out to both the federal government and the Alberta government and said we need to be engaged; we need to be part of this process. I've sent a letter to Minister Savage and Minister Guilbeault, and I just recently sent another one there, again stressing the importance of us to be part of anything that's moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. I'm encouraged by the fact that they will have engagement, which was very lacking at the outset of the tar sands development in the early years, as we would have heard many statements of concern, something similar to the Berger Inquiry. Everybody remembers that one, when the pipeline was going to be coming up and down the Mackenzie Valley and there were a lot of concerns. Nothing was ever, ever heard from the Indigenous peoples. I notice the people from Fort Chipewyan have been voicing their concerns for quite a number of years. There's lots of cancer agents within the tailings ponds effluent, and that is not going to stop. Because these lakes, as I mentioned before in previous statements, that these tailings ponds can be seen from space. So they're very large. And those are just waiting, you know, to spill over and into our waterways thus ending our way of life with the water. And this is very concerning because right now we got waterfowl that we count on for spring hunts that are landing in the tailings ponds. There's many of them that have been killed through that process, and it's going to continue. You know, this is very, very concerning. I'm just wondering what message the Minister's bringing to the bilateral water agreement table without first having heard from the First Nations of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you firsthand that the Indigenous governments reach out to me on a constant basis, especially about the tar sands and this issue. And it's been an issue previously. So I've had a number of conversations with them. I've been down to Fort Smith and met with the Indigenous leaderships there. I've had conversations with other leaders

in the Northwest Territories about that. So the first and foremost thing is right now with the disaster that had happened in -- with the seepage and -- of 5.3 million litres of tailings released into the environment, I can tell you right now Fort Chip has done the monitoring. There has been no impact there. Right now in Fort Smith, the monitoring we have done, there is no monitoring. So we are working with the Indigenous governments. We're hearing their concerns. We've also passed that message on. The Wednesday I heard it, we had a Minister's statement out. We advised the Alberta government and the federal government this was going on. We advised the Indigenous governments. So we are taking this seriously. It's about -- as the Member said, water is life in the Northwest Territories. We take it seriously. So we are dealing with it as efficiently as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1469-19(2):
ALBERTA TAILING PONDS SPILL

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of chairing the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board for six years, and I had also the privilege of working with the Yukon Environmental Assessment -- the Yukon Environmental Social Economic Assessment Board and also the Nunavut Impact Review Board. Amongst these three boards, I was able to work with them to create an MOU so we could work together and share information. But at the same time here in the Northwest Territories, I chaired many environment assessment projects here and so I understand what's happening here in the North in terms of regulatory process.

My question to the Minister today is that my concern is that we need to come up with a strategy. And I mentioned that in my opening remarks. So my question to the Minister of ENR, Shane Thompson, is that what specific regulatory measures will the government put in place to address the downstream users of water contamination originating in Alberta to protect the Slave water system in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question. The NWT continues and does participate in Alberta public environmental assessments and regulatory processes. The

transboundary agreement with Alberta provides a number of ways to address downstream concerns. The agreement commits Alberta to meet water quality, water quantity, and biological objectives at the border. The agreement commits Alberta to share information in a timely way and notify the GNWT prior to development of the activity. Should questions of dispute arise, the agreement contains a dispute resolution process. Should the provisions of this agreement not be met, the GNWT needs -- the agreement was negotiated so that all legal measures outside of the agreement remains available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. When I was chairing the public review board, we dealt with Giant Mine, for example, and what we did with Giant Mine is that we had a lot of proponents that were impacted. So all Indigenous governments, the Metis, and we went through a review board assessment, environment assessment process, and we thoroughly examined that project and we made some strong recommendations and measures and that kind of thing. The thing is that the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the way it's set up right now, is that it doesn't address the downstream users, whether it be in the Yukon or in Nunavut. And so we're only -- when I was the chairman, I was only able to address north of 60, in the Northwest Territories only. That's why we created this MOU to work with both boards and agencies and that kind of thing. But for me right now as it is, Mr. Speaker, is that the current transboundary water agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and Alberta is insufficient in addressing this issue on downstream users.

My question to the Minister is what steps will the government take to renegotiate this agreement to ensure it includes adequate regulatory measures to protect the water system for downstream users? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the transboundary water agreement remains one of the best of its kind. The agreement prioritizes NWT interests to identify throughout the years of engagement on the NWT water strategy and guidance from Indigenous steering committees. For example, it includes measures to protect aquatic ecosystems' integrity and ensures Indigenous knowledge is considered in decision-making. These agreements are cooperative and respected decision-making authority of each jurisdiction.

There is no reason to renegotiate the agreement. In fact, the agreement gives us the tools to address situations like the Kearl spill through our dispute resolution provisions, which is happening right now.

Throughout the agreement, we should not have -- if we would not have these tools and Alberta would not be obligated to share information with us or meet specific conditions at the border. Alberta's engaging with us on this issue. They have agreed to engage in a dispute resolution under the agreement and have put us in touch with Imperial to provide us with more detailed information on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, you know, when I was thinking about the -- when I chaired the impact review board, you know, we -- again, we couldn't really address any issues on the downstream users from Nunavut and the Yukon. And, but here and Alberta, it's the same thing. This agreement that the Minister talks about doesn't give us the tools needed to participate in their regulatory process in terms of approving a mega project. We're just kilometres down the road in Fort Smith, and my riding of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and Fort Resolution, that are impacted and all the residents of the Northwest Territories. So there has to be a way that we have the voice at their table so that we are able to have a say in the regulatory approval process, otherwise it's -- you know, we're going to be talking about this in the next four years and four years thereafter. Nothing's going to happen.

So my question now is to the Minister, again, the need for the national water strategy to protect Canada's water system against harmful effects from industrial development is long overdue. What concrete steps will the government take to advocate for and concrete such strategy and what timeframe is being considered? That's my question to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, the NWT does -- can and does participate in the Alberta environmental assessment and regulatory process. I need to stress that. We do engage. We were part of that process.

In regards to the question the Member is talking about, the Government of Canada continues to work towards a Canada water agency. We have participated in the process and will continue to advocate for the NWT Indigenous governments and organizations to be part of any process that we have -- or they have. We've been having -- that's our letter. We've had conversations with Minister Savage. We're

reaching out to Minister Guilbeault. And we're trying to meet with them, and we're trying to meet with Minister Savage as well sometime in April face-to-face to discuss this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I'm hearing, then, the Minister had said that we -- the Northwest Territories has -- is involved in the regulatory process for approval for development in Alberta. I'm not sure about that.

Can the Minister provide a commitment that the government will prioritize a protection of the water system in the Northwest Territories over the interests of industry and will take proactive measures to prevent contamination from industrial activities from entering the Slave water system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And maybe I misspoke. What I said was we're part of the process. We engage. We provide feedback to it. We're not involved in the final decision-making. No other jurisdiction -- Nunavut doesn't have that with us when we deal with our diamond mines and that there. So we do engage, and we work with them there.

I can tell you right now I'm committed to protect the waters in the NWT. As I said to the previous Member from Deh Cho, as soon as we found out this was happening, we did a Minister's statement; we wrote letters; we've had contact with both the federal and the Alberta government. So again, though, I have to stress that right now there's no evidence in the water, whether it was in Fort Chip or in Fort Smith, that the tar sands that -- what has happened has had an impact in our waters right now.

Finally, as I publicly stated, I will not support discharge of treated oil sands tailing water without rigorous scientific or science to prove that the water is safe and the process is safe. And if the GNWT is not happy with it, Indigenous governments are not happy with it, and the public needs to be involved. So we're all a part of this. We're stressing it. And if it's not that, we have other processes that we can move forward on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1470-19(2):
REVIEW OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
POLICY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Finance on the recent review that seems to have been carried out around the fiscal responsibility policy. So can the Minister outline how this review was carried out and who was consulted? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fiscal policy review was something that is an internal policy looking at a way of evaluating what we do as a government and how we manage our budgets, how we design our budgets. It was completed by the fiscal policy division as the primary lead within the Department of Finance but also with input from some of the other departments that look at this type of work and that do this type of work, such as the comptroller general's office, the management board secretariat. We certainly did look at counterparts across other governments to see what they might do when their departments of finance are managing and developing their own internal budgets, and it certainly was very helpful to take that opportunity and have a fairly detailed engagement with standing committee. And as mentioned earlier, it was a very thorough response that was received back.

I'd also note we did check in with the two credit rating agencies that would look at how we are doing to manage our budgets, and that's how this was developed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. It never fails to amaze me sometimes the things I can learn in oral questions, that the credit rating agencies were consulted but -- okay, that's all good.

In my statement, I noted that the fiscal responsibility policy has failed to keep our debt from growing at greater than inflation, that there are no consequences for noncompliance. Can the Minister tell us what changes will be made to the fiscal responsibility policy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fiscal responsibility policy is really only one tool among many, not the least of which is the process that we are currently engaged in here, of examining our budgets publicly as part of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I would note that our current rate of budget growth is the smallest that it's been in a very long time, possibly in over a decade. So certainly there are things that are working within the Department of Finance right now to manage that debt growth. But

notwithstanding that, the review was done to try to make it even better. There's a number of changes, Mr. Speaker, not the least of which, something that comes up frequently, we're proposing a cushion of \$120 million under the federal borrowing limit so that there's not going to be this constant question of when are we going to hit the limit. We know there's going to be that cushion there so that that gives us the room every year to ensure that if there's something like a flood that there's always the room available to us.

Another one I want to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to publishing two things: An ongoing moving average to show where we are in terms of where we are in fiscal responsibility policy, what kind of surplus we need depending on what's happening on the capital side. And with that, Mr. Speaker, in the fall, when we do the capital plans, that's when we'll actually be putting out an anticipated amount that's required for the fiscal responsibility policy and for the operating surplus to meet the capital plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, as a Regular MLA, I was asking for that kind of information in the last Assembly, but glad that we're going to finally get this. So another concern, though, that I've outlined is the growth in P3 debt servicing that eats into our ability to pay for programs and services. This is a growing problem as this government takes on more and more P3 projects with little to no analysis or disclosure of the impact this has had on our operating budget.

So can the Minister tell us whether there will be greater analysis and disclosure of P3 servicing costs and impacts on programs and services as part of a revised fiscal responsibility policy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the P3 policy is separate; it wasn't part of the review that was done in looking at the fiscal responsibility policy so that it simply wasn't part of it. It's a different policy all together.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time there's not any active work happening with respect to a P3. So this is not something that is -- you know, there's not an active concern around growing numbers of P3 projects. What we do have are the -- some projects that are ongoing that where there are operational expenses now because rather than investing huge amounts of sums at the capital side to build a project through a traditional process, instead, that -- the budgeting for these projects, such as Stanton, such as the Mackenzie Valley fibre line, they

were extended over the life of the asset; they were made into operation costs over the course of existing projects. At the end of the day, though, Mr. Speaker, all that money is GNWT money, whether it's on the capital budget, whether it's on the operations budget. So those P3 projects that are still on the books are there on a different side than what they would have been otherwise. 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. Of course I'm not talking about the P3 policy; I'm talking about the fiscal responsibility policy where debt servicing should come into play, whether it's P3 debt as well, and it should include that. And although the Minister doesn't think there's active concern, I've been raising this in the House for seven years. So I'm very concerned that the Minister and the department appear to be ready to make changes to this policy without bothering to engage the public, and the Minister herself spoke about how they engaged the credit rating agencies but are -- you know, are we actually going to talk to the public? So we hold all kinds of public engagements for such mundane things as renaming the Stanton Legacy building or a survey on liquor and cannabis products. But can the Minister tell us whether there will be any public engagement on the review of the fiscal responsibility policy, and if not, why? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure of overseeing a number of different policies that have been reviewed and revised in the life of this Assembly. And I've actually had the opportunity to go back and say, you know, when do we go out and engage public and when do we take different types of approaches? And, Mr. Speaker, it depends upon the impact of the policy on members of the public. The greater the impact, the greater the anticipated interests, such as in the naming of a building which may well involve wanting to name it after an individual or after a particular location. Those occasions certainly do see a wider and more concerted effort to do engagement. The affirmative action policy would be one that I am currently involved in right now where there is extensive public in-person engagements taking place. The fiscal responsibility policy, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, it really is something that looks at government trying to ensure its own processes and its own budgeting is done in a responsible fashion.

As far as input on to budgets, Mr. Speaker, there are the budget dialogues that I've done

every year; there is the process of the Committee of the Whole; there is the process of business plans. All of those are opportunities where members of the public, advocacy organizations, municipal governments, send in their comments on the budget, what we should spend on, how we should spend it. The budgeting dialogues process, again how we should budget, where we should manage, where the balances should be. So all of those processes continue to exist. But the fiscal responsibility policy in terms of how to structure the fiscal strategy, that's an internal looking process and that's why we've kept it to being more narrow focus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1471-19(2):
OUTSTANDING MORTGAGES

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed, we do need to do a better job at administering our housing programs and supporting our residents. And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, if we give people a home and they continue to build arrears and are unable to pay their mortgage, that means our program is not working.

Can the Minister tell this House how they are working with residents who currently have a mortgage with Housing NWT to ensure they are able to pay that mortgage while having resources for other things, such as food? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for raising this question as well too, because right now Housing NWT is reviewing. We have 268 mortgages throughout the Northwest Territories. This was a program that was available to the Northwest Territories through CMHC about over 20 years ago. At that time, we did come out with the subsidized mortgages throughout the Northwest Territories. We have run into some issues where we have not had clients pay consistently throughout the territories. But we do enter into payment plans, and we do work with each of the clients considering their financial changes and trying to make them become -- and help support them to become successful homeowners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have mortgages that we know people cannot pay. We have a

collection policy that shows our ability to forgive residents who are in this situation.

Can the Minister explain how Housing NWT administers its collection policy and how often people are assessed and forgiven from their debts based on their ability to pay those back, those debts? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the lifetime of this government, the Housing NWT has forgiven \$8 million in housing mortgage arrears throughout the Northwest Territories, and they consist of several different financial situations that the client may be entering into. And we try to do our best to try to work with the client prior to them receiving the eviction notices. That is the absolute last resort. And if that -- that we do have public housing that is available to the tenants as well if they're not able to afford their homeownership program.

We also do work with our collections within Housing NWT, but we also do have to submit to FMB as well too with the financial analysis as to why we are going to be submitting a forgiveness and a write-off of those debts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the moment, Housing NWT is owed almost \$5 million in mortgage payment. The current process of refinancing and owning a house through Housing NWT is proving not sustainable. Can the Minister commit to forgiving the current outstanding mortgage payments owed to NWT Housing, particularly for those that have recently refinanced, so we can help our residents get out of poverty by having a stable home they know is theirs? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member as well too. It is not just as simple as just writing off all of these debts throughout the Northwest Territories for housing. A lot of our programming does recycle, and it does go back in to programming for homeownership repair and programs available to support homes throughout the Northwest Territories.

I will have to take a look at what we have so far and looking at the current debt status that we do have, and I have to work with the Member as well too for her riding. But this is an issue throughout the Northwest Territories, and Housing is really trying to work with each and every one of these clients so they can be successful homeowners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have some elders in the community who -- they did -- they entered into refinance agreement, and some of these elders are in their 70s. I mean, that should have been forgiven long time ago. I mean, that is not acceptable. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. And we have some refinancing that was done with 20 years old and that the agreement is not in their name; it is in the parent's name. The family moved into the house before the child was born, and this is where they are doing refinancing agreement with a child that -- who got their first job. There's quite a few of that in my community, in my region. So I just -- it's more of a statement. It's more of a comment. So I don't have any questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Taken as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1472-19(2):
PROCUREMENT REVIEW

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Mr. Speaker, the 19th Legislative Assembly cannot afford to leave residents of the Northwest Territories without meaningful change to procurement benefit retention and transparency in this territory, especially after all the focus and conversation we've had about that in the life of this Assembly. So I'm wondering does ITI intend to table a fulsome response to the procurement review panel's 50 recommendations that the public can see where ITI stands on each of those recommendations? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, as the Member's already pointed out, there was a summary version of what's ongoing already published several months ago with respect to the work that's happening. I believe with that there was also a publication of a set of principles, unifying principles about procurement so that we are no longer spread with different purposes and objectives between different departments, which was a significant recommendation from that report.

As to a detailed response, Mr. Speaker, that is something that is still coming out. There will be a more fulsome response out this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out that delay isn't for lack of work that's been happening. One of the major things that's happened in the last year was an engagement directly led with EIA on -- with Indigenous governments and towards an Indigenous procurement policy or approach, and it was out of respect for that process that a more fulsome response has been somewhat delayed. But I do, as I said, expect something more by the summer. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that response. And I can also say that in conversation with the Minister during our other work time that the Minister's been very helpful at kind of providing a fulsome response of what all the department is working on. The problem that I have is that I don't have concrete answers to be able to give the people that I serve about what those specific changes are going to look like.

In the month of August and in the summer, there's about eight sitting days that we'll get to sit through roughly before we're done, and we're literally escorted out the building. And that doesn't give me the time or my colleagues the time to really hold the government accountable to what those changes look like. And so the Minister said that there's an intent to table responses in the summer, but I'm really concerned with that timeline.

So is the specifics to the policy work that's been done, for example, to the northern manufacturer's policy, to the business incentive policy, is that expected to be tabled in the summer, or is that something that we will see before? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's things happening in an ongoing way. So some of the work under the manufacturing policy has -- if I'm not mistaken, has already been prepared and is already ready to go ahead with respect, for example, to the guidelines under the manufacturing policy. Those guidelines have been improved. And I will reconfirm as to their whereabouts on the website. I had understood they were going out and were being promulgated already.

With respect to the business incentive policy, one of the biggest issues is around defining northern business. I know this question's been asked many times. Mr. Speaker, there are recommendations in the report that we are actively looking at. Again, the issue around ensuring that we are being respectful of what's happening within Indigenous procurement and with those definitions has put a bit of a pause

on that, but it will ultimately produce a better outcome that everyone is on board with.

It's not my intention -- not that I wouldn't table them, but it's not the intention to wait to the August session to table it. The idea is to get them published in the usual process here, which is it goes to Cabinet, it goes to MLAs; it then goes public. I would certainly employ that process here but with a view to having it out so that if there needs to be some further debate about it in August that there's ample time for that to take place, and it won't just be happening on August 30th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that commitment from the Minister because I think that this is really important, and I think that there's been too much focus on procurement in this Assembly for this to simply be something that's tabled on the last day and then we don't get the opportunity to discuss it in this House, because I think that's really important. And I appreciate the Minister referring to the fact that, you know, this information will be coming to committee for comment, but I think it's really important that we have a very transparent view on this work so that also the constituents who are using this information and will be using these policies going forward have the opportunity to reach out to their MLA and say hey, this doesn't work because of this applied reason, because, you know, when I'm going about doing this work it doesn't work for that reason. So I'll ask that -- or I guess I'll start by asking will the Minister commit to making these changes public sooner than later so that as we're reviewing it, we have the opportunity to also discuss these changes with our constituents? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so already there is, just to confirm, the manufacturing policy guidelines newly minted are on ITI's website, current BIP guidelines and renewed guidelines are on the ITI's website. There is now a dashboard with respect to procurement that is live over on Finance's website. Those are all things that have come out of the procurement review, and I certainly would encourage people to go to them, take a look at them.

Further, as well, I -- the principles that I have mentioned, the objectives and principles around procurement, that is not a small thing. That was one of the major parts that I had read in that review, was that it was too spread out, the purposes and principles of procurement -- public procurement was too spread out. There are now set principles. That's an important part of the work that took place

here, and it's now guiding what's happening across departments. So, again, encouraging people to locate that on our website so that they can consider if that meets their needs.

The definition, yes, Mr. Speaker, I hear the definition will need some opportunity to go to Members to have some consideration done. It is part of policy. I think part of the messaging here is that when there's small things within policies that need changes and adjustments, it can be done. It doesn't have to wait for a full legislative review. We now have done that. We have done the work of the review. We have the background available to us. And I do encourage people to see all of the work that's been done to date. There's quite a lot that's out there.

Vendor performance management. It's the last one before I get into the land of a Minister's statement, Mr. Speaker, and I'd encourage people to look at what we have been doing with vendor performance management. It's actually enforcing the rules. It's a lot that's happened in that space in the last year. And, again, I'd like to know that that's working for those who are already under that system so that we can consider making adjustments in the life of this Assembly if we need to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all of the references that the Minister gave to different areas of the ITI website, of the Finance website, where this information can be found. I think this speaks to -- and, you know, with all due respect, I think this speaks to the need for a consolidated response from the government. Even when I was going through and kind of creating my questions for today and figuring out how do I go about continuing this conversation in this House, I'm looking at and reading through press releases from the GNWT in regards to procurement review; I'm looking through, yes, the guidelines and the dashboard and the contracting website; I'm looking through the work plan; I'm looking back at the information that came out with the procurement review. And that information is scattered. So anybody that actually wants to look at the panel's recommendations and then see what the government has done in response or what they have chosen not to do for whatever reason actually has to go and do a fair amount of legwork across the GNWT's website. There's not one place where we can see this is the plan moving forward, this is how the government is responding, and this is what businesses can expect. And so that's why I'm asking if the government will table a fulsome response for what their response is to the procurement

review panel's 50 recommendations. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, simple answer is yes, there will be a response. It's going to be a full response to the review. And I couldn't agree more because of all the things I've been detailing in my responses now that have happened and that are underway. I've more than once brought the full team from multiple departments together. And at the last occasion, that was exactly the topic of conversation, was saying we can't let in some -- in this case, it's all the good work go unknown and those who are using one part may not know about the things that have happened in another. So it's coming, Mr. Speaker. It needs to come in time. I appreciate the comments it needs to come in it time that it can be considered, and so that if there's questions in the House, that they can be prepared for. So I'm not giving a date today, but it's coming, and I'm conscious of the fact that it needs to come in a manner that provides time for MLAs to be able to ask questions in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1473-19(2):
LAND LEASING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Across the Northwest Territories there's essentially three types of tenure. There's community government leasing. I got no problem with those. Community governments can sort out how they want to lease their land. Then there's fee simple title. Never hear any complaints about anyone who owns their house, Mr. Speaker. And then there's the GNWT lease, which to me the main benefit seems to be a miraculous ability to be brought up in every single meeting and immediately derail it. No matter the meeting we're having, someone inevitably starts complaining about a 600 percent fee increase or their cabin, Mr. Speaker. It seems to be a golden rule of the GNWT.

And so my question for the Minister of Lands is can we get out of the leasing business and give people who live in their houses, in a GNWT lease, fee simple title? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Lands is able to offer fee simple title to leaseholders in the areas where land

lease-only policy is implemented or doesn't apply. In other words, where land claims have been concluded. The land lease-only policy applies where land claims are not settled. The policy restricts the sale of public land in order to ensure the land claims and treaty negotiations are not jeopardized. As the Member is aware, we are wrapping up a review of the land lease-only policy. This review is intended to address the efficiency or effectiveness of this policy, and it was developed over 30 years ago and has been very -- and has had seen very little change over time.

I'm hoping to update the Members here this week on the status of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to those updates to the land lease-only policy. But there seems to be a disconnect because it's only supposed to apply in unsettled areas, but we know in the IRC, even though it was settled 40 years ago, we are still having this fight about GNWT leases. And it seems to me that at the heart of this issue is we need to separate out those who are rights holders. Even if they are on public land, if they are in their traditional territory, we need to create a different form of tenure and bring them into a different conversation.

Is the Minister willing to look to create some form of new tenure where rights holders are not paying the same lease fees and the same taxes as everyone else? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so rights-based cabins, we're working on that. We're trying to put that to the side. We're trying to be able to identify some of the things. Some of the work that's being done is exactly what the Member is asking for. So we're working on this, trying to get this resolved. We're working with Indigenous governments to come up with a definition with what's a rights-based cabin. Not the GNWT, with the Indigenous governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1474-19(2):
AUDIT REPORT AND UNSPENT FUNDS ON
INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. And I'm going to spring this on the Minister of Finance unfortunately, but there was a audit report just released by the Auditor General of Canada connecting connectivity in rural and remote areas. There's quite a bit of discussion, Mr. Speaker, in this report about unspent funds.

I thought our government was bad getting money out the door but this is actually quite shocking in terms of supporting internet connectivity in rural and remote communities. You know, for example, the broadband fund, only 26 percent of the money budgeted was expended. Low earth or orbit to capacity agreement, zero percent. Connecting Canadians, 88 percent, a little bit better. But only 40 percent of the money was actually expended to help connect rural and remote communities, Mr. Speaker. What is our government doing to fix this problem? Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would love to see the federal government spend its money better and spend its money in the Northwest Territories. That would be a good news story for all. I can say that the universal broadband funds including their rapid universal broadband fund, which I think I've got slightly miss-titled, were not necessarily well tuned to some of the needs here in the Northwest Territories. An example being redundancy was not eligible for any funding through those funds. And redundancy in the Northwest Territories, of course when we have one line going into communities, one line going across the Northwest Territories, that actually is a big part of ensuring accessibility and availability because if one line goes down, it costs us millions; it costs businesses millions. That was not available for funding. We did get funding through the fund, and the Indigenous governments, Tlicho government got funding through the fund, and funding up to the -- the Inuvik-Tuk Highway was funded through that fund. So while I had received only some initial data back on this fairly new report, I'd be interested to see how we've done perhaps in comparison and to see if there were areas that we could have looked for more that we could go back now and look for more.

And one last, Mr. Speaker, I think they have actually gone out now and asked for recommendations and responses with respect to how to improve those funds and, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I have already checked with our department; we are planning to put our submission in on that regard. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. And, of course, I didn't give the Minister a heads up so I'm springing this on her, probably playing a little bit of this just off the cuff. But, you know, some of the recommendations in this report are aimed, of course, at one of my favorite

agencies, the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission. And, you know, recommendation 2.31, the CRTC should routinely collect and verify data from telecommunication service providers about connectivity quality. Like, I would have thought that that's something you would just normally do.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit to provide a briefing note to Regular MLAs about what our government is doing in response to this report from the auditor general? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to provide a briefing, a briefing note or briefing in person with respect to, you know, monies we've had, challenges, perhaps opportunities to come, and what we might be doing to look for more money. Mr. Speaker, it's, again, certainly been my position, and I've communicated to federal ministers, that some of the funds perhaps weren't best tuned or well tuned to what the needs actually are and to where we are at in terms particularly around, again not only accessibility and availability, but affordability. That was not necessarily well tuned in terms of those funds, in terms of improving affordability here in the North. So, again, happy to explain where we're at so that all sides of the House can continue to advocate for residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 60-19(2): PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 60-19(2) asked by the Member for Hay River South on March 2nd, 2023, regarding Physician Recruitment and Retention.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is currently funded for 72.5 full-time equivalent physician positions and Hay River Health and Social Services Authority is funded for seven. Within Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the regional physician staffing levels change frequently based on need and availability. A challenging national health human resources landscape means the use of locum physicians across the Northwest Territories, including Hay

River, has increased and is likely to continue at higher rates. Currently, there is no funding policy set by the Department of Health and Social Services that stipulates per capita or other formula for allocation of physician full-time equivalent funding. The current allocation is based on historical practice and funding levels.

There is no policy stipulating minimum physician allocation.

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority conducts its own employee satisfaction survey every two years. The most recent Hay River Health and Social Services Authority employee satisfaction questionnaire was completed in 2021. The employee satisfaction questionnaire did not include specific questions related to lack of physicians and its impact on staff satisfaction in the workplace.

To address staff shortages, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority has worked in collaboration with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Tlcho Community Services Agency, and the Department of Health and Social Services to develop the NWT Health and Social Services System Human Resources Plan, which was released last summer. As part of the implementation of the plan, officials are looking at factors that contribute to talent acquisition, hiring and retention challenges through exit surveys and/or interviews with physicians and nurses to see where improvements can be made.

Hay River has retained all their physician funding and only reimburses Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority for direct costs related to physician services provided. The agreement between Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority for the provision of physician services is based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Authorities and can be terminated by either party at any time, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority has noted that it will continue to collaborate with the other health and social services authorities in the recruitment of physicians, as they have noticed that in the past it has been very challenging and counterproductive when competing with larger centres in the NWT and the rest of Canada. Historically, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority has noticed that working together in their recruitment efforts has yielded better results.

The Department of Health and Social Services has not undertaken a formal assessment to determine if Hay River and area residents would be better served if the Hay River Authority was amalgamated into Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority. To date, the feasibility of amalgamating Hay River Health and Social Services Authority into Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has not been considered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 61-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES SOLE SOURCE
CONTRACTING UNDER PROCUREMENT
CRITERIA 1.8.2 (A)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 61-19(2) asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 6th, 2023, regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories Sole Source Contracting under Procurement Criteria 1.8.2(a).

The Member enquired what portion, by amount and by rate of contracting, is awarded under each of the procurement categories, including sole sources by each of the three criteria under 1.8.2(a) by GNWT departments. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document containing this information.

The Member also enquired what the average length of time of contracts awarded under sole source criteria 1.8.2(a) is. For GNWT department's reportable contracts for the period of April 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022, the average length of time of contracts awarded under sole source criteria 1.8.2(a) was 144 calendar days.

Additionally, the Member also asked what the rate of sole source contracts awarded under criteria 1.8.2(a) is that undergo change orders. For the period of April 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022, there were 55 contracts, approximately 33 percent of the contracts under sole source Criteria 1.8.2(a), that had change orders issued.

Lastly, the Member enquired about the average rate of increase of change orders awarded under criteria 1.8.2(a) is. Between the period of April 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, the average increase for change orders on contracts issued under sole source criteria 1.8.2(a) was \$42,800 dollars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 62-19(2):
SOLE SOURCE CONTRACTING FOR
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY UNDER
PROCUREMENT CRITERIA 1.8.2 (A)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 62-19(2) asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 6th, 2023, regarding Sole Source Contracting for the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority under Procurement Criteria 1.8.2(a).

To preface to this response, the information provided covers the time period of April 1, 2021 to December 1, 2022. This period spans both an unprecedented national public health emergency due to COVID-19 and a national health human resource crisis that has critically impacted the health and social services system's ability to fill frontline positions. For the time period, Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority issued a total of 258 contracts valued at \$64 million for goods and services. This amount includes costing of change orders as well.

Of the total number of contracts issued, 10 percent were under sole source criteria 1.8.2(a). The value of those contracts was \$4.7 million, which is 10 percent of the total contracted spend for the time period. It is important to note that this includes change orders and contracts awarded under \$25,000.

The average length of a contract awarded under the sole source criteria 1.8.2(a) is 7.3 months. Of the contracts awarded under the sole source criteria 1.8.2(a), 16 percent of those have had change orders issued. The average rate of increase of change orders for contracts awarded under criteria 1.8.2(a) is 114 percent.

This number is impacted by the high value of change orders related to two staffing services contracts, paramedic and agency nurse services. Without these two contracts included, the average rate of increase of change orders for contracts awarded under criteria 1.8.2(a) is 0.4 percent.

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority complies with the GNWT procurement guidelines however, with the delivery of essential services, circumstances demand urgent responses that require use of criteria 1.8.2(a). It is not the intention of Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority to utilize sole source contracting as a regular practice. As set out in the policy criteria for sole source contracts, they are used in circumstances where there is an urgent need for the contract to avoid potential

harm to the public, or there is only one contractor available and capable of performing the contract.

In the case of the two high-value contracts referenced earlier in the response, Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has taken steps towards public procurement, where the sole sourced contracts are being phased out through a transition period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 63-19(2):
USE OF INDIGENOUS FONTS ON OFFICIAL
DOCUMENTS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 63-19(2) asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 6th, 2023, regarding Use of Indigenous Languages on Official Documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Early in 2019, the business transformation committee, an assistant deputy minister advisory committee reporting to the Informatics Policy Council, initiated work to establish a working group to address the 2015 recommendations of the Northwest Territories' Official Languages Commissioner. The working group was to support GNWT technical solutions that would allow for the use of Indigenous fonts and diacritics on GNWT-issued identity documents.

A Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Fonts Working Group was drafted in 2020 but not finalized and, to date, no meeting of the working group has been held. In the intervening time since the initial thinking on this work, the GNWT now better understands the extent of the interoperability challenges beyond GNWT information systems as a barrier to progress in this area.

In 2017, amendments to the Vital Statistics Act removed the requirement for registration of a birth certificate to be in "roman alphabet". However, a birth certificate, as a 'foundation identity document', that incorporates an Indigenous diacritic will not be accepted by key systems that require a birth certificate such as Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada for documents like passports and social insurance numbers. Having a birth certificate not recognized nationally will impact NWT residents when they want to travel, open a bank account, or when accessing health services in jurisdictions outside of the NWT, as examples.

In 2017, a preliminary high-level estimate determined that the changes to the Vital Statistics Act to introduce Indigenous fonts would affect 24 health and social services

information systems to some degree and potentially 400 GNWT information systems. In 2019, it was estimated that it would cost \$14 million to accommodate the inclusion of Indigenous characters in the health and social services information systems, if done as an activity separated from broader system replacements. There are no identified resources for this work. The subject of inclusion of Indigenous characters and diacritics has recently become a topic of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers tables as more jurisdictions consider this work a commitment to reconciliation. Most recently, federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers' attended the symposium on digital trust and cyber security, which was attended by my colleague Minister Wawzonek. One of the actions items coming from this meeting was that Ministers and DM tables endorse the development of a pan-Canadian work plan on the priorities related to digital trust, credentials and cyber security and work on enabling Indigenous languages in identity records.

The GNWT, with our provincial and territorial colleagues, will continue to work with Canada towards enabling federal information systems to accept Indigenous diacritics in identity documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS: REPORT ON THE 2021-22
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act and commends it to the House.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Over the last two years, the Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed the Official Languages Act. This law protects speakers of the NWT's eleven official languages and outlines language rights, rules, and responsibilities in different parts of government. This law requires a review about

every five years. Previous committee reviews were released in 2003, 2009, and 2015.

For our 2021-2022 review, committee aimed to collect input from Northerners on the effectiveness of the Official Languages Act, recommend changes to better protect and revitalize official languages, and ensure changes are implemented. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed our review, but committee pushed for changes before the end of the 19th Assembly.

This report describes how the public participated in the review and summarizes what committee heard. Participants shared many examples of how the languages approach of the Government of the Northwest Territories falls short of Northerners' needs and rights, and many suggestions for improvements. Statistics back up what residents are saying: Indigenous language communities continue to lose speakers, but many more people want to learn the language.

The report also outlines committee's call to overhaul the government's approach to official languages, starting with four transformative changes:

1. Implementing the right to receive services in your official language of choice;
2. Implementing the right to K to 12 immersion education in your local language;
3. Doubling resources to support and revitalize Indigenous languages; and
4. Support of official language speakers in the public service.

Committee urges the government to begin making these changes now and complete them in the 20th Assembly.

DESPITE PANDEMIC DELAYS, COMMITTEE PUSHED FOR CHANGES

In early 2021, committee set out to travel across the NWT. Unfortunately, our plans were repeatedly postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In December 2021, committee realized that we could not finish our review of the Official Languages Act in time to make changes to the law before the end of the 19th Assembly. However, almost twenty years had passed since the law had last been updated, and in that time many important and straightforward amendments had been suggested. Therefore, committee urged the Minister responsible for

Official Languages to work with us to develop legislation before our review was complete. The Minister agreed and invited our input.

In response, committee reviewed all past suggestions for changes to the Official Languages Act since 2003, the last time the law was changed. Committee identified about 50 past suggestions and prioritized 12 of them for the new bill. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment accepted some of our priorities and put them into Bill 63: An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. Bill 63 would:

1. Clarify and strengthen the role of the Languages Commissioner;
2. Merge the two languages boards; and
3. Update the law's preamble to recognize the impact of colonialism and the relevance of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While committee was pleased with these changes, we were also disappointed that the bill was not more ambitious. We wrote a report about our review of the bill entitled Report on Bill 63: An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. In that report, committee recommended a second phase of legislative changes to improve the government's approach to official and Indigenous languages. Those changes should start in the life of the 19th Assembly and respond to the recommendations contained in this report. It is a known fact that the 20th Assembly is not obligated to follow up or consider any recommendations this Assembly makes. Furthermore, it may not be their priority.

I will now turn it over to the Member for Kam Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE NWT WERE CLEAR ON NEED FOR CHANGE.

In October 2020, committee held public briefings with the Languages Commissioner and the Minister responsible for Official Languages and his staff. Between June 2021 and October 2022, committee engaged the public. 74 people from across the NWT participated in public meetings, including 33 residents, organizations, and governments that provided formal oral comments.

During this time, committee was inspired by NWT residents doing amazing things to reclaim

their languages, teach young people with limited resources, and advocate for changes to help their language communities survive and thrive.

We were especially moved by what elders had to say. They reminded committee of the horrific role of the Indian Residential Schools system in the loss of Indigenous languages - but also Indigenous peoples' determination to keep their language. One survivor shared: "Even we whispered, and we get slapped. Sometimes we bleed from our mouths, we get hit. And you're so scared. You just wish you could go home, and you were a long way from home [...] And today, when we're trying to teach our young people to speak, that thing is with us [...] I don't know why they didn't want us to speak our language. But we held on to it."

The harmful legacy of residential schools and colonization, and the need for reconciliation and recognition of Indigenous rights, were major themes that committee heard from residents. Other important themes were:

1. **Visibility.** Indigenous languages need to be more visible in daily life.
2. **Education.** Barriers to revitalization can be overcome with more funding, training, educational resources, instruction time, and rights to immersion education.
3. **Program funding.** Existing funding for Indigenous-language education and revitalization is not enough and must be increased. Funding requirements should be tailored to applicants' needs and flexible for creative approaches.
4. **Services.** The government should improve access to quality services in official languages by enhancing active offer, standards, and rights to service.
5. **Public service.** The government should promote using and learning official languages in the public service by increasing Indigenous representation, providing more training, and recognizing the value of knowing a second official language.
6. **Legislation and rights.** More needs to be done in law to protect rights and revitalize languages, including adding Michif as an official language and setting up new bodies and policies for language revitalization.
7. **Languages Commissioner.** The role should be clarified and strengthened. And,
8. **Languages Boards.** A merged board needs a better nomination process, a clearer role, and more effective representation, transparency, and resources.

Committee provided more detail on these themes in an appendix to this report. We recommend the government review and consider residents' input on official languages.

STATISTICS SHOW INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ARE DECLINING AND ENDANGERED

Statistics confirm a trend committee heard on the road: Indigenous language communities in the NWT are not creating enough new speakers to sustain their languages. From 2014 to 2019, eight of the nine Indigenous official languages lost speakers, resulting in a total decline from 7,900 to 6,800 Indigenous language speakers. According to UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations, all nine Indigenous official languages are endangered, meaning they're at risk of disappearing. Inuvialuktun and Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik -- thank you very much, MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes -- Gwich'in, are the most severely endangered languages, with 560 and 290 speakers in the NWT, respectively.

The age profile of current speakers is also concerning. Half of the 6,800 Indigenous language speakers are over 50 years old and one-fifth are over age 65. In almost every community, committee heard that young people are losing the Indigenous language, and elders find that they are unable to communicate with them in their Indigenous languages.

A 2019 survey by the NWT Bureau of Statistics gives reason for hope. This survey found that thousands of residents, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, want to improve their conversational skills in each of the nine Indigenous official languages. For instance, while less than 1,400 Northerners speak Dene Zhatie, nearly 5,000 Northerners want to improve their Dene Zhatie. This extends to all nine languages. The desire to learn each language is three and fourteen times higher than the number of actual speakers.

Despite attempts to eradicate Indigenous languages, many people remain passionate about reclaiming this right. Committee is convinced there is incredible potential to revitalize all language communities. Revitalizing languages is not just a hope -- it's a right. Article 13 of the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples says that: "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures [...] States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected."

Article 13 matters because it confirms the government's unique duty to protect Indigenous peoples' language rights and prevent the loss of valuable knowledge and traditions. While the GNWT has made improvements, anecdotal evidence and the statistics suggest that the government is not fulfilling its language responsibilities under the Declaration.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the reading of this report to my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

FOUR CHANGES TO OVERHAUL GNWT LANGUAGES APPROACH

1. Implement the right to receive services in your official language of choice

Since 1984, the Official Languages Act has set out the public's right to government services in an official language. That right exists where there is "significant demand" or where it is reasonable given "the nature of the office."

However, the concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office" have been criticized for years because they are unclear and do not work for the NWT. These concepts make it hard for residents to understand their right to demand services from the government in any official language.

Committee believes that each resident is a language rights holder, regardless of where they are and which office they interact with. These rights extend to the descendants of the language speakers, especially if they lost their language. Language rights should ensure "substantive equality" – this means using targeted measures to address underlying barriers and achieve true equality. Language rights should also be remedial in nature, meaning that they address inequalities and past injustices.

Practically speaking, the government has far to go to implement this expansive vision for language rights. But even the Minister has expressed hope that the NWT will "one day realize the vision of service delivery similar to what we see for French language services for

all of our official languages." Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1: That Government of the Northwest Territories recognize the right of each resident to receive services in the official language of their choice.

This right should go beyond the concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office," and follow the principles of substantive equality. As such, the GNWT should consider quantitative and qualitative characteristics when determining service levels to each official languages' community. This right should also be remedial in nature, designed to counter the gradual decline of Indigenous official language speakers.

Residents expressed a desire to see more Indigenous-languages signage on a day-to-day basis. The government has a guidelines manual requiring new and replacement signs to display local Indigenous official language. The rules only apply to territorial institutions. The department is currently updating the guidelines. Committee welcomes that work but recommends that the government accelerates the transition towards more Indigenous language signage in the built environment. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 2: That Government of the Northwest Territories set up a policy and a plan to display more Indigenous language signs before the 19th Assembly ends.

The policy should require all new signs at all territorial public bodies and community governments to prominently feature the local Indigenous official languages. The plan should set targets and offer funding for new Indigenous language signs.

In the NWT, the Metis are the only Indigenous group whose traditional language is not recognized as an official language. Committee heard interest in adding Michif as an official language in Hay River.

This idea is not new. In 2002, a special committee developed a discussion paper about Michif in the NWT and recommends further research to figure out how the language should be recognized. The Languages Commissioner also recommended reconsidering whether Michif should be an official language in 2016. As there is no recent publicly available research on Michif in the NWT, committee believes more study is necessary and recommends:

Recommendation 3: That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment commission a study on the state of Michif in the

NWT and options to recognize Michif in the Official Languages Act. The study should be tabled in the House within the first 18 months of the 20th Assembly.

2. Implement the right to K to 12 immersion education in your local language.

Committee heard a strong and clear desire for more Indigenous languages in education, including more intergenerational learning opportunities, more instruction time, and K to 12 immersion options in each community. However, there are more formidable barriers such as lack of fluent young people to replace retiring teachers and too few language instructor training opportunities at Aurora College.

Committee believes that the long-term goal needs to be a right for full K to 12 immersion in your local official language. Anything less would fall short of UNDRIP Article 14 which says: "States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language."

Committee believes upcoming work to renew the Education Act must prioritize languages revitalization and aim to make a plan to achieve full immersion in the future. We note that Nunavut's Education Act sets out a long-term schedule to phase in bilingual Inuktitut education for all grades by 2039. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends:

Recommendation 4: That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment implement an exercisable right for Northerners to full K to 12 immersion in each local Indigenous official language. To achieve this vision, ECE should prioritize Indigenous language revitalization in the ongoing Education Act modernization.

Recommendation 5: That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment help ensure Indigenous languages early childhood education is available in each community. To achieve this vision, ECE should provide additional and sufficient funding to program operators that use Indigenous languages.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to turn this over to my colleague, the Member from Thebacha. Mahsi.

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

MS. MARTSELOS:

3. Double resources to support and revitalize Indigenous languages

Committee heard clearly that funding for Indigenous-language education and revitalization is not enough to ensure language communities survive. This unanimous sense of underfunding exists despite recent increases in language funding. The Government of the Northwest Territories now spends around \$21 million each year on Indigenous language programming, up from \$14 million ten years ago.

To gauge the potential funding gap, committee compared the Government of the Northwest Territories' Indigenous language funding with its French-language funding. Committee acknowledges this comparison is far from perfect: these language communities have different histories, circumstances, and needs; and, the government's responsibilities to these communities are different based on constitutional and international law.

Committee compared French-language funding per French-speaker with Indigenous language funding per Indigenous residents. Looking at Indigenous residents, rather than current Indigenous-language speakers, is appropriate because Indigenous language rights extend to all Indigenous people, including those who have lost the language.

Committee found that the Government of the Northwest Territories' French-language funding is around \$2,200 per French speaker compared to Indigenous-language funding of around \$1,100 per Indigenous person. This puts the funding gap at \$1,100 per Indigenous person. To close this gap, the Government of the Northwest Territories would have to double per-person Indigenous-language funding. The total cost would add up to an additional \$22 million per year. More details on this calculation are included in Appendix C of this report.

Committee believes that increasing funding by at least this amount is necessary to reverse the decline in Indigenous-language speakers and revitalize language communities. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 6: That the Government of the Northwest Territories double funding for Indigenous-language education, services, and revitalization.

Recommendation 7: That the Government of the Northwest Territories reimburse use of an Indigenous official language as an eligible expense for all programs, grants, and contributions. These funding agreements

should be multi-year to reduce administrative burden and improve sustainability.

Educators and language experts brought up the problem of fragmentation among language communities in developing resource materials. Committee heard one example of a southern publisher charging \$20,000 to allow an education resource in one Indigenous language to be translated into another.

Participants thought the department could do more to "minimize the reinvention of the wheel" so that educational resources can be translated easily and affordably. One promising suggestion was for a "creative commons" – a digital space for people to share and collaborate on educational resources. Existing resource hubs, like the Our Languages NWT platform, do not particularly promote decentralized content creation and digital collaboration. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 8: That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment set up a creative commons for Indigenous-language resource materials.

The creative commons should build on the Our Languages NWT platform and offer an accessible digital space. It should allow creators and users to share and collaborate on educational materials, language-learning apps, curricula, grant applications, and other resources.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to now turn this over to the Inuvik Twin Lakes Member. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4. Support of official language speakers in the public service

The Government of Canada has committed to preserving, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages in Canada (Indigenous Languages Act, 2019). Supporting the efforts of Indigenous peoples to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages also responds to Calls to Action 13, 14 and 15 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Keeping Indigenous languages alive contributes to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, Article 13 recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages and traditions to future generations and indicates that states should take adequate measures to ensure these rights are protected.

The government's duty to protect language rights extends to its role as an employer of over 6,300 public servants. However, current efforts appear modest. In 2021-2022, only 340 employees, or 5 percent of the workforce, received a bilingual bonus. The bonuses were worth only \$560,000, or 0.1 percent of total human resource costs. The government also gives an allowance to teachers using an Indigenous official language, but it has decreased from 105 teachers getting the allowance in 2010 to fewer than 40 teachers receiving it now.

In the spirit of reconciliation, it is imperative that the Government of the Northwest Territories steps up and does much more as an employer. After all, the loss of Indigenous languages in this country directly relates to residential schools.

The public service must support Indigenous language speakers proactively. The employer should be responsible for identifying and supporting employees who want to learn the language of their heritage and culture rather than demanding Indigenous persons achieve and prove bilingual proficiency in an independent path. Departments and agencies should prepare an annual action plan to support and grow the official Indigenous languages. The plans should include funding, targets, and regular reporting. Committee recommends:

Recommendation 9: That each department and agency be required to have an annual official languages action plan to improve and revitalize the language skills of its Indigenous employees.

The plans should identify objectives, actions, performance measures, and multi-year targets. The plans should be supported by an updated bilingual designation policy creating a new category of bonuses for Indigenous employees learning to speak an official Indigenous language. Each department and agency should be responsible for identifying Indigenous employees wanting to learn the Indigenous language of their heritage and culture, helping identify access to learning opportunities, providing financial support, and assisting access to language proficiency assessments where available.

Recommendation 10: That each department and agency be required to create an individual language training account for each person. The account should guarantee each Indigenous employee a minimum number of hours of language training, in any Indigenous official language, as a first or second language.

Recommendation 11: That the Department of Finance set up an Indigenous languages revitalization fund to support Indigenous employees in the effort to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen their languages.

I'd like to now turn it over to the Member for Yellowknife North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RESTORE INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE TERMS AND SPELLINGS

Committee was disappointed that Bill 63 did not update colonial terms used in the law like "North Slavey" and "South Slavey." The Minister said that language communities did not agree on new terms, so the terms stayed the same. Committee shares the Minister's hope that the terms can be changed during the next review. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 12: That the Government of the Northwest Territories restore Indigenous language terms and spellings to refer to languages and communities. The GNWT should update all legislation, regulations, policies, guidelines, standards, and communications within the life of the 20th Assembly. The GNWT should also consult Indigenous communities on the changes.

CONCLUSION

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act. Committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 13: The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this report within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha, that Committee Report 49-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act, 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. The committee report has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Colleagues, we will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 50-19(2): STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS, LIFTING YOUTH VOICES: RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its report Strengthening Community Supports, Lifting Youth Voices: Recommendations on Suicide Prevention, and commends it to the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

A MESSAGE TO YOUTH

Thank you to the youth who shared courageously on suicide prevention with the Standing Committee on Social Development. We heard you. We respect you. We believe in you. From you, we learn and take your lead. We hope you see your thoughts, ideas, and perspectives, and the resources and supports you asked for, reflected in the following report and its recommendations.

INTRODUCTION: YOUTH KNOW WHAT THEY WANT

All youth are sacred. Northwest Territories youth are talented, brilliant and powerful. Youth have so much to contribute to the North and to the world. Yet, many youth in the NWT are facing a mental health crises due to complex challenges that diminish the overall quality of their lives. Far too many youth do not have

access to sports and recreation, Indigenous languages, Indigenous culture, on the land programming, mentors, addictions supports, places of healing, safe schools and other safe spaces. Some youth struggle with having basic human necessities like stable and safe housing. Indigenous youth face additional challenges due to the Indian Residential Schools legacy, the child welfare system, and loss of culture and land as a result of colonization. Youth touched by the loss of life to suicide face added layers of loss and grief. These risk factors increase the likelihood of suicidal ideation and loss of life to suicide.

Youth need leaders and champions throughout the NWT who believe in them and will advocate for the resources and supports they need to live quality lives. Youth need action taken now. The committee invited youth-led and youth-serving organizations to share their thoughts, ideas, and perspectives on suicide prevention and the kinds of strategies needed to empower youth and prevent loss of life to suicide. Five youth-led organizations, one youth-serving organization, and one Dene counsellor who facilitates on the land healing with youth and communities, stepped forward and provided responses to the Committee's three questions:

1. If it were up to you, what supports would you give to youth in your community to prevent loss of life to suicide?
2. What do youth need in your community to build resilience and inspire hope? And,
3. How can the government empower youth to lead mental health and well-being solutions?

Youth were clear in their responses. Youth know what they want:

- Youth want a territorial youth-led conference that focuses on mental health and wellness;
- Youth want consistent aftercare supports from health professionals and community members following and suicidal ideation or attempts;
- Youth want access to individual and family-oriented addictions and healing supports;
- Youth want an increase to accessible programs including programming sports, recreation, culture, language, and on the land programming;

- Youth want to be cared about;
- Youth want safe schools and safe spaces that are free of alcohol, drugs and violence; and,
- Youth want safe and stable housing.

Youth said these were suicide prevention strategies. A territory-wide response focused on building resilience and strengthening community supports is key to protecting lives and reducing loss of life due to suicide.

LOSS OF LIFE TO SUICIDE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

In October 2022, the Office of the Chief Coroner released the 2021-2022 Early Release of Suicide Data to raise the alarm on the upsurge of deaths to suicide. At that time, 18 deaths to suicide were reported, more than any one year in the two decades prior. According to the Office of the Chief Coroner, the majority of those impacted were male between the age of 20 and 29 in the Beaufort Delta and North Slave regions of the Northwest Territories. Community leaders have shared that most were Indigenous. Loss of life to suicide occurred in all five regions.

See Appendix A for more information.

In response to the loss of life among youth to suicide, committee prioritized speaking to youth on the topic of suicide prevention efforts and advocating for accessible resources and supports. Youth are defined as an individual under 30.

COMMITTEE APPROACH.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the reading of this report to my colleague for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: COMMITTEE APPROACH

Committee took two approaches to this report. First, a suicide prevention approach that is focused on strategies that reduce the likelihood of someone losing their life to suicide, participating in suicidal behaviours, or suicidal thoughts (suicidal ideation). Second, a trauma-informed approach that recognizes a person holistically and acknowledges that a person may have or is currently experiencing trauma. Committee incorporated this approach several ways, including centering the voices of individuals with lived experience, providing private and confidential listening sessions, and only asking questions with consent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth-led Mental Health and Wellness Conference

"Throughout the process, avoid tokenization. Have lots of youth. Value their lived experience. The youth of today have the insights and experience needed to represent what NWT youth are experiencing." This was from Community Building Youth Futures.

Youth want a youth-led territory-wide conference in a regional centre or small community outside of Yellowknife that focuses on fostering mental health and wellness with workshops and activities. Potential topics for workshops and activities mentioned were positive relationship development, emotional intelligence, healthy ways to manage grief, anti-bullying, practicing advocacy and grassroots movements, sobriety, self-care, Indigenous languages, Indigenous culture, trauma and intergenerational trauma, mental health first aid, grant proposal writing, sports, and art. Youth require support from the Government of the Northwest Territories to advance this undertaking. Youth-led organizations want to lead and develop a conference but need the GNWT's financial and human resource support.

Committee believes a youth-led conference can be organized within six months. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1: The Department of Health and Social Services provide financial and human resource support to youth-led non-governmental organizations to host a territorial youth conference on mental health and wellness before the end of the 19th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pass it on to the Member for Deh Cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Aftercare

"When we reach out for help, we need something to happen." - That's Home Base Yellowknife.

What happens when a youth ends up at a hospital or a health care centre in the NWT following suicidal ideation or attempt of suicide? According to many youth, nothing. Nothing happens. Committee heard story after story of youth who attempted suicide or had suicidal ideation who were not triaged, provided only physical health support if needed and no mental health support, and did not receive an

aftercare plan or any kind of meaningful aftercare. Youth shared that in addition to their parent or guardian, they would like to be accompanied by a counsellor or health advocate while they are in the hospital or health care centre. Additional support persons provide comfort and knowledge in challenging situations. After discharge, youth and the persons who care for them want consistent aftercare support from health professionals and community members.

Committee believes that aftercare plans support a youth's journey out of crises and towards recovery and mental health and wellness. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 2: The Department of Health and Social Services develop aftercare processes for persons discharged from hospitals and health care centres following suicidal ideation and attempts to reduce suicide re-attempts and loss of life.

Addictions Supports and Healing Centre

"Piecemeal stuff doesn't work with addictions or suicide prevention." - Donald Prince.

Addictions are a major contributor to poor mental health and wellness. While many youth in the NWT do not identify with having a drug or an alcohol addiction, youth in the NWT have the highest rates of hospitalization caused by substance abuse in the country. Leaders and community members are concerned about the impact of drug and alcohol addiction among youth, and the increased availability and new types of drugs entering the communities. Current approaches to preventing alcohol and drug abuse do not work. For many people in the NWT, alcohol and drug abuse is seen as a response to trauma, with holistic healing needed for the individual and family. Youth described the land as a place of healing. Youth want an addictions and healing centre here in the NWT where they can deepen their support circles with family and loved ones. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 3: The Department of Health and Social Services establish a youth and family addictions support and healing centre in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pass to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Community Suicide Prevention Fund

In October 2022, following the upsurge of deaths to suicide, the Minister of Health and Social Services acknowledged the NWT was in a mental health crisis and "expedited" the Community Suicide Prevention Fund. The Community Suicide Prevention Fund provides financial support for community-based prevention activities. At the direction of the Minister, the Department of Health and Social Services provided funds directly without application. Committee believes this was an appropriate response. Many communities do not have the human resources capacity to write an application, budget, or provide reporting required. As a result, many communities do not apply to the Community Suicide Prevention Fund or other mental wellness and addictions recovery funds, leaving these funds underutilized. Eliminating administrative burdens allows communities to focus on self-determining their own suicide prevention strategies and will increase the likelihood these funds will be utilized. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 4: The Department of Health and Social Services expedite and streamline the application, approval, and reporting requirements for the Community Suicide Prevention Fund.

"We are talking about more cultural programming and events in community. What if we had small activities happening every week, every month that makes us feel supported. Various things like going on walks, drum dances, anything that helps youth connect with others. Connecting with identity and culture is suicide prevention." - Supporting Well-being.

Youth want opportunities to be involved in sports, recreational activities, and do arts to develop friendships and gain confidence and be part of the community. Youth want to know their identities and have opportunities to practice their culture, language, and on the land skills with elders and knowledge-keepers. Doing so, instills pride and empowers Indigenous youth. Youth want access to consistent programming and activities daily, weekly, and monthly. Youth who are in a crisis or experiencing challenges may need access to a lot of different programming, with the understanding that their participation may take time to develop interest or trust. Youth want mentorship with elders and respected members of the community. Youth are seeking simple experiences with their mentors like going on walks, getting coffee, or just having conversation. They want to be sincerely cared about. Home Base YK staff said, "One act of kindness will make a huge difference in someone's life." Youth want youth-led

programming that builds resilience and strengthens their community supports. This is what youth said is suicide prevention.

Committee believes that the eligible projects under the Community Suicide Prevention Fund should be expanded to include strategies youth have identified as suicide prevention. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 5: The Department of Health and Social Services expand the eligibility for projects under the Community Suicide Prevention Fund to include sports, arts, and recreational programming, culture, language, and on the land programming, and informal elder/respected community member-youth mentorship.

Currently, the maximum funding available for the Community Suicide Prevention Fund is \$225,000 per year. Committee believes that that \$225,000 annually does not adequately respond to the mental health crisis and upsurge in deaths to suicide. Additional funding is required to strengthen the community supports. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 6: The Department of Health and Social Services increase the Community Suicide Prevention Fund to \$1 million annually.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pass on to my colleague Monfwi, Ms. Armstrong.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SAFE PLACES AND SAFE SPACES

Housing

Youth need housing for shelter and their basic human needs. Housing is a first step for stabilizing youth and reducing loss of life. The probability of experiencing homelessness increases for youth who do not have access to housing. Youth in care are especially vulnerable if they do not have family or close relationships to support them as they transition out of care and secure housing. Youth need access to different housing options that are safe, affordable, and supportive. For example, Home Base YK Youth Dorms in Yellowknife offers programming every day and have staff on site 24 hours a day. Currently, there are no Housing NWT units targeted toward youth. Few to no studio or one-bedroom units are available in NWT communities. Youth need housing options. Safe and stable housing is directly related to quality of life. Quality of life is linked

to the likelihood a youth will lose their life to suicide. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 7: Housing NWT develop a supportive community housing strategy focused on youth and youth aging out of care.

Mr. Speaker, I this is a quote from the Dene Nation Youth Council: "For years I have been hearing parents and students need an Indigenous guidance person, and a space open to them for support in the schools. The better life we can give them, the better quality of life they have." From the Dene Nation Youth Council.

Indigenous students and their families want additional supports in schools that will:

1. Improve academic success and university readiness including tutoring, course planning, and completing post-secondary applications.
2. Increase the presence of Indigenous language, culture, and community.
3. Provide emotional support and advocacy when needed.

This aligns with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 14, 15, and 21, relating to rights including the right to self-determine education systems and accessing education without discrimination; the right to cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations reflected in education; and, the right to improve Indigenous people's economic and social conditions in the areas of education. Indigenous students and their families want schools that support their academic journeys and set them up for success. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 8: Education, Culture and Employment review and amend the career and education advisor job description to recruit Indigenous persons in these positions.

Mr. Speaker, I pass this on to Member for Great Slave. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Educators need to be committed to maintaining safe spaces. If not, kids then don't trust their schools to keep them safe." -Northern Mosaic Network.

Youth who identify as 2SLGBTQIPA+ may experience discrimination, harassment, and violence from other students, educators, community members, and leaders. Many youth

do not feel safe expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity in the NWT. Indigenous youth who identify as 2SLGBTQIPA+ may face additional layers of harm due to the intersection of racism and homophobia. One youth said that many Indigenous 2SLGBTQIPA+ youth are on the "fringes" of their communities. Research has shown that 2SLGBTQIPA+ students suffer from greater rates of mental health issues and suicide. Their sexual orientation and gender identity does not inherently put 2SLGBTQIPA+ youth at a higher risk for suicide, but, rather, the lack of acceptance, mistreatment, and hatred for the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community increases the likelihood of suicidal ideation and loss of life to suicide. It is not enough to "tolerate" 2SLGBTQIPA+. Adults including educators, leaders and community members need to actively educate themselves and work to be accepting and inclusive of 2SLGBTQIPA+ youth in schools and the broader community. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 9: Education, Culture and Employment make the guidelines for ensuring LGBTQ+ equity, safety and inclusion in the Northwest Territories schools training mandatory in Northwest Territories schools.

Youth Centres

"Youth know what they need, and they know what they want." - AYDA Women Youth shared what they want in a youth centre:

- Physical spaces that are free from drugs, alcohol and any forms of violence;
- Environments that are inclusive, positive and uplifting;
- Consistent, healthy and fun programming and activities that give youth meaningful things to do;
- Indigenous youth want cultural and language programming and activities with elders and knowledge-keepers. Some examples include elders' stories, cutting dry meat, making a tipi, igloo or sod house, learning how to trap, singing Indigenous songs, etc.;
- Leadership opportunities including youth-led programming;
- Celebrating success and success stories with people who have similar life experiences; and,
- Dedicated staff who truly care.

Youth centres are important places in the community. They are safe spaces where youth can gather with friends and have healthy outlets for their emotions. Diverse programming and activities give youth opportunities for learning and skill development and building confidence and resilience. Indigenous youth's identities are nurtured and empowered with culture, language, and on the land programming. Connections in the community are strengthened. Youth shared that these spaces, combined with the factors of success described above, and what they want, are directly linked to suicide prevention. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 10: Municipal and Community Affairs increase funding for the youth centres' initiative to a maximum of \$100,000 for each recipient to ensure that youth have a positive and safe spaces to be free of alcohol, drugs, and violence.

I'd now like to pass this over to the Member for Kam Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this concludes the Standing Committee on Social Development's Building Resilience, Strengthening Community Supports: Youth-Led Recommendations on Suicide Prevention Report.

Committee looks forward to the Government's response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 11: The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report in 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to give thanks, and once again acknowledge and say thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts, ideas, perspectives, experiences, knowledge, expertise, and stories, with committee to inform the report and its recommendations, including:

- AYDA Women;
- Dene Nation Youth Council;
- Community Building Youth Futures;
- Donald Prince;
- Home Base Yellowknife;
- Northern Mosaic Network; and,

- Supporting Well-being.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 50-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Strengthening Community Supports, Lifting Youth Voices: Recommendations on Suicide Prevention, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. 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. Committee Report 50-19(2) has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 892-19(2):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RETURN
TO WRITTEN QUESTION 61-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES SOLE SOURCE
CONTRACTING UNDER PROCUREMENT
CRITERIA 1.8.2.(A)

TABLED DOCUMENT 893-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
CORPORATION CORPORATE PLAN
2023-2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 894-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INNOVATION
ACTION PLAN

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Additional Information for Written Question 61-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Sole Source Contracting under Procurement Criteria 1.8.2(a); Northwest Territories Business Development and

Investment Corporation Corporate Plan, 2023-2024; and, Northwest Territories Innovation Action Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 895-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1423-19(2): NUNAKPUT COURT
TRAVEL

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1423-19(2), Nunakput Court Travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 896-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1367-19(2): IMPROVING
HEALTHCARE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 897-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1435-19(2): DENTAL HYGIENIST
REGULATIONS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1367-19(2), Health Care in Small Communities; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1435-19(2), Dental Hygienist Regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills

BILL 80:
DENTAL HYGIENISTS PROFESSION
STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statutes Amendment Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 81:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ACT,
NO. 2

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 81, An Act to Amend the Education Act, No. 2, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 82:
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 82, Legal Profession Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 83:
LIQUOR ACT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I will give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 83, the Liquor Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

BILL 84:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION ACT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Madam Premier.

BILL 85:
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
IMPLEMENTATION ACT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, I will present Bill 85, The United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Member for Thebacha.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 76: AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 76 amends the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act to

- Establish a Commission within two years of the 2023 general election;
- Expand the size of the Commission;
- Broaden the eligibility to serve as chairperson of the Commission;
- Add geographic and place names to the relevant considerations of the Commission; and,
- Modernize language, including by using gender-neutral language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, we'll take a short time out.

---SHORT RECESS

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act, be read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 76 amends the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act to

- Establish a Commission within two years of the 2023 general election;
- Expand the size of the Commission;
- Broaden the eligibility to serve as chairperson of the Commission;
- Add geographic and place names to the relevant considerations of the Commission; and,

- Modernize language, including by using gender-neutral language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 76 has had second reading. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 8.2(7) and have Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act, referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 8.2(7) and have Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act, referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Member for Thebacha, it's referred to Committee of the Whole later today.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, 60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 68, 73, and Bill 76, Committee Report 40-19(2), Committee Report 42-19(2), Committee Report 43-19(2), Committee Report 44-19(2), Committee Report 47-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), Tabled Document 813, 881, 882, and 883-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker under Rule 2.2(4), 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. Committee wishes to consider Committee Report 40-19(2), Committee Report 43-19(2), Bill 61, Bill 63, Tabled Document 881-19(2), Tabled Document 882-19(2), Tabled Document

883-19(2), and Committee Report 44-19(2). Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 40-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 61: An Act to Amend the Ombud Act. I will go to the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on the Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Thebacha

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 2nd, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

Bill 61 is a private Member's bill sponsored by the Member for Yellowknife North. As such I, as deputy chair, assumed the role of chairing meetings about the review of this bill.

The committee sought feedback on Bill 61 and received eight written submissions. The committee held a public review of the bill on December the 9th, 2022. The input helped committee to understand the benefits of the proposed changes and put forward amendments to making the bill even stronger.

The committee amended two clauses: One to clarify the Ombud's mandate and one to maintain the exclusions on all six statutory officers covered in the existing Act and to exclude the Human Rights Commission and the adjudication panel from the Ombud's jurisdiction. As a result of the review of Bill 61, committee presented a report with two recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on February 14th, 2023.

I would like to thank the committee for its work on the review of Bill 61. Individual Members may have additional comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 40-19(2). Do Members have any general comments? Seeing none. Member for Thebacha.

COMMITTEE MOTION 380-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 40-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON BILL 61: AN ACT
TO AMEND THE OMBUD ACT –
STATUTORY OFFICER JURISDICTION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Board of Management, lead a wholistic review to examine and clarify the jurisdiction of each statutory officer of the Assembly to investigate

- A. Other statutory officers of the Assembly;
- B. Public bodies that exercise statutory authority on behalf of the executive; and
- C. Public bodies that provide statutory advisory services to the executive.

And further, the review should identify areas of over- and underlapping jurisdiction and make recommendations to address discrepancies based on best practices. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I think someone should speak to this.

So I think what happened was the bill had recommended that the Ombud have the ability to review statutory officers' operations in terms of fairness and so on and some of the statutory officers felt that that was not appropriate. So -- and it wasn't clear where some jurisdiction began, some jurisdiction ended. So I think in lieu of trying to get a better understanding of all of that, that's why this recommendation was put forward to kind of do a review of the jurisdiction of each of the statutory officers that the Board of Management should look at that, and I support this motion and I think it's a better way to approach this issue a little bit more systemically. 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Thebacha.

COMMITTEE MOTION 381-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 40-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON BILL 61: AN ACT
TO AMEND THE OMBUD ACT –
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we've concluded consideration of Committee Report 40-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We've concluded consideration of Committee Report 40-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on Bill 61: An Act to Amend the Ombud Act.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 43-19(2), Report on Bill 63: An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has been reviewing the Official Languages Act for approximately three years, having undertaken both a statutory review of the Official Languages Act in early 2020 and now the review of Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, for the last three months.

Committee provided input to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for the development of Bill 63 by providing the Minister with ideas for some of the most straightforward and attainable legislative changes. Committee heard in its review process of the Official Languages Act. The bill received second reading on November 2nd, 2022. The committee invited public feedback on the bill

and appreciates all of the stakeholders that participated in the review process.

As a result of the review of Bill 63, committee presented a report with three recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on February 28th, 2023. I would like to thank the committee for its work on the review of Bill 63. Individual Members may have additional comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Do any Members have any general comments? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: We know that a lot of people have different view on the Indigenous language, and some are saying okay, our language is dying; some are saying our language is thriving. So what I would like to see from this government is that this government should give the Aboriginal language fund to the Indigenous government because they are the authority over the language and culture, you know. They should have more say but they should give the funding to the Indigenous government. And I don't think -- I don't feel comfortable in support somebody from ECE having the authority over this language. So I would like -- that's what I would like to see, is that for future references that to give the Indigenous the Aboriginal language funds to the Indigenous government because they are the authority. They have the authority and control over the language and culture. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other general comments? Seeing none. Members -- or sorry, Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 382-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 43-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON BILL 63: AN ACT
TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT – INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
LEGISLATIVE CHANGES,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories commit to a second phase of legislative changes to protect, promote, and revitalize official and Indigenous languages in the 20th Assembly;

And further, this new legislation should be based on past recommendations, suggestions arising during the review of Bill 63, and the advice in committee's upcoming report on its statutory review of the Official Languages Act;

And furthermore, the new legislation should also seek to implement Articles 13 and 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

And furthermore, Indigenous governments should be invited to co-develop the legislation.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 383-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 43-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON BILL 63: AN ACT
TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT – INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
LEGISLATIVE CHANGES,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment ensure independence and transparency at the merged languages board;

And further, the department should provide a proper framework and resources for the board to fulfill its mandate, including timely appointments when vacancies arise;

And furthermore, the board should disclose meeting agendas, minutes, and other documents of public interest;

And furthermore, the board should also release an annual report that summarizes recommendations to the Minister, the Minister's response, progress on implementation, and the findings of program and initiative evaluations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you've concluded consideration of Committee Report 43-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 43-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 63: An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act. I will ask the sponsor of the bill, the Member for Yellowknife North, to introduce the bill.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am pleased to speak to Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act. The bill proposes changes that derive specifically from the ombud's 2019-2020 Annual Report and the Standing Committee on Government Operations' review of that report.

The ombud of the Northwest Territories is a new position for this territory. It was only in April of 2019 when our first ombud was appointed. I made the decision to bring forward Bill 61 as a private Member's bill because it is important to listen to the people who are living the realities of the legislation created for this office, and these are changes that the government was not prepared to consider putting forward in the life of the 19th Assembly.

The ombud made her recommendations to ensure her office is fully enabled to fulfill the purpose and vision with which the Legislative Assembly created it. The changes in this bill would mean residents can make complaints about a wider range of public bodies. The changes would allow the ombud to investigate complaints into matters that have come up since April 1st, 1999, because right now the

ombud can only investigate complaints into matters that have come up since January 1st, 2016. The changes would also allow the ombud to provide more notice of investigations. Finally, the changes would clarify the ombud's role.

I was pleased to concur with amendments proposed by the Standing Committee on Government Operations that further clarify the ombud's role and that ensure guardrails to make sure the ombud cannot override decisions of the Human Rights Commission or adjudication panel. The changes in this bill will improve the ability of the Office of the ombud to carry out the mandate of that office for the people of the Northwest Territories. That concludes my remarks on Bill 61. I'm pleased to hear comments or respond to questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

MR. JOHNSON: I don't actually know, Madam Chair, if anyone's in that little room. They can come join me, or perhaps a law clerk or someone.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witness in. Can you please introduce your witness.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce Christina Duffy who is a legislative drafter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now turn to the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comments on Bill 61. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I have to start over again now. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 2nd, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

The committee received eight written submissions and oral comments at a public review of this bill. Considering the valuable feedback received from stakeholders during the review period, the committee was pleased to see two proposed amendments concurred with by the sponsor of the bill at the committee's clause-by-clause review.

As a result of the committee's review of Bill 61, the committee presented its report on Bill 61 to the Legislative Assembly on February 14th, 2023.

I would like to thank the committee for its work on the review of Bill 61. Individual members may have additional comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I now open the floor to general comments on Bill 61. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank Members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for their review of Bill 61 and the MLA for Yellowknife North for bringing the bill forward and his efforts. Given existing resources and focus on current legislative priorities for the 19th Legislative Assembly, the Department of Justice, which jointly administers the act with the Legislative Assembly, has not been able to undertake a policy analysis, the policy analysis that is necessary to fully understand the impacts of some of the proposed amendments in Bill 61, but had provided initial feedback to standing committee during the course of their review. The Department of Justice appreciates that some of the initial feedback that was provided to the bill was incorporated into a revised bill. Cabinet agrees that several of the provisions will improve the overall administration and readability of the Ombud Act. However, the impacts of some of the provisions proposed in the bill are not clear.

For example, Bill 61 will allow the ombud to investigate complaints about a wider range of public bodies by expanding the definition of "authority" and replacing the current schedule that lists these authorities. The bill will also expand the list of statutory officers that the ombud shall not investigate without the officers' agreement to include a commission and an adjudication panel.

The Department of Justice has not had the opportunity to undertake a detailed analysis of these amendments in order to completely understand the impacts they may have on the ombud's investigation authority. The bill will also change the temporal jurisdiction of the ombud from 2016 to 1999, allowing the ombud to investigate complaints into matters that have arisen since April 1, 1999.

When Bill 20, Ombudsperson Act, was initially drafted, the temporal jurisdiction of the ombud did not extend before the commencement of the Act, which was consistent with similar legislation in other jurisdictions at the time. The temporal jurisdiction in Bill 20 was amended in response to feedback from the committee so that it was extended towards the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, specifically January 1, 2016. Limitations on temporal jurisdiction are important for several reasons and the significant expansion of this jurisdiction

in Bill 61 raises concerns in regard to the potential impact on resources resulting from this amendment.

The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to take the position that amending the act would have been most appropriate during the 20th Legislative Assembly given that the act is still relatively new. As the ombud continues to implement the act, it is expected that further insights will be gained as to what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Madam Chair, there is nothing egregious in this bill, but given that the department has not had an opportunity to do its due diligence, Cabinet will abstain from voting on the bill as a whole. But that said, I wish the Member good luck and I thank him for his efforts on this. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. First off, I guess this is one of the few times a Private Member's bill has actually come forward for consideration in Committee of the Whole, and so it is a historic event. And I think that Members, certainly on this side of the House, should consider and use Private Members' bills more often. There are some things that Cabinet is never going to get to, some things that they will not do, and that's why we have a consensus government so that Members on this side of the House can sometimes bring forward legislative initiatives, and that's the importance of Private Members' bills. So I guess I'm speaking a little bit from experience because I did have a Private Member's bill passed in the last Assembly, so -- and that was actually after encouragement from a couple of Members of Cabinet.

In any event, I do want to commend sincerely the initiative and work of the Member for Yellowknife North in bringing this forward as a Private Member's bill. In my view, what this bill really does is fix some of the problems with the Ombud Act that was -- some of these issues were identified in the last Assembly. The Minister who just spoke was actually on this side of the House and voted in favour of some of those amendments to try to fix the bill at that point. So it's kind of interesting to hear the changing of shoes or hats in this House on some of these issues, particularly on the scope of the ability of the ombud to reach back in time. And the ombud, you know, in the very first report identified this as a problem, her ability to go back in time to get a full understanding of some of the issues and complaints that were being brought forward to her attention and really impeded her ability to conduct a full

investigation. So as I said, I think this just helps fix a number of problems that were already there with the bill, some of which arose from the way it was put together and drafted in the last Assembly.

I am a bit dismayed to hear the Minister say that the Department of Justice hasn't had time to do policy analysis around this bill. It's been with us now for months. Perhaps the people at Department of Justice have too much other work to do but a bit dismayed to say that, you know, they haven't had time to look at this. Some of these issues, as I say, have been around not just for months now, for years. So a bit dismayed to hear that but I'm pleased to hear that Cabinet is going to abstain, and I anticipate that all the Members on this side of the House will support this bill because it's in keeping with issues that were identified in the last Assembly and helps meet some of the issues that have been brought forward by the ombud to help improve the ability of her office to do that very important work on behalf of all of our constituents and residents of the NWT. So I'll definitely be supporting this bill. And, again, I want to sincerely thank the Member for Yellowknife North for all his work on this bill. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other general comments? Does committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Can we proceed to a clause by clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1, does committee agree?

---Clauses 1 through 11 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Thank you, Member. Thank you to your witness. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witness from the Chamber.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here today to present Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories seeks to recognize, preserve, and enhance the use of Indigenous languages in the NWT, along with the two official languages of Canada. To do so, the act designates Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, and Tlicho as official languages in the NWT. The act requires a review of the provisions and operation of the act to be conducted by the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly every five years. The most recent review report was presented to the House earlier today, eight years after the previous report.

Without a recent report to inform potential legislative changes, Bill 63 proposes limited changes and is less ambitious than it would be had the statutory review requirement been met. Despite this, the department welcomed a set of initial recommendations from the standing committee for amendments to the act.

Based on standing committee's recommendations and the department's engagement with stakeholders and the public, ECE is seeking to amend the act to

- Clarify and strengthen the role of the Languages Commissioner;
- To merge and empower the languages board as a single unified board; and,
- To emphasize the importance of language protection as a means of implementing the Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Would the Minister like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses

into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I have with me John MacDonald, deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment. And Laura Jeffrey, legal counsel with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comments on Bill 63.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 2nd, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

Committee engaged with stakeholders and the public in its review of this bill. The committee held a public review of the bill on January 18th, 2023, and received five submissions with stakeholders. On February 15th, 2023, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Individual Members may have comments or questions. And in addition, I would like to thank the Minister for his close work together on getting this bill forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 63. Does committee agree that there are no general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Clause 1, does committee agree?

---Clauses 1 through 15 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Come on, guys. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 881-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023. These supplementary estimates propose a total increase of \$24.044 million, comprised of the following items:

- \$27.75 million to provide funding for the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project;
- \$205,000 to increase the total project budget for the Land Tenure Optimization System; and,
- A decrease of \$4.886 million to adjust infrastructure project cash flows to realign the appropriations with the anticipated project schedules.

These estimates also propose the supplementary appropriations that will be offset by federal revenues, including:

- \$726,000 for fish processing equipment for the Hay River Fish Plant;
- \$158,000 for cost increases related to the Fort Simpson airfield electrical replacement project; and,
- \$91,000 for nurse call bells in Fort Simpson, to be included in the communications retrofit project.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Members might have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, can you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on my left I have Bill MacKay, who is the deputy minister of Finance. And on my right Kristal Melanson, director of management board secretariat.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. I will now open the floor for general comments. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me what the opening supplement -- the supplementary reserve was for the infrastructure side in 2022-2023. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there are -- supplementary reserves are on the operations side. There aren't supplementary reserves for infrastructure sups. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, thanks. Okay, so as a result of this supplementary appropriation, are we going to be in a -- does this create -- are we going -- what's the debt that's created through this supplementary appropriation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, at this point the net impact doesn't have us going into any new debt on this one -- actually, Madam Chair, sorry, let me -- I think I'm looking at the wrong page. Let me direct that to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the total impact to be \$31,758,000. So we'll be spending more than what was budgeted under the capital plan. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Maybe I'm really mistaken, but I understood that we actually did have a reserve on the infrastructure side. Can I

just confirm that with the Minister. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I know there is a reserve for supplementary operations, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I don't have anything further on general stuff but I have some questions on the detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other general comments? Seeing no further general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will begin on page 5. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, infrastructure expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$27,750,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, they're not going to get away with this one. So I guess I'd like to get an explanation of what this \$27.75 million is for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there had been a matter involving the other parties, what we call Project Co, the entity that was involved in building and running the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line. They, under the project agreement, have the ability to seek compensation for what's called a supervening event. So that's an event that they may have claimed would have increased the associated costs of the project. What they were seeking was such that the GNWT entered into some discussions to try to determine if that could be settled rather than having to go all the way through a more formalized process. And in the course of doing that bought in a mediator and it was after the mediated process that a proposed settlement amount was reached, and that is the amount that is reflected here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So this money is going to go to NorthwesTel; is that what happens here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was the Ledcor team cohort that was -- that is the other party. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So what's the total cost of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link with this settlement and all the rest of it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I have \$194 million as being the total cost now including this. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So what was the original sort of cost estimate? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Ms. Melanson has the detail. I'll direct it to her, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Melanson.

MS. MELANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The original procurement estimate for this project was \$81.3 million.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I think there were a few gasps in the room.

How do we get from \$81 million to \$194 million? Like, who provided the original cost estimate of \$81.3 million? I guess I just need more of an explanation here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, this is dating back to, I think, approximately 2013 but I'd be happy to try to locate that information and provide it to the Member.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So I'm just -- yeah, so this was done as a P3, and was there any other way for us to -- I guess we could have contracted this rather than do it as a P3 or something and, you know, why did the -- and I know I'm putting the Minister in a difficult position because she wasn't even here when these decisions were made. But would this have been any cheaper if this had been done just as a regular procurement? You know, we contract somebody to do it rather than as a P3; like it's more than double the original cost. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the GNWT hasn't borne the entire costs. So part of the costs here are actually being paid by this project entity, which includes Ledcor. They are the ones that were responsible for financing -- building and financing the line. So the costs that they've incurred are quite significant. The GNWT actually is not fully responsible for all of those because of the P3 arrangements, they undertook some of the risk, including some of the risk of cost overruns. Now -- so it's not so simple as to say that all of those cost overruns are entirely the GNWT's responsibility. That's -- that is the benefit of having the P3, is that another entity takes on risk and when matters go up in cost, they are sometimes responsible for it. And that is one of these situations.

I'm hesitating, Madam Chair, only because some of that was the subject of the matter that was settled, and I want to not run afoul of an agreement about what was settled and why it was settled upon. They were claiming obviously an increase of costs that they put under the supervening events, a discussion was had as to what amount we would agree were under the project agreement and therefore the GNWT would compensate for. But some of what they were claiming for as being cost overruns was not going to be compensated for under this process. So again, Madam Chair -- and I don't have all the details, neither do any of us have all the details going back to 2013 of what budgets were and what cost overruns were over that course of time. So perhaps I could, again, suggest that we'll begin by getting

committee members a more detailed breakdown of the budgets and costs. And then hopefully that will help provide a bit more clarity and ensure that we are remaining on side with the settlement agreement that led to this very specific line item here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So what other exposure do we have on this project? Are there other, you know, subcontractors out there? Is there ongoing litigation related to any other aspects of this project that we could have some exposure or liability for? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this should be the sum total of it. At this point, there are no other outstanding claims or matters that are brought to our attention and certainly at some point, as parties would be aware, there are limitation periods that are attached, particularly to this type of matter. I am not anticipating anything further of this nature. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, how do we -- how do, like, even us as Regular MLAs -- do we -- is any of this sort of exposure or potential for risk ever disclosed to us? Like, this comes as a total surprise. I know that the public accounts has this global figure, massive figure of, like -- I think the last time it was over \$200 million or something of potential exposure or litigation or something that -- and it's grown exponentially over time. But how does this sort of exposure or potential liability ever get conveyed to even us as Regular MLAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Member's quite right. This is within what is termed the contingent liabilities that are budgeted for and that are reported upon. It's a larger sum initially. It comes -- it's in the public accounts. It's a larger sum. It's reported as an aggregate precisely because there's often either the discussions towards resolution aren't advanced enough to know whether they should be within contingent liabilities or they're at a stage where it would not be strategically wise for the GNWT to put itself out and say well, we think a matter

should settle at X dollars. That would really impede the ability to settle claims and may well actually create an incentive to bring claims if those kind of numbers were put out publicly. So that is a challenge. It makes it that we can't say last year when this was already in process and we knew there was likely to be a settlement in the life of our government to be able to go forward and say well, we know there's going to be a settlement and we're hoping, and we're aiming, for a range because that would really undermine the settlement negotiations, the mediation process that was underway in this particular example, but as in any other as well. But -- so that's the contingent liabilities, though, overall in public accounts is where you would find the amount that we are -- we're expecting or having to report on for matters of this nature. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks for that. And that's why the Standing Committee on Government Operations in its I think most recent review of the public accounts has asked for greater transparency of those contingent liability amounts, as is done in some other jurisdictions. And I just don't know why that kind of information can't be disclosed to us as Regular MLAs. But I'm going to run out of time here, Madam Chair. But I'm going to be voting against the supplementary appropriation, particularly for this amount, because I think this is just extremely poor project management and not the kind of thing that we should be doing and just come to the House and get a bail out on it. I'm just not prepared to do that, Madam Chair.

But I do have one other question, and that's whether there's any revenue coming in from this project and whether we could ever recover enough money on the revenue side to help offset some of these costs? And, of course, in offsetting revenue, that means our citizens probably have to pay more for their internet and phone services which is already outrageously expensive, so. But I'd be happy to hear what the Minister has to say about revenues on this project. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're just looking to see if -- we had looked for a revenue number earlier. I just don't know if I had received it in. Let me see if we can find it quickly and if not perhaps provide it -- we'll have to -- I don't know that we'll have it here today, Madam Chair. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Well, we'll wait for -- thank you for that commitment that you'll provide that. Are there any further questions? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too am questioning some of the transactions. I know this is inherited; it's not with this Cabinet because it goes back to 2013. There's no Indigenous partners in this. There's another company that's called Ledcor. And it's an international company with NorthwesTel, in a P3, and we're giving them a settlement of \$27,750,000. And it's questionable as to how these kind of agreements are done. I'm all for P3s if it's done properly and the Is are dotted and the Ts are crossed. And, you know, onus goes back to the legal teams that put these kind of things together. And I want to see how could this happen, first of all, is my first question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, again, the total project cost isn't the total necessarily that the GNWT's paid for it. I am providing the total project cost as an estimate. But, again, I'm somewhat constrained because it wasn't a total project cost by the GNWT. It was paid for by this other entity. That's the nature of having a P3 partner design and build a project and deliver it. And they ran into some significant issues in the course of that project, which we didn't then have to have the risk for. So the claim that was made and the settlement that was reached, as in the case of many claims and settlements, started at a different point and had to go to a mediated process in order to reach a conclusion, which is what brings me here at \$27 million on almost \$200 million project is the resolution that is before committee right now. But, again, it is not the total cost of the project, nor is it reflective necessarily of what the GNWT's portion would have been.

The ability to undertake a fairly technical delivery and a very technical procurement and project delivery on a fibre line running up the value is not one that I would suggest, frankly, and with respect that the GNWT has the technical expertise to deliver upon. So it's a matter of paying upfront to have a third party come and do it or having them engage in some risk to deliver on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I would like very specific and precise answers and not

waste my time for my questions. So I would appreciate that very much.

The other question I want to ask is, you know, we have NorthwesTel here as the main proponent in this settlement. And, you know, I've always been against monopolies because when you have a monopoly in business, you never try to give the best service. And that's usually what happens in business. And I think it's extremely important that we as a government start being more accountable and more transparent. And that's what we were trying to do.

You know, there's another part of a whole situation that I'm in with Fort Smith with the fire centre. There we have the fire centre who we're going to put out now to a different process and yet we pay out an international company and NorthwesTel, who is stationed in the Yukon, and we're paying all this extra money for -- to make sure we agree on a settlement outside the premises of the agreement and that to me is very alarming. And I'd like to know if that's okay for the Minister of Finance to say that's okay, and how did this settlement come about? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't know that any parties to any contracts want to end up in any kind of dispute resolution mechanism. I mean, that's -- I'd go so far as to say they don't. That's not the preferred course of action for anyone related to a contract, including the GNWT. We can't certainly control when entities want to make claims against the GNWT. There are times where that is going to happen. And this happened in this particular instance. Again, it's an almost \$200 million project. And that was back starting in, you know, now a decade ago so certainly worth, no doubt, much more than today.

You know, as far as the settlement process itself, again there was discussions that were had between the parties involving counsel, which is a standard operating -- exactly as I would expect them to do, to have counsel engaged for something of a technical nature like this, done within the parameters of the agreement that was previously negotiated. And then when discussions got to a point that required a mediator, then a mediator was engaged in order to ensure then that the two parties continue to have their counsel involved and to use the mediator services to reach a point where, you know, what was reasonable in the circumstances under the agreement could be achieved. So am I satisfied that the

agreement was adhered to? Yes. Do I want to see agreements get to the point that they have to be in some form mediated or litigated? Of course not. But am I satisfied that that agreement was followed? In this case, I'd say yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, you know, we sit here and as -- and we're using public monies and, you know, in private industry, this would never happen, okay. And it's -- you know, being in small business for 50 years and considering all the aspects that would happen if you had to go to litigation is really alarming, that we could just go and do this with a brush of whatever. And, you know, I have to really think seriously before I vote on this and I just don't like the whole taste of it because it's not okay for transparency and accountability issues when it comes to public monies, because we're doing this on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, and I have a real problem with that. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't (audio).

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm also concerned that -- in regards to how we managed this project. And you know, if we get a price of \$81.3 million and now we're looking at \$194 million, and now we're asking for a total additional cost of \$33,750,000 extra, it's concerning to me as the MLA for the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. I mean, I just got back from a funeral service in Lutselk'e and, you know, I'd been advocating for better internet services for my community and, you know, we were told that it's going to be a big improvement in December. I'm still having troubles. I don't see any improvements in that community.

Having said that, though, I mean, you know -- and I agree with my colleagues that there's got to be a better way of doing this. In the business world, you know, you'd be -- you know, these guys should be holding all the risk of \$81.3 million. And now we're spending, you know, almost \$227 million just to get through this. And, you know, I asked for ice roads for my community, \$2 million, housing, infrastructure dollars, homeownership repairs, etcetera, and I don't see it. But yet guys like NorthwesTel are, you know -- it seems like they're the only monopoly and game in town that are providing this type of services, and this government continues to work with them and acknowledge that, you know, they're the only players in town. Well, you know, when I come back from Lutselk'e, because the people there are so tired

of waiting for better services, they're starting to purchase starlink satellites there. And they're improving their systems in the community because they -- NorthwesTel is nonexistent. So I'm just going to make a comment on this because, I mean, at this point, you know, I mean, I have a lot of, you know, wants for my community. I mentioned it to the Minister. I mentioned it to the Premier. I mentioned it to the housing minister. Again, you know, it's really tough for me to sit back and find out that, you know, we're spending all kinds of money here and we don't -- I don't see the benefits in my riding. So I'm -- I can't support this increase. Thank you. It's just a comment, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do have an issue with this too as well because we've been asking on Highway No. 3 to have cell service because that is the busiest highway and even you, Minister of Finance, said it before that it is a safety risk that, you know, since there's -- there's no cell service. I just -- I have a serious concern about that because we've been asking for cell service on Highway No. 3. We have a lot of incidents. We have life lost. And even last year when there was an incident on the highway, you know, like, I was talking about this young man at Boundary Creek, like, in -- because there's no cell service, like, you know, we're quite a ways and instead he got -- he caught a ride to Behchoko and -- instead of going to Yellowknife because everybody was going this way, and then where the -- they didn't have nothing to call the ambulance with.

So it is a safety risk. She even acknowledged that so which is good, you know, but. And we can't even provide cell service for Highway No. 3. And the previous MLA -- my previous MLA had mentioned it too numerous times. And I've said it quite a few times here. And other colleagues, they have mentioned it before too as well, because Highway No. 3 is the busiest highway, and everybody uses that. It's a lifeline to Yellowknife. And for internet service, when I did my constituent visit to Wekweeti, the students over there have asked that can we -- can you do something about -- can you talk to the government to do something about improving the internet service at their school, especially at the school. They said it's really poor, we can't do much, you know. And I did talk to the Minister about that. And I thought, you know, like here, \$27 million, but they're asking additional from 81 million to \$194 million. I mean, I do have a serious concern about that. It would be nice if they're going to be spending

that much money, you know, do cell service, provide cell service for Highway No. 3. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, infrastructure expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$27,750,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3 -- oh, you had a question? Sorry. Oh, I just didn't -- Member for Nunakut.

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. No, I'm just going to make a quick comment. You know, as Regular MLAs, this is the most money. Like, we haven't even secured this kind of monies in -- as Regular MLAs over the last few years in regards to adding into the budget. You know, for myself, I see this as just bad project management. All this money we could have put into youth sport, health care, the suicide prevention. Just like that they could come up with a sup for something like this, out of the blue, but nothing -- they don't add in nothing for what's really needed in our territory, you know. No effort. Also no effort made by cuts within the Department of Finance to cover these extra costs. Are they cutting anything? But that's more of a comment and just bad management. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, infrastructure expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$27,750,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Members, I'm going to ask for a show of hands on that. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was quite a number of comments made, Madam Chair. I was hoping I might have an opportunity to respond to some of them?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I think we're going to -- let's entertain the Minister to comment and then we'll -- I'll call it, and then we'll have a show of hands on the vote. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is a \$200 million asset with some of the budgets dating back to 2013, so probably an asset that is worth far more than that today. It's an asset that was built through a P3, which gave us the ability to not pay that full cost value of that asset, and yet to be able to have a point of presence for the internet across and up the entire value. And today, Madam Chair, earlier there was raised with me the fact that the auditor general putting out a report about telecommunications. Again, I only had a very brief opportunity to look at it, but one of the things that came out was that, in fact, the Northwest Territories has better internet access than many First Nations and Indigenous communities across Canada, than many rural and remote communities across Canada, and I have no doubt that part of that is the fact that we have that point of presence running up the valley.

So as for being, you know -- whether or not there's bad management or bad project management, there was an asset that was built and delivered; it is being actively used; it has delivered on providing a point of presence. As far as the details of the fact that some -- one of those parties decided to, under the agreement, raise some concerns about project overruns, Madam Chair, again, that process went through the project agreement.

I appeared in front of committee. I appeared in front of committee and the opportunity to speak in an in-camera proceeding about those details. I can't speak to it publicly because there's an agreement, as there always is, including in all private business transactions when there's disputes between parties, which is what keeps an awful lot of lawyers employed because it happens all the time, I can't speak to it publicly because I am under a settlement agreement. I could have spoken to it when I was under in confidentiality in-camera proceedings. I can't do it here.

But, Madam Chair, again, it's a \$200 million asset. I realize there's now been a settlement reached on a many years' process. It avoided the litigation risk. Going through mediation is not litigation. It is not going to court. We avoided going to court. The parties were able to reach a settlement. The settlement is now before the committee so that the public is aware that there was a settlement reached. I suppose at this point I won't say anything else about it. The concerns around providing different and other capital projects in different communities can go through the capital planning process. It's unrelated to the fact that there's been a settlement reached under the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, infrastructure expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$27,750,000. I'm going to ask Members if they are in favour or agree to please raise your hand so I can...

So since I called the vote, can you -- all those in favour, excluding the Minister who wasn't in her seat when I called it, all in favour, please raise your hand. Or that's agreed with this.

Nine. So that's eight. All those opposed? Three, six, seven. Okay. This is carried.

---Carried

We will now take a break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We are continuing on with our Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, infrastructure expenditures, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, negative \$2,964,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized \$24,786,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now turn to page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social service programs, not previously authorized, \$91,000. Does committee agree? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering if the Minister can just provide some information as to what Safe Long-Term Care Fund is and what it's used for. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So it is a federal fund. I can't necessarily speak to the details of the federal fund. But for the purposes here, it is supporting the nursing call bells in the Deh Cho Region

and as well as in Avens Seniors. So in Avens Senior Home, it's to provide for oxygen concentrators, shower shares, patient lifts, medication carts, fridges, infection prevention and control. So, you know -- and that's in relation to, again, a long-term care facility. And in the Deh Cho region, it's related to nursing call bells, again in relation to long-term care facilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, is the reason this is coming forward in a sup because it was additional funding received from the federal government, is it annual funding, and how many years can we expect to see this come forward if it is something that is multi-year funding block? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe, Madam Chair, that it was part of an unspent balance from the previous fiscal year, and so this is the remaining amount that was unspent now carried forward and fully satisfies the amount that was available. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions or comments?

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social service programs, not previously authorized, \$91,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$91,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, please turn to page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$726,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, negative \$1,717,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see we're moving \$1.7 million over to I assume another year for the mineral administration and registry system, also known as MARS. I believe this is the system that will one day hopefully allow us to have online map staking. Can I just get an update in the timing for this project and when we expect to have online map staking in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Member is correct. This was moved over to the following fiscal year, which is expected to be when that amount will be fully spent.

As for project timelines and activities, we are expecting to have this contract awarded this fall, which means it would then be being built and then implemented thereafter over the next -- it takes approximately two years and with a go-live date to follow. So, you know, early in 2025.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, I guess 2025 for online map staking. You know, at one point, perhaps naively, I thought we were going to have that done, well, very quickly in this Assembly. I get, perhaps that this is a bit of a custom piece of software. Is there -- is it not possible to perhaps get online map staking a little faster? At one point, I believe there was suggestions about using other registries that, you know, exist everywhere else in Canada. Yeah, is there any way we can speed this up? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I have asked the very same question actually not so much of the folks of Finance but more from the folks at ITI, and I know that there is some effort underway to try and do a bit of parallel work but the online map staking program development depends very much on the regulations that it is then going to be applying. So what I understand the

effort is right now is to try to put some work in parallel so that we're not entirely waiting for the final version of every regulation to be fully concluded with the Mineral Resources Act project before beginning the work of some of the background for online map staking development, procurement, etcetera. So I gather that some of that is now happening in tandem. I can go back and confirm whether or not that parallel process will accelerate the 2025 estimated date or whether that 2025 date is actually a result of that. That I don't know, but I'll go back and confirm. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. My colleague from Yellowknife North asked some of my questions, although -- and I -- look, I am in favour of moving to map staking, but I've got a lot of issues and concerns if the fees aren't raised to appropriate levels and companies are allowed to go in and speculate and tie up a whole bunch of land without actually having to do anything. That's just not a good place to be. But I'd like to know from the Minister how much have we actually spent on this MARS thing so far and what's the total budget for it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure, Madam Chair, if I have the totals here in front of me. Let me check with the deputy minister first, please.

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

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't believe we do have those, the amount spent by the department on this in front of us here, but we can get back to the Member on that.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So because we're in a public forum, I want some assurance from the Minister that her responses to my public questions are going to be public information. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, anything that certainly has been spent to date would be -- form part of, you know, either the public accounts or would certainly, you know, be able

to be spoken to publicly here. I think the only challenge I'd run into is with respect to matters that are being procured in the future years. But -- and actually, Madam Chair, as I sit here, it would appear that I may have that.

To date we have spent \$24,000, is the number I'm getting. So, again -- but let me -- I'm -- I think we can provide more information than that about this project generally by the project leads, which does determine about -- or does require the Department of ITI to be involved. So \$24,000 to date is what I have but I think there's a lot more that I can -- or hopefully some more that I can provide, and I would make sure that what we're providing is something that can be public in relation to the work that's happening on the Mineral Resource Act regulations project. I think it -- and that would include, Madam Chair, around the idea that there would be speculation. That matter has been raised with ITI, and I know they do have a fulsome response to it. So I'd like them to be able to provide that to the Member and to, I think, alleviate his fears. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm not fearful; I just want the information to be made public. I've seen the information the Minister's provided in confidence. I do not understand or accept that it has to be kept confidential. We've got a budgeted amount here for this work. So I guess what -- and a better understanding how much has been spent, I don't see any reason why that can't be made public. So I want the assurance of the Minister that in her fuller response that she'll be able to, say, perhaps table that in the House. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, again, just subject to not going too far in the future in terms of procurement dollars, of the dollars that have not been yet put out for procurement, other than that responses will -- they can be certainly tabled in the House. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I accept that the information on money that's already been spent can be made public. In the future, maybe it's bit dodgier, but we are actually being asked to authorize moving \$1.717 million into a future. So clearly that's what's part of the budget for this project.

So I guess my last maybe -- I'll start -- maybe I should never say last, Madam Chair, is I don't think I've actually ever seen, or at least a more recent version, of some kind of public schedule about the implementation of the Mineral Resources Act and the regulations. I've seen bits and pieces, some in confidence. Can the Minister commit to actually provide a public schedule for what's going to happen at the end of this Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we'll provide a public document that shows the timeline to the end -- anticipated timelines to the end of the Assembly. I don't know where that's at in terms of -- that's obviously not what I have in front of me right now, Madam Chair. So I don't know if I will be tabling that in the next, you know, sort of 72 hours. But we'll make sure that we get something out publicly. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I appreciate that because it's been a long time since there's been any effort to actually lay that out in a public fashion, so. And if the Minister can do it before the end of the week, even better but -- and if she can't do it, I don't think I should wait until the end of May. So can I get an assurance from the Minister that she's not going to wait until May to make this information public. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree it doesn't need to take until May.

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

MR. O'REILLY: That's all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized negative, \$1,717,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department

of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, negative \$991,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Please turn to page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services not previously authorized, \$158,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$158,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 881-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 385-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 881-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2022-2023,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 881-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 881-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? Can you raise your hands? All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 881-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 882-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023. Does the Minister of Finance have opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I do. However, I thought we were doing the infrastructure sup and so I have the wrong ones in front of me, Madam Chair. But if you'll bear with me a moment, I will be able to read the correct ones to you. All right, no, that's still not it. All right, Madam Chair, I'm happy to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023.

These supplementary estimates propose a total increase of \$44.1 million, of which \$11.9 million will be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada. These supplementary estimates propose the following expenditures:

- \$6.3 million for Technology Service Centre costs incurred by departments;
- \$26.6 million in support of health and wellness services for residents of the Northwest Territories including:
 - \$15.8 million to support recruitment and retention of physicians and frontline nursing staff;
 - \$3.9 million for adult supportive living services and \$882,000 for foster care and support agreements;
 - \$3.4 million for the medical travel program;
 - \$2 million for radiology and referred laboratory services; and,
 - \$633,000 for chemotherapy drug supplies.

Also,

- \$1.8 million for justice and court services, including \$1 million for court circuit travel costs and deputy judge honoraria, as well as \$808,000 for enhancements and extensions to the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program; and,
- \$375,000 for support to the 2022-2025 Energy Action Plan.

Additionally, we are proposing the following supplementary expenditures, which are supported by federally funded agreements, including:

- \$8.47 million in support of health and social programs that includes \$6 million in support

of First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Agreements and the Territorial Health Investment Fund;

- \$1.18 million to support Environment and Natural Resources agreements including \$300,000 for cooperation in the continuation of the National Forest Inventory Remeasurement, \$200,000 for Peary Caribou Movements and Habitat Use, and \$300,000 for Wood Bison Collaborative Working Groups in the Northwest Territories;
- \$1.08 million in support of the Canada-Northwest Territories Workforce Development Agreement and the Labour Market Development Agreement;
- \$394,000 for the Pan-Territorial Sport Strategy Agreement;
- \$374,000 in support of Women In Leadership and made-in-the-North campaign schools;
- \$316,000 in support of public housing renovations; and,
- \$130,000 to enhance economic activity, including \$80,000 to support sealskin artisan development and \$50,000 to investigate the use of NWT's geological materials for cement production.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair, and we are happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I'll now open the floor for general comments. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I think I'm on the right fund now. What's the supplementary reserve, what do we start off with, and what was it before the sup and what's it going to be after the sup? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. And, Madam Chair, just of note, we might make a change on the infrastructure sups in terms of the language of using supplementary reserve because I appreciate that that is a confusing way of putting it. But there is a supplementary reserve for operations. It started off at \$35,000, but as a result of the appropriations and the supplementary appropriations, including the proposed one at present, we are expecting to

be in a deficit of negative \$77 million to \$422,000.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think the Minister just slipped there. It's not \$35,000 for the supplementary reserve. At the beginning, it was \$35 million. But that's okay. So I guess the reason why I have to keep asking these questions is because this information isn't public. So is there a way that we can do this in the future where the information in the sup, somehow there's a page or something that says how much we're getting from the feds in general for this stuff, what the net effect is on the reserve and, you know, how much additional debt is being added. Is there a way in which we could do that in the future so I or some zombie of me that comes back doesn't have to ask these questions again. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me take that back to the department. I don't have a ready answer as to why that wouldn't be a chart that could be included. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks. Because we get that kind of information in the main estimates. Well, sort of although -- whatever. Anyways, I just think it's a good thing in terms of greater disclosure, transparency, and so on, and I'm sure the Minister will find a way to do it.

So this, you know -- I think, as I understand it, I think I heard the Minister say that the supplementary reserve is going to be \$35 million -- well, maybe \$44 million in debt or whatever. How do we cover that shortfall, and do we have to go and get short-term, you know, debt coverage somehow and pay an interest rate for that that's higher than maybe long-term debt? How does that shortfall get covered, and what does it cost us? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, well, depending on the timing of it, there can certainly be, you know, a cash flow situation that would require a short-term debt but in general at this point in the fiscal year, we can look back and say that that if there was a projected surplus, then this -- these amounts come out of whatever that

projected surplus would be or eats into that, as you might say, which then, in turn, takes away money that would be available for the capital investments. And in this case, there was a projected surplus and that, between the supplementary appropriations and the special warrant to support flood relief, we are now down to anticipating only a roughly \$4 million surplus in the fiscal year. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. So I think I heard the Minister say so then at the end of 2022-2023, the operating surplus is going to be \$3 million; is that what I heard the Minister say? Thanks.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Estimating or projecting \$4 million at this point.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I'm probably straying a little bit far here but what was the original projected operating surplus then for 2022-2023?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me see if Ms. Melanson might have that at her fingertips. I don't have it.

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

MS. MELANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The initial -- I do apologize, I just need to bring it up.

The initial operating surplus for 2022-2023 was \$130,552,000.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks. Well, I guess sometimes I wonder why I ask these questions but that's it. Like, so our operating surplus went from \$130 million down to \$4 million. I just -- so next year we're projecting \$178 million, and it's probably going to end up way, way, way, way less than that. But, okay. I just wonder about these things. And I just don't like it quite frankly. Our ability to predict our finances doesn't seem to be very good. I don't know what else I can say, Madam Chair. I'm not very happy about this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other general comments? Seeing no further general comments, we'll review the supplementary estimates by department.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will begin on page 3. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, corporate management not previously authorized, \$1,680,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, negative \$2,269,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, negative \$589,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now turn to page 4. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$75,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, environmental stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$219,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So what's the Deh Cho money actually going to be used for? Thanks, Madam Chair. And will it actually result in the Horn Plateau area being

permanently protected? I guess that's my underlying question. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, Ms. Melanson has a brief description. I propose she provide it.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Ms. Melanson.

MS. MELANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The additional funding will be used to fund meetings, community engagement, and negotiations towards the development of the establishment agreements for the Deh Cho candidate protected areas. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. Can I get some detail about which areas are going to be protected? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I don't have that level of detail for the supplementary appropriation, but I can commit to providing that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you for that commitment. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I guess, again I'll ask, is any of this money going towards Edehzhie and permanent protection? We got some, you know, interim land withdrawal covering it. Is this going to help get this area permanently protected in some way? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, again, I don't have that level of detail of what the conservation approach might be. My understanding is that this is meant to help with the developing what candidate areas there are going to be. So I would leave that to -- a question for people over at employment -- ECC to provide further detail on, and I can obviously convey that to my colleague. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to find a way to say nicely that it would be better if we could get better answers rather than

push it off to some future point where we don't know whether the information is actually going to be made public or not. And I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, environmental stewardship and climate change not previously authorized, \$219,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, forest management, not previously authorized, \$300,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, wildlife and fish, not previously authorized, \$585,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$1,179,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$290,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$290,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$681,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Finance, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$681,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Please turn to page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$3,107,000. Does committee agree?

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social service programs, not previously authorized, \$25,263,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I feel obligated to ask a couple questions about the \$25 million in health spending, and I know the Department of Health and Social Services is just kind of a black hole we have to fund. I'm looking at the \$8.4 million increase to standard physician contracts. Can the Minister just elaborate a little bit more of what we're increasing, how much more the doctors are getting paid to increase competitiveness. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this was concluded as part of negotiation with the territorial medical association and resulted in some small retroactive amount, but also there's recruitment bonuses and there's an amount that is resulting from changes to the locum contract rates, and I'm certainly happy to provide some further breakdown of each of those. Well, \$1.2 million to the contracts for physicians, standard physician contract rate, as well as \$3.4 million just over in recruitment initiatives, and \$3.1 million for locums, and then just over \$700,000

is for retroactive amounts, again related to that contract. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I actually don't know. Is there somewhere I can look publicly and see the pay scale for all doctors? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe there is. I don't have a link offhand but we can provide that together with some of the other commitments we've made today. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I also see that we're \$633,000 more for chemotherapy drugs. Can someone just elaborate why we're incurring this cost? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is a projected shortfall in the chemotherapy program that we have here at Stanton Hospital, and it's based on the actuals that we ran as of October and then extrapolated that to the end of this fiscal year. So based on where the program was at as of October 21st, it was expected that there would be this shortfall. The drug cost, I mean, it's two-fold. It's partly the cost of the drugs and also the amount of usage by clients, by patients. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. So, yeah, more people have cancer, and more people -- the drugs are more expensive. Can someone tell me what the total is for funding for chemotherapy drugs; how much the total is? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking as a net, \$1.553 million.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Looking next at radiology services, I see that is costing us another \$1.5 million. Can I just get another bit

of an explanation on why we need another \$1.5 million for radiology services. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Radiology services are an item that is actually contracted out and provided by Beam Radiology which is based in Calgary. This is done through a competitive procurement process through the NTHSSA and that contract, as I understand it, has been renewed, and there are increases in over and above what was in the previous contract, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Last one, \$6.79 million for frontline nurses, including agency nurses. Can I just get a bit of a breakdown what this is, whether it's related to -- yeah, a breakdown of what this is getting us. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so that -- yes, that also is for anticipated shortfall at the NTHSSA. As noted, it was for frontline nurses. It is for agency nurse expenditures. So this is in situations where there's an ongoing shortage. Notwithstanding efforts for health care recruitment, there do continue to be a reliance and a necessity to bring up nurses to cover urgent positions. And with the nationwide shortage that's ongoing, again, as I said, notwithstanding some of the other efforts, some of which are reflected here in terms of other areas of supplementary appropriations, agency nurses are one way to ensure that there is a person in a position, and that has with -- with the situation of labour market shortages, there's been a reliance on agency nurses and not at a -- not enough money to fund that. So in order to keep those services available, that's what is driving the increase in these costs and expenses. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just confirm then that the entirety of this \$6.79 million is agency nurse contracts that it -- I guess, it doesn't include overtime or other -- you know, the labour markets bonus we gave -- I forget what it's called. You know, there's a lot of increased nursing costs but is

this the totality of this just that we're bringing up more and more agency nurses? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The total amount requested of 6.792 includes funding for agency nurse contracts of 5.7 as well as providing accommodation for those nurses and also for their union dues, and it's divided up between the different departments within which they would be employed. But that is the total, 6.7.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized \$25,263,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operation expenditures, long-term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$3,428,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operation expenditures, out of territory services, not previously authorized, \$3,590,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operation expenditures, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$3,388,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Health and Social Services, operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$38,776,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 10. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operation expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, negative \$231,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So if I'm looking at the descriptions right, we're cutting funding in the economic diversification and business support part of ITI and giving it over to minerals and petroleum resources. So I can I get an explanation here as to why that is happening? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there's two reallocations taken out from the secondment program and the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy is sunsetting. That work's been complete, and that money is no longer needed there. It's at a different stage now. The secondment program, there was a position that was no longer required and so the secondment agreement was cancelled. So there's surplus money sitting in those two, and it's been reallocated to three things. One, the NWT producer incentive pilot program, which is within the film industry for \$100,000; the MRA implementation process for 125, and the SEA redesign for 86. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So how much of the \$311,000 is going to the MRA implementation and royalty regime review, and then how much is going to the socio-economic agreement program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: \$125,000 plus \$86,000, Madam Chair. And I just didn't do the math in time.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So, again, I guess I'm just kind of interested in how much additional funding the department has secured for the MRA implementation royalty work over the last few years. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't know if we have a total here but perhaps I'll suggest we turn to Ms. Melanson. She might have some further information that she could provide. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Melanson.

MS. MELANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Unfortunately I do not have that information in front of me at this moment.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I'm happy to get a commitment out of the Minister if she can pull together that information and provide it to me publicly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sure we can do that. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay. And I just continue to make these observations about how this department is very successful at securing extra money for development of regulations, implementing the new Mineral Resources Act, and other departments either don't go to the well or if they do, they're refused. You know, and the Forest Act in particular, you know, Protected Areas Act in the past, the Public Land Act, those departments seem to have to work within their existing budgets to get that work done, and I think it's suffered as a result of that. So I don't expect an answer from this Minister. But I just continue to make that observation, that some departments either don't go to the well or if they do, they're turned down. But when it comes to the mining stuff, no problem. The extra money just flows from the tap. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, negative \$231,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operation expenditures, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$361,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized \$130,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 11. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Infrastructure, operation expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$477,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Infrastructure, operation expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized \$375,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Infrastructure, operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$852,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Please now turn to page 12. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Justice, operation expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$1,036,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, policing services, not previously authorized, \$808,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Justice, operation expenditures, services to the government, not previously authorized, \$755,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,599,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 13. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Lands, operation expenditures, operations, not previously authorized, negative \$205,000. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can I get an explanation as to why this is being shifted from what used to be or will soon be former Department of Lands to Department of Finance. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, ISSS or information shared system services within Finance is now managing the LTOS project so that's why it is going there. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So, you know, I think it was in the last Assembly -- I think it was in the last Assembly where 77 staff people were kind of culled from different departments that had been previously working on different, you know, IT stuff, and they're all put into Finance now and -- because it was apparently going to be more effective and efficient. Has there actually ever been an evaluation done of the transfer of the funding and staff into the Department of Finance? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not as of yet. This is only the first sort of -- well, this will be the first full Assembly where ISSS has been in existence. So I don't know that -- and with the two years that were somewhat lost to COVID, I don't know that we

would have been in a position at this point. But certainly the Department of Finance, including ISSS, has been part of the government renewal process and is live to the fact that we're shifting towards a more evaluative process. So I'll certainly take note of the Member's comments and can report back to the department and see where and when we would fall within a more evaluative process. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So is there any kind of annual satisfaction survey ever done of ISSS and the services that they offer to the departments? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I gather there has been some work done internally within the government as to their satisfaction with ISSS. That was done on the operations side. But I can endeavour to see what information may be available. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I would be very interested in seeing that because I -- I've heard rumblings about some departments not being able to get work done in a timely fashion or that they have to go outside, and there seems to be some issues there. And not knowing enough about it, if there was some information that the Minister could share and if it has to be done on a confidential basis, that's okay in this case, but I'm not convinced that this move of these 77 people and centralizing this has actually made anything more effective or efficient. So anything the Minister can provide on that in satisfactions levels of the departments that they're supposed to be providing a service to would be helpful, and I look forward to receiving that information. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So to clarify, we'll provide the copy of the survey results confidentially to MLAs but I would also say we'll put something together that we could put together with the public information that is coming as a result of commitments. I know it does get raised in the House with respect to IT projects and what's happening with them. And there are -- you

know, it takes a bit of time for a new team to come together, and I know there's been some projects, Mineral Resources Act being one, that wind up going back to a department function. So some understanding as to the benefits of having moved IT together is probably valuable. So we'll do both in terms of providing the private results but also something that can be shared. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Lands, operations expenditures, operations not previously authorized, negative \$205,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Lands, operation expenditures, total department not previously authorized, negative \$205,000. Does committee agree? Thank you.

Please turn to page 14. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023 Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operation expenditures, sports, recreation, and youth not previously authorized, \$394,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$394,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 882-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 386-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 882-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2022-2023,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 882-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 882-19(2) be reported and recommended as

ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Tabled Document 882-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

We will just continue along.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 883-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024. Did the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023- 2024. These supplementary estimates propose an increase of \$45.196 million comprised of the following items:

- \$2.297 million in previously approved projects as a result of transferring the 2023-2024 capital budgets from the Departments of Lands and Environment and Natural Resources to the newly formed Department of Environment and Climate Change; and,
- An increase of \$4.886 million to adjust infrastructure project cash flows to realign appropriations with the anticipated project schedules.

In addition, this amount also includes the following items which are supported by federally funded appropriations:

- \$3.45 million for COVID-19 ventilation projects; and,
- \$36.86 million to provide funding for community government infrastructure projects under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan and the Small Communities Fund.

That concludes my opening remarks, and I'd be happy to answer questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll now open the floor to general comments. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm going to sound like a broken record. Where -- so what did we start off with as a supplementary reserve and what impact will this -- how much of that is offset by -- or sorry, the new money, how much is offset by feds, and what's the net effect on the supplementary reserve? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this is where on infrastructure supplementary appropriations there isn't a supplementary reserve for infrastructure. And as I said, I think there's some information that we do provide to committee that could stand a bit of a look at the terminology that's used to make that more clear because it wouldn't show -- there wouldn't be a net impact because there's nothing to be impacting upon. That said, Madam Chair, there is -- I mean, again -- well, I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, I guess I lost my mind, but okay, is any of this offset by federal money, and how much? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there is \$40,310,000 in federal or other revenue offsets. And just on the same vein, Madam Chair, in terms of money that is being offset to either prior or future fiscal years, there's \$4.886 million. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. So the net effect really is zero, is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That is correct, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Seeing no further general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will begin on page 5. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, community operations, not previously authorized, \$36,860,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$36,860,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, environmental management and monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$80,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024 Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$225,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,992,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,297,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1,

2023-2024, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, environmental protection and waste management not previously authorized, negative \$80,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, forest management, not previously authorized, negative \$1,592,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024 Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, wildlife, not previously authorized, negative \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024 Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$2,072,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office to the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$3,169,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,169,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 9. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investments expenditures, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$1,717,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,717,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 10. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$3,450,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,450,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 11. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Lands capital investment expenditures, operations, not previously authorized, negative \$225,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Lands, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$225,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 883-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 387-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 883-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2023-2024,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 883-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 883-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 883-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in a formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 44-19(2), Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Final Report: A Northwest Territories Approach to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements.

I will go to the chair of the Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs for any opening comments. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the special committee's final report was read into the record in the Legislative Assembly on February 28th, 2023. This Assembly has tasked the Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs to seek and encourage discussion and recommendations on opportunities and specific challenges in meeting two specific assembly priorities:

- Advance resolution of Aboriginal rights negotiations; and,
- Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In this final report, the committee makes recommendations informed by discussions with Indigenous governments and organizations, legal experts, Canadian scholars, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The committee's recommendations address informed governance, enabling a Northwest Territories constitutional framework, monitoring UNDRIP implementation, ensuring policies are consistent with UNDRIP, and concluding land agreements.

I thank all committee members for the commitment, time, and work given to the special committee. Every so often it truly felt like moving through time, discussing and hearing about the rights, issues, that seem to have not moved forward in decades. It felt like being stuck in the past, at the same time hearing visions of an empowered future and about the will to put the work into this vision was a true privilege.

The committee hopes that the collaborative efforts observed since we began our work will continue and achieve the reconciliation that is needed in the Northwest Territories. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 44-19(2). Do any Members have any general comments? Seeing no comments at all, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 388-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – POST-ELECTION
TRANSITION AND ORIENTATION
MATERIALS,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that

- A. The office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly includes in all transitional and

orientation material for all MLAs post-election, and

- B. The office of the Secretary to Cabinet of the Government of the Northwest Territories includes, in post-election materials specific to Cabinet, an introduction to the history and role of each of the following:
- a) NWT Council of Leaders;
 - b) Modern treaty and self-government partners forum;
 - c) Intergovernmental council and intergovernmental council secretariat;
 - d) The jurisdictions of public government exclusive and inclusive Indigenous governments; and,
 - e) NWT Council of Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to, first of all, thanks the committee for the work that they did on this. And I know that this was tabled in the House on February the 28th. So, you know, since the report was even tabled, there's been other progress made as well and, you know, I point to the process convention on bills drafted pursuant to the Intergovernmental Council legislative development protocols. So I assume that that would probably be part of the orientation that Regular MLAs and Members of Cabinet would receive as some background on that legislative development protocol and then the process convention that we developed springing from that. So I just thought it would be worthwhile to add that because I know our staff are probably listening, and somebody might pay attention and actually make sure that gets included in the orientation program. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those in favour? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 389-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – 20TH LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
UNDRIP IMPLEMENTATION,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the 20th Legislative Assembly establish a special committee on UNDRIP implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those in favour? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 390-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – GNWT WORK PLAN
PROPOSALS,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the work plan proposals to be suggested by the Government of the Northwest Territories under the NWT Council of Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding should include:

1. Description of who or what entity will monitor progress;
2. Identification of who or what entity will be accountable for progress;
3. A dispute resolution mechanism other than the Government of the Northwest Territories for disputes between Indigenous governments over the implementation of UNDRIP, land access and land exclusivity and other inter-jurisdictional disputes; and,

4. An established process or determined place to ensure the implementation of existing self-government agreements or land claim agreements is consistent with the principles and objectives of UNDRIP.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 391-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – REVIEW OF GNWT
POLICIES,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: It's the separate motion. It's not the one that's in the package.

Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories systematically review the GNWT policies against the principles of UNDRIP and in consideration of purposes and objectives established by the NWT Council of Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding,

- A. Beginning with the review of policy 11.51 Aboriginal land claims;
- B. Continuing with the review of policies listed under the authority of the Executive Council and ministerial policies; and,
- C. While at the same time, establishing an understood process to ensure a check in with Indigenous governments and Members of the Legislative Assembly before final versions are concluded.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. So I was trying to quickly refresh my memory on the report, and I confess I don't think I was here when it was read into the record. But I assume that this special committee is going to be a joint one between Regular MLAs and Cabinet? But I don't really see that kind of spelled out anywhere in here. Maybe somebody who's on the committee or the chair might be able to help me understand that. I assume, maybe I'm just reading too much into this, but are Regular MLAs going to be part of this or is this just like a Cabinet committee, or what's going on here? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Regular MLAs should be part of this. I don't think it should just be Cabinet in charge of this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, do you want to comment on that?

MS. SEMMLER: I think when we -- when we had the discussions around the motions, I guess that's something -- because we were sitting around the table and we were a joint committee. So I think that was the intention, is this type of a committee to continue on. And so I think it was just an oversight of -- I think this committee worked well as being -- I mean, to do the work that we had to do, we had to have both sides of the special committee and I think to continue to do that work, it's going to have to continue to be both sides on the special committee to make sure that, you know, concerns from both sides are represented. So I'll leave it at that, and hopefully this gets into record so that when the next government does form and if they do choose to do this recommendation, then they understand that this should be recommended as a joint committee. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those -- Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's important to note within this motion as well that if we're really following the United Nations Declaration for Indigenous Peoples, which will be hopefully put through second reading sometime this week, and maybe by the end of the government, the third reading, that the Indigenous governments also have a huge role within this motion. So just wanted to say that it's not only the GNWT Ministers and Regular Members; the Indigenous governments within the declaration

have to have a say in this as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 392-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – OUTSTANDING LAND AND
SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work towards establishing a shared framework with the Government of Canada, Indigenous governments, and organizations for the resolution of outstanding land and self-government agreements;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories make the option of an independent facilitator available to all negotiation tables.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE MOTION 393-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2): SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT: A
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING
AGREEMENTS – GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report in 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 44-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Agreed. Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 44-19(2), Final Report of the Northwest Territories Approach to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Mahsi

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 40-19(2), Committee Report 43-19(2), Committee

Report 44-19(2), Bill 61, Bill 63, Tabled Document 881-19(2), Table Document 882-19(2), and Tabled Document 883-19(2) and would like to report progress with 14 motions carried, and that Committee Report 40-19(2), Committee Report 43-19(2), and Committee Report 44-19(2) are concluded, and that Bills 61 and 63 are ready for third reading, and that consideration of Tabled Document 881, 882, 883 is concluded and that the House concur in those estimates. And that an appropriation bill be based thereon and be introduced without delay. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Frame Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 28th, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1343-19(2), Impacts of COVID-19 on Education
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

- Motion 77-19(2), Review of Territorial Land Lease Policy and Procedures

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 77, Nursing Profession Act
- Bill 78, Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act
- Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Judicature Act

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3

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 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum products and Carbon Tax Act
- Bill 66, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act
- Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
- Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child Day Care Act
- Bill 73, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 4
- Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
- Committee Report 42-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 66: An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act
- Committee Report 47-19(2), Report on Homelessness Prevention: Supporting Pathways to Housing NWT Residents
- Committee Report 48-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 68: An Act to Amend the Child Day Care Act

- Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
- Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
- Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
- Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
- Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 28th, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:18 p.m.