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**LEGISLATIVE  
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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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(Deh Cho)

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(Kam Lake)

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(Sahtu)  
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*Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*

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(Yellowknife Centre)

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

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

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*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

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

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Diane Thom**  
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*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
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*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 12, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 10-19(2):  
STRONGEST FAMILIES INSTITUTE**

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year, one in five Canadians experience a mental health challenge or illness. Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience a mental illness or substance-abuse disorder than any other age group. Research also shows that 70 percent of mental health challenges begin during childhood or adolescence. These numbers are higher in the Northwest Territories with the impact of intergenerational trauma and the legacies of colonization and residential schools.

To help address these concerns, the Department of Health and Social Services released the mental wellness and addictions recovery plan in June 2019 to guide changes to our mental wellness and addictions recovery system. A primary goal of the action plan is to ensure services are person- and family-centred, recovery-oriented, trauma-informed, accessible, and culturally safe. We want people to experience a positive experience and effective support at any point of entry into the system and to remain engaged as partners in their care as they move toward healing and recovery in their lives.

As part of developing the addiction action plan, the department reached out to Northerners and key stakeholders. They made it clear that there is a need for more mental wellness and addictions recovery options and supports. One way to meet this need is to implement distance-based and e-mental health programs across the Northwest Territories. Launched in January 2020, Strongest Families Institute is the first of several mental health

initiatives that are being implemented to complement in-person supports and options to residents. With our partners, Bell Let's Talk and Northwestel, we will invest \$500,000 over the next five years to have Strongest Families Institute provide telephone-based distance support for individuals and families experiencing mild to moderate anxiety, depression, and behavioural concerns.

Strongest Families Institute provides individuals and families with weekly access to trained coaches and skills-based programming to support their unique needs, experiences, and goals. Because it is telephone-based, there are very few barriers. Once referred to the program, people can talk to their coach in the comfort and privacy of their own home at a time that works best for them, day or night.

Mr. Speaker, these award-winning, evidence-based programs have been shown to help with child mental health issues, academic progress, bullying, family relationships, and parental stress. Strongest Families Institute has been providing these programs to all of the Atlantic Provinces, Manitoba, and Finland for many years.

An important focus of the Department of Health and Social Services is to work towards building and supporting a more culturally aware and informed health system. To ensure that the Strongest Families Institute's programming is culturally respectful, it was co-designed with partners, including Indigenous advisors. All of their coaches are also receiving ongoing diversity training to gain knowledge and support of a variety of cultural traditions. Information specific to our territory's northern context has also been shared to help inform Strongest Families Institute coach and train staff.

Mr. Speaker, the Strongest Families Institute is one of many support options that the residents can access in the Northwest Territories. We are committed to increasing the number and variety of culturally respectful, community-based mental wellness and addictions recovery options. Giving people more choices, and in addition to things like the Community Counselling Program, the Northwest Territories helpline, and on-the-land

healing, is part of our commitment to building better mental wellness and addictions recovery success in the Northwest Territories.

There is no single approach that will work for everyone when it comes to addressing mental health and addictions. By providing a variety of options based on the needs of the person seeking the support, we are more able to provide the right type of care, at the right time, by the right person. Going forward, we will continue to work with individuals and families who have first-hand experience with mental wellness and addictions recovery, as well as Indigenous governments, and other key stakeholders as we work to improve our system and better meet the needs of Northwest Territories residents.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Bell Let's Talk and Northwestel for partnering with us in supporting mental wellness in our territory. I also want to encourage individuals and families seeking support to reach out to their local community counselling program for more information on the Strongest Families Institute and its potential to provide some valuable support in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 11-19(2): FOSTERING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I stand in this House today to celebrate the nine official Indigenous languages of the Northwest Territories. How incredible that we have nine official Indigenous languages, unlike any other jurisdiction in Canada. Our languages are gifts to be protected, strengthened, valued, and promoted.

Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to keep our languages alive, to ensure we are a territory where Indigenous languages are supported, respected, and where they thrive. This is the vision that gives me hope, that gives us the energy and the drive to revitalize our languages, and that will help us ensure that our children and our youth retain a strong connection to their language and to who they are.

Mr. Speaker, each of our Indigenous languages, Chipewyan, Tlicho, South Slavey, North Slavey, Gwich'in, Cree, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, and Inuktitut, articulate the ways of knowing, doing, being, and believing that are unique to their own communities and histories. They define who we are as people of the Northwest Territories.

Indigenous languages are the essence of our identity, our people, and our culture. Our Indigenous languages remind us of our relationships with each other, the land, and the spiritual world. It is through the oral traditions, legends, and stories of our ancestors, elders, and knowledge-keepers that we come to understand the history, geography, and ecology of this land. These stories remind us to work together through consensus and collaboration, which is the basis of how we govern here in the Northwest Territories. Our languages benefit all of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of the countless Indigenous people who never acquired the language that was spoken by my ancestors since time immemorial, so I understand the importance of fostering Indigenous languages and commit this government to do so through the many revitalization initiatives currently in place and those planned for the future.

February is Indigenous Languages Month in the Northwest Territories, and I am proud to be a part of a territory that acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of language and the rich culture of its peoples. The theme of this year's celebration is Say It With Me. This is a call to action that focuses on the importance of using Indigenous languages at home, at school, in the media, at work, and in the community. These are the words of encouragement that the next generation of speakers need to hear.

This month, we are supporting regional Indigenous governments to celebrate Indigenous Languages Month through community activities and events. As a government, we are also celebrating the bilingual Government of the Northwest Territories employees who provide important government services to the public in Indigenous languages.

Next month, we will continue these celebrations by honouring 14 students graduating from Aurora College with the University of Victoria's Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, there are many exciting Indigenous language revitalization initiatives underway right now within the territory. We have:

- awarded 29 Indigenous Languages Revitalization Scholarships to postsecondary students;
- piloted the Northwest Territories Indigenous Languages Mentor-Apprentice Program in partnership with three regional Indigenous governments, which is helping 60 community participants build language fluency;
- delivered training for 20 community Indigenous language instructors to support capacity building and give communities the tools they need to keep the languages vibrant and strong;

- provided training for over 100 Indigenous language teachers on instructional strategies and resources to use in school programs; and
- we will be launching the new JK-12 Our Languages curriculum in our schools beginning in the upcoming school year.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that we have done to support Indigenous languages. Recently, on an education tour, I saw a wonderful example of this in action when I came across an Indigenous Language scramble game. The game started as a project by students learning Chipewyan at Paul William Kaeser High School in Fort Smith. This Indigenous-language teaching tool became so popular that the South Slave Divisional Education Council invested in its commercial production, printing copies and distributing them to schools throughout the South Slave. It was not long before other school divisions began asking for copies in other Indigenous languages. In response, the game was redesigned to accommodate additional languages, and hundreds of copies have since been distributed to schools and libraries throughout the North, with the hope that children, parents, and grandparents come together to explore their language through a fun and exciting family activity.

Mr. Speaker, mahsi cho to the elders, community leaders, language advocates, and teachers who continue to promote Indigenous language revitalization efforts across the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho to all of the language learners who have the courage to Say It With Me in the Indigenous languages of the Northwest Territories. Most importantly, I want to encourage our young leaders and adult learners to take up the torch and become the new champions of Indigenous language revitalization across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Minister. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FULFILLING MANDATE AND PRIORITIES OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning, I sat in front of my computer and compared our proposed budget with our priorities in this government's mandate. No matter which angle I looked at it from, the reality is that we are cash-poor and have limited chances of fulfilling our priorities in the mandates set by Cabinet.

Our reliance on the mining sector and the federal governmental revenue is all that is sustaining our territory. The federal government fails to provide adequate funding to the North. The mining sector is becoming questionable as a source of sustainable revenue. We are basically giving our resources away. Our population is too small to really make a difference when it comes to generating revenue for the GNWT. We have squeezed all the money we can out of northern residents and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to increase our borrowing limit with the federal government as our debt keeps climbing. We need to do something bold. Canada has to do something bold to ensure that we, as a territory, survive financially. We need to do the unexpected, and that unexpected does not require making our residents pay, nor does it mean reducing services or staff. What this government has to do requires the support and buy-in from legitimate landowners of this territory, the Indigenous people. In collaboration with Indigenous peoples, we must make the federal government understand the importance and potential of this territory in terms of sovereignty, in terms of national security, in terms of the economy, and in terms of the resource that it yields.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is one of the last frontiers. We cannot give away our resources while we get very little or nothing in return. We need projects that provide maximum benefits such as jobs and contracts for the people and businesses of the North. If we are looking at major projects, then such projects must be fully paid by the Government of Canada and industry. It is Canada and industry that has reaped the benefit of resource development.

Mr. Speaker, the bold solution we need is for this government, with support from the northern Indigenous governments, to demand that Canada forgive the outstanding debt we have with them. Let's not fool ourselves or our residents in thinking we can dig ourselves out of the financial hole we find ourselves in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPROVING INCOME ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I spoke in this House of the stigma of social housing, and the government needs to help the people improve their lives, not kick them when they are down. The same can be said for income-assistance clients. Just like social-housing clients, many of these people are good, hard-working people who live near poverty, no fault of their own,

and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Unlike the Housing Corporation, at least Education, Culture and Employment has policies posted online, Mr. Speaker. That way, the requirements for income assistance are available to applicants, so called, as long as they have internet connection.

It is also good to see ECE has published its service standards. I would encourage the Housing Corporation to do the same. ECE's standards make it clear that, among their things of income assistance, clients have the right to be treated with respect, expect services without delays, get help with a friend or family member, and ask to see their own file or how do they lodge an appeal. Despite these standards, too many of my constituents are made to feel diminished as human beings when they seek income assistance. They do not understand the information that they need to bring with them sometimes. Even if the report from income is incorrect, Mr. Speaker, they can be penalized for up to three months, and they feel judged by the worker, who is supposed to be there it help them with their applications.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of income-assistance clients would rather seek jobs than income assistance. That is why they keep saying this government has to do more for small communities. Economically, there is nothing happening in my riding of Nunakput, Mr. Speaker. It is frustrating for me to hear my constituents complain about poor treatment by government when the government is failing them in the first place. Mr. Speaker, while I am the MLA for Nunakput, I am going to continue to speak up for the people of my riding and to bring the jobs and economic opportunities in my riding of Nunakput. I am challenging this government to put its game on. It comes to providing service to the public, no matter how rich or poor. Mr. Speaker, we work for the people. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. As a new Member of this House, I have a steep learning curve, and I know a few of our other Members do, as well, mainly in regards to the budgeting process of the GNWT. One area in particular that stands out is our Assembly's usage of supplementary budget appropriations. Now, this terminology is just fancy language to mean additional government funds being allocated to certain departments due to

unforeseen circumstances or unforeseen expenses that were not anticipated during the original development process, or new federal funding which was not previously included.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes there are extenuating circumstances which more funds are needed by some departments, like in 2014, for example, when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources required supplementary appropriations due to the severity of the wildfire season that year, which necessitated allocation of an additional \$47 million to ENR once that fire season was over. There is no doubt that those extra funds were needed in that instance.

Mr. Speaker, overall, during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, there were a total of 29 supplementary appropriations brought forward by the last government, over four years. These were split between infrastructure and operations. To put that in perspective, that amounts to about seven appropriations bills being passed each year during the last Assembly.

We've only begun the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and already we have passed our first supplementary appropriations bill. I've heard many questions from my constituents over what these supplementary appropriations bills are for, and I will have questions for the Minister on how we can better inform the public about how the government spends their money. It's really important that we spread that message of being transparent and make sure that the government shows that they're being transparent in how we do our business. With that, that will conclude my statement. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions for the Minister of Finance shortly.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to revive a discussion started in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly about creating an office of the child and youth advocate for the Northwest Territories. Children and youth need our special attention and support, particularly when they are being cared for by people other than their immediate families. Since the NWT started discussing this issue in 2003, Yukon has created an advocate office, and so has Nunavut. In fact, we are now one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without an office dedicated to protecting the rights of children on both an individual and systemic basis, as well as providing public awareness about those rights.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon has had a child and youth advocate office since 2010. The mission of the advocate is to provide services to children and youth up to 18 years of age, by protecting and asserting their rights and ensuring their voices are heard in a safe and supportive way. The office advocates for children who are receiving or who are eligible to receive government services, including help with mental health and addictions, education, and justice. The advocate is also involved in all aspects of child and family services. A total of 154 children accessed services in Yukon in 2018.

In Nunavut, the representative for children and youth was appointed in 2014. The office supports young Nunavummiat youth by giving voice to their concerns and ensuring that the government protects and advances their rights and interests. An elders' council helps guide the work. In their last annual report, the office reported opening 76 files.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the NWT to offer the same service to children and youth here. First, there is a big population of children accessing government services, an average of 1,000 children per year in each of the last 10 years. Second, the work of the Office of the Auditor General revealed that health authorities have not maintained regular contact with many of the children they have removed from homes and placed in foster care or other places. We know that contact with children and youth out of territory was also lacking. This is obviously a very vulnerable group, ranging in age from six months to 18 years, who have rights, including the right to be heard and to be treated fairly. The child advocate can provide the linkage between different players in the child's life to further his or her interests. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** It's time for the GNWT to provide better services to children and youth. Creating a child and youth advocate is the place to start. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FINAL REPORT ON NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO  
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS  
WOMEN AND GIRLS: CALLS FOR JUSTICE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm going to follow up on my Member's statement and questions from yesterday with regard to the final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQUA people.

The calls for justice in that report require sweeping changes and actions by all levels of government to bring this reality to those calls for justice. This report and the calls for justice are wide-ranging and apply across various government departments. If implemented fully, Mr. Speaker, these calls for justice can have positive effects for Indigenous women and girls and, in fact, for all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, the calls for justice include the implementation of UNDRIP, on which I should add that both the federal government plans to introduce legislation and BC have actually passed legislation and is leading the country in terms of implementing UNDRIP. The calls for justice call for reforms on health, child and family services, housing, policing, justice, education, and extractive and development industries, to name a few. As you can see, these calls for justice will need a whole-government approach to achieve real, meaningful change.

Mr. Speaker, today I call upon my Cabinet colleagues, their DMs, and, in fact, all MLAs in this House, to take the time to read and familiarize themselves with the national report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQUA people, and the calls for justice in that report. I also ask that this government take into account those calls for justice in our decision-making as we move forward, as these may save lives.

As I close, I would like to leave you all with a statement and a question, and I hope you agree: I am a change-maker; are you? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin lakes. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk once again about the Fort Smith Regional Airport, to expand on the points that I raised last week. I felt that the answers I received from the Minister of Infrastructure were not clear or concise.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that, as a result of the narrowed runway, it is now more difficult to land planes in poor weather. As well, the new runway lights were placed on the pavement, which has made them more vulnerable to being struck by incoming and outgoing aircraft, whereas other airport runways across the NWT have their lights placed off the pavement top. As a result of these infrastructure changes, the Fort Smith Regional Airport is no longer a viable alternative airport for larger aircraft to land during emergencies. For

example, in the event of a forest fire or other natural disaster, the size of aircraft that are now able to land is severely limited, making it impossible for any Air Canada or WestJet aircraft to land there anymore.

Mr. Speaker, what government destroys a perfectly good airport, an airport that could accommodate future growth in tourism and economic opportunity? These are open-ended questions that I and the residents of Thebacha would like to get to the bottom of. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SINGLE-WINDOW SERVICE CENTRES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The GNWT began setting up single-service window centres in small communities in 2010-2011, and we now operate in a total of 23 communities. The most recent is Jean Marie River in 2018-2019. These centres house government service officers, or GSOs, who help residents gain much-improved access to government, especially for residents in more remote communities where GNWT staff may not be located. An annual training camp provides professional skills development, functional training, and updates from various departments and Service Canada, and team-building opportunities for the officers. The training has also been delivered to 12 GSOs where the office has expanded its service to deliver seven Service Canada programs directly to residents.

Some of the GSOs now provide awareness and access to all Government of Canada programs and services. This includes services ranging from Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan queries to income tax enquiries and passport applications.

Service TNO offers much the same single-window services in Yellowknife for francophones as the GSOs in smaller communities. As hard as Regular MLAs tried in the last Assembly, the Minister of executive and intergovernmental affairs refused to develop a plan, schedule, or even make a commitment to completing the network of GSOs in their single-service window centres across the Northwest Territories that would include all of our small communities and the regional centres.

Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of executive and intergovernmental affairs on how we can complete our network of single-service window centres for all of our communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COSTS, VULNERABILITIES AND INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Among my takeaways from last night's technical briefing on the new Stanton hospital territorial review. First, the cost of healthcare will go up. Through P3 contract adjustments for rising input costs such as labour, material, energy, technology, regulation, and expectations, the cost will go up, and both government and Northerners will be forced to pay. Second, our healthcare systems are becoming more vulnerable. A reverse slope in a pipe can lead to a sewage backup that can shut down parts of the facility. In anticipation of something like coronavirus in China or other superbugs, we need highly sensitive air filtration and reverse-pressure systems to isolate parts of the building from cross-contamination. If that leaks, we are vulnerable to big problems. The system becomes increasingly vulnerable to surprise events. Of course, the same is true of extreme weather all over the world, increasing cost and increasing vulnerability.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of housing about housing affordability in Yellowknife, and the answer was increased subsidies, so more cost. The increasing number of housing problems over time is an indicator of increased vulnerability. Mr. Speaker, the issues across our public systems are consistent. When systems become socially expensive and vulnerable, however, we need not maintain the status quo but innovate. The cost of computing and smart electronics is going down, and its effectiveness increases. As external costs of fossil fuels go up, the cost of solar, wind, and renewable alternatives have gone down and crossed over to become cheaper than fossils through localization as an innovation to centralization. Renewables have become less vulnerable to global conflict in decreasing supply.

Where we can think outside the box and innovate, we reduce the issue of cost and vulnerability. We reverse the trends by doing things differently.

The housing problem is the same. We need radical innovation through change, business process, and new scientific paradigms in combination with deep traditional knowledge. Innovation comes from a new way of thinking. This new thinking is what we expect from our educational outcomes, the way we structure jobs in the economy, the way we approach health and healing, the systems of collaborative nation-to-nation governance, and the way we build housing. We need housing that is better integrated with our unique northern

environment and our diverse northern culture. We need to ensure we are investing in innovation for the long-term, doing right now what will make life for our kids less expensive and less vulnerable.

Governments are conservative by nature, and we need innovation. We need creativity. I challenge all Ministers to put their heads together to prioritize innovation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE CITY CHARTER

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I wish to plagiarize a Member's statement brought forward by my predecessor, Cory Vanthuyne, Member for Yellowknife North. I think many of us are aware that the only thing to get done in this House is persistence, persistence through Assemblies. The idea and the topic of my Member's statement today is a Yellowknife city charter.

This request has been made by the City of Yellowknife in response to frustration from getting traction out of the GNWT. For as long as the property and assessment and taxation act has existed, municipalities have been asking for it to be amended. The City of Yellowknife has asked for the land within their municipal boundaries to be transferred because they have found the process through the Department of Lands to be burdensome and frustrating. They asked for about a decade to get a hotel tax, something that was fought tooth and nail by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

A Yellowknife city charter begins to address these issues. I think we all recognize that Yellowknife is in a different situation from many of our communities, and should not fall under the same legislation. I believe the reason this issue gets no traction is because there's a consistent hesitation to giving Yellowknife more in this Assembly, which I do believe is a healthy check on power. Governments tend to centralize over time. However, blind, anti-Yellowknife sentiment can cause bad policy.

In this case, we have seen the City of Yellowknife frustrated with where its mandate begins and where the GNWT ends. We have seen this in issues such as homelessness. We have seen this in issues of control of lands. A Yellowknife city charter would allow the City of Yellowknife, which is in a unique position, representing approximately half of our territory, to begin negotiations with Municipal and Community Affairs of where those jurisdictions lie, where there are needs in the city of Yellowknife that simply don't make sense in other communities, and

then it would allow time in our departments to stop micro-managing the city of Yellowknife and allow what is a much more flexible government to accomplish the task it needs to do.

Today, I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs about whether we can begin the work on a Yellowknife city charter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I want to make a statement on the Aurora College Act. It is stated that the Aurora Board of Governors make a decision. It is written that we say, the Aurora College Act, it's a big act for us. If we were to take a look at that act, we need to all work together in order to go forward. [Translation ends.]

The Aurora College Act gives the governance of Aurora College to our board of governors to guide the college's overall direction and supervise the college president in the exercise of his or her duties. Mr. Speaker, that act is based on a very important philosophy. The college should be run by an arm's-length representative body of qualified citizens, separate from the government bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, under such esteemed board members such as Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Kathy T'setso, Yacoub Adam, Ted Blondin, and Paul Andrews, and many, many others, the college prospered for many years under the arm's-length philosophy.

Then suddenly, on June 5, 2017, with little explanation, the Minister of the day, Minister of education, dissolved the Board of Governors of Aurora College. That was some 32 months ago, almost three years without operating from a board of governors or committee representatives.

The Minister at the time described the board's suspension as a temporary measure. Now, we find out from the Premier, just a few days ago, that this temporary measure may last for another 18 months or so. That makes for a total of four years or more, four years of government-by-bureaucracy at Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, this is hardly a "temporary measure." I will have questions for the appropriate Minister at the appropriate time. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral

questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'd like to recognize my constituent from Inuvik Boot Lake, Arlene Hanson. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber, and I hope you are enjoying our proceedings. It is always nice to have members in the audience. Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 57-19(2): CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my statement today, I talked about the need for a child and youth advocate in the NWT. Given the two reports from the Office of the Auditor General, which both feature concerns about children not being heard and not being in regular contact with authorities, I'm wondering if the Minister is ready to discuss having an independent, arm's-length agency that is an advocate for children and youth. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department is working with Executive and Indigenous Affairs to look at some options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thanks to the Minister for that concise answer. Could she talk about some of the options that are on the table, just to give us an idea of what might be considered?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Again, this is a broader government issue, rather than I alone as the Minister can have a position on. However, as Minister, I would like to share some observations. We need to ensure that any steps we take to protect and support the rights of children do not come at the costs of taking away existing resources for children, especially preventative services. Another observation is, given that 99 percent of our children in care are Indigenous, we need to ensure that the advocacy, as the Member is stating, model is not colonial and works with Indigenous governments. Communities are in the best position

to know what issues affect them and identify the proper solutions. Another observation is, now that we have federal legislation, it creates a mechanism for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis governments to enact laws that determine what's best for their children, including accountability and advocacy measures.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that. I would certainly agree that nothing should be established at the expense of any of the current funding. It would have to be in addition. I see that other jurisdictions with even more significant Indigenous populations than ours, such as Nunavut, have made this work, so I wonder if the Minister sees a model elsewhere in Canada that might be useful in the Northwest Territories.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Again, I mention to the Member that I am working with the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs on this issue, as it has been brought to our attention in the previous government that it's something we need to look at, so we will be working with the EIA.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. Let me state clearly to the Minister that I expect her to be an advocate for this role within government because of the importance of the rights of children, especially with so many children in care in the NWT. I also am prepared to be an advocate for this position, and so I would be interested to know how I can help you, as a member of the Standing Committee on Social Development, explore options and bring this idea to fruition. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** That is great to hear, that the Member is willing to participate in this important subject of child and family services, and as we sit in front of standing committee, we will bring that attention forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### QUESTION 58-19(2): AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I made a statement on the Aurora College. I think it's a very important issue. We have a College Act with board members. It's been three years since they've been without a board. [End of translation.] Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, with the recent internal senior appointment within Aurora College, why does this government deny an arm's-length philosophy that this Assembly, through the

Aurora College Act, wisely believes that is the best way to run Aurora College? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university has been identified as a priority of this Assembly, and we are in the midst of that process. That process calls for the board to be re-established at a point in the near future, a couple of years from now; 2022, right now, is the plan. Before that is going to happen, we'd like to make some changes to the Aurora College Act because, you know, the act isn't quite as arm's-length as one would think. It states that the Minister may give direction to the board respecting the exercise of its powers and performance of its duties; the Minister shall determine the policy respecting the operations, programs, and practices of the college; the Minister may remove board members at any point during their term; board members need approval on many things to create policies.

We have an act, but it does not create a board that is free and clear of government interference. In fact, the power essentially lies with the Minister; the act makes that pretty clear. I want to make some changes to that act so that we do have an act that requires an independent board because, if we want to become a university, we have to meet national standards, and right now, we're not there. Over the coming years, we're making the decisions that are going to put us in that position so that we can reinstate a board, and that board is going to take control and carry us the rest of the way to the creation of a polytechnic university.

I will just apologize right up front, Mr. Speaker. When I was a Regular Member, before I was the Minister, I was frustrated by not knowing what was going on with the college. Nothing was clear to me, what was happening. I felt that one day, ECE was going to say, "Now, we have a university." That's not what is happening. You know, there is a lot that's been going on, but we haven't been getting that information out there, so I've told the department, I've told the college, "We need to expedite that. We need to get information out there so that people can see."

There is a plan. There has been work going on, and there are things to be excited about, and so I've expedited that. Tomorrow, I hope to make a Minister's statement -- I've basically just committed myself to making a Minister's statement tomorrow on this -- to get some of that information out there, because the public deserves to know what we're up to and they deserve to be as excited as I am about this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Obviously, we're looking forward to the statement. As the government has stated, we need to be open and transparent, and, if we have nothing to hide, let's lay it on the table. It's going to be almost five years, in 2022, without a board of governors. During the polytechnic university transition period, we need that expertise, which we don't have today; until 2022, 2024, 2025, whatever the case is. Why does the Minister believe a duly appointed, arm's-length board, as envisioned by the Aurora College Act, is incapable of transitioning the college to a polytechnic university? This is a very important question that I would like to have answers to.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The type of board that the Member is describing is exactly what will complete this transformation. Right now, based on the foundational review and the government's response to the foundational review, we have moved to a public administrator instead of a board, and that is to ensure that this process is streamlined, so that everyone is on the same page and that we're moving in the same direction while we strengthen the foundation, because that's what's going on right now, is we're strengthening the foundation. We're identifying the issues that occurred in the past, that I spoke about in the last Assembly as a Regular Member, that everyone is concerned about, and we're fixing those so that we can institute a board and we can move toward having this world-class university that we're all waiting for.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** My third question is: how does the government justify turning a temporary measure into an ongoing four-year suspension? Now, I'm hearing it's going to be five, or potentially six years. Is this going to be an ongoing discussion that we're going to be having? Define the term "temporary measures." We heard 2022, the last time. Is that the final date that the board members are going to be appointed?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** This is why I'm excited to get the information out there, because, right now, that's the plan. I don't like to say we're going to get something done regardless of whether we're ready or not. I've seen, when government tries to do that, things don't work out well. There are also legislative changes that need to happen, and that means the Assembly is involved. Right now, that's the plan, 2022. That's temporary, that's during the life of this Assembly, and that is going to lead us toward the creation of the university.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope that is the plan, 2022, not 2023 or 2024, when our term is up, here. My final question is regarding the polytechnic transition period. I'm just curious to

know, because I haven't seen any of these areas, if we have any Aboriginal or Indigenous persons or resource people who are involved as part of the management team during this transition period. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I am involved. All of the Members of this House are going to be involved. I've offered a technical briefing to the Standing Committee on Social Development, but we have crazy schedules right now, so we haven't been able to get in front of the committee to show them what we're up to and hear what the feedback is. Further to the expertise that was mentioned earlier, there are people at the college also assisting with this. It's not just some people in Lahm Ridge Tower in downtown Yellowknife. You know, we have people with a lot of experience working on this.

One of the first things that I did during the very first briefing I had with the department about this is I said, "We need a much stronger Indigenous government engagement strategy," or approach. I don't even want to say "strategy"; approach. So I actually pushed some of the timelines back because I wanted to make sure that we're developing a university that is going to meet the needs of the people it's serving. I don't want to create a university and hope people buy into it; I want to build that from the ground up. So the Member can rest assured, we're going to have that input. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 59-19(2):  
BUDGETING PROCESS AND PUBLIC  
COMMUNICATION

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I had a question for the Minister of Finance, but I just want to say what the Minister from ECE said about having plans to move forward and taking steps to be more open and transparent to the people of the Northwest Territories. They deserve that. With that, my question to the Minister of Finance is: would the Minister commit to having the Department of Finance do more public communications around the budget process, including supplementary appropriations? Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an occasion where I'm tempted to simply say, "Yes," and sit down, but perhaps I'll elaborate. I'll elaborate very briefly, only in that this is a conversation that we've already been having in the Department of Finance, recognizing that what the finance department does can sometimes seem

unnecessarily opaque, and it doesn't need to be that way. In my past life, a lot of what I often did was translate things from legalese into good public communication, and it is my hope to bring some of that to what happens in our Department of Finance so that we can all better understand the documents. So I certainly will do that, and I'll certainly be going to the Members as I'm working through with different ways we can do that.

I can say that we have already set up, this Friday, an opportunity for media to have a conversation with myself about the process of the budget and how a budgeting process unfolds and how that comes together, in the hopes that, as we move through this session, the public is better informed as to the different stages of what happens throughout the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you for the response from the Minister. Not quite what I wanted to hear, but, you know, I try to look at it this way: the States have the CIA; Canada has CSIS. You know, they have their secret committees, but we're the GNWT. We're a consensus government. I think we need to be more open, wherever we can, and I'm hoping that that's the way moving forward. People deserve transparency, as I mentioned earlier. I guess my next question is: can the Minister commit to having the department do more to inform the public about the various GNWT budgets, such as the capital budget and the main estimates, and have a little more of an education piece for the public?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Again, the short answer is yes. I'm more than prepared to make that commitment. So, in addition to the fact that there is an effort to have some general media engagement this coming Friday about how a budget process unfolds, in addition to that, we're already working on having a bit more of a social media strategy to introduce people to the different parts of a budget and to the different processes. There has been some information already going out on social media to that regard. We are also actively, right now, working with stakeholder organizations across the Northwest Territories, in order to provide them with opportunities to have sort of budget fundamentals, to understand what the process is, understand what the budgets are, and we certainly look forward to being able to bring that kind of presentation out into the public in many forums.

So, again, the short answer is yes. The long answer is we're already doing some of that work and we're going to continue to find ways to do that work. It is certainly of interest to me to make sure that people who are coming to the government, who are asking for support for various projects, understand the best possible time to do that, understand what goes into that process, so that, when they come forward, they can give all the best possible information to the

right parties early on, so that we can actually deliver on a budget that is effective and that does achieve the priorities of the people of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam lake.

QUESTION 60-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION POLICIES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House, the housing Minister advised that we do not work through legislation, and that "the Housing Corporation works solely through policy." Given that the NWT Housing Corporation Act sets out the Minister's authority, will the Minister please clarify what she meant by her remarks? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your comment. The Housing Corporation is established under the Housing Corporation Act, and we do work with our policies in order to deliver our programs and to best meet the needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you for that. If there are policies guiding the use of T4 slips as proof of income, I have not had any success at finding them online as of yet. What policy guidance governs the local housing authorities, and will the Housing Corporation commit to making their policies easily accessible online?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I would just like to elaborate on the T4 slips that are required for the rental scale for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. When we were establishing our rental program, we found that, when we established and we set our rent using the T4 slips, they were mainly to accommodate the people who had disabilities who were on income support and who were high-income earners, so it would just eliminate the time that they would have to be spending and reporting to the LHO offices. Going forward, we do have an assessment that is required that can be completed and filled out, and that is the responsibility of the client.

There were two questions that were asked. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Can I have the Member repeat the second? Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I am wondering if the Housing Corporation would be willing to commit to making their policies easily accessible online.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** This is a conversation I am having with my staff currently. We were looking at making our programs available online so that people would be able to access, as simple as even completing their rental assessments, access to the policies that we currently have, more communication with the general public, more communication with our clients. I have also wanted to just express that I have instructed my staff to also start advertising. One of our first advertisements just went out in the newspaper. Throughout the next three years, we will be seeing that consistently. I would like to make the programs more accessible to the people, also, who don't have the access to the internet or to technology and that they are able to get into our LHO offices and being able to program-deliver productively.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have created an arm's-length corporation to enable housing to be more flexible. My question for the housing Minister is: how will the Minister make sure that deep and transformative innovation are part of the everyday work of the Housing Corporation? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** With the delivery of the programs for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, we have had a lot of successful stories going forward that haven't been advertised. I think to make it more accessible and make the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation more integrated with our clients and with our stakeholders, we have had opportunities with Indigenous governments and building relations with them, building programs with them, as well.

I would just like to elaborate on the Northern Pathways program that we have had. I am very excited to speak about this, that we do address the homelessness. That is one of the largest areas of concern in the Northwest Territories, and we did work with the K'asho Got'ine land claim organization out of Fort Good Hope, where they took the initiative to deal with their homelessness on their own with the support of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and funding from the federal government. Also, I wanted to address that we had similar initiatives that were completed, homelessness strategies, in Aklavik, Fort Simpson, and Behchoko. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 61-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SINGLE-WINDOW  
SERVICE CENTRES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My statement earlier today raised the issue of completing our network of single-service window centres across the entire NWT. Would the Minister of executive and intergovernmental affairs briefly describe the services performed at these centres and how effective they have been in increasing access to government programs and services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, the government service officers in the single-service window centres are actually a real success in the smaller communities, in all honesty. In the last 10 years, we have had over 70,000 people use that service in the small communities. What do they do there? Because in the small communities we don't have the big government buildings like we do in the regional centres or like here in our capital city, often they have people who fly in from different regions. A worker will fly in once or twice a month or whatever.

Like we have heard many times in questions in the House, people have income support; they need housing; they need all kinds of services, medical access, et cetera. The government service officers' task, these single-service windows, is to actually be there as that connecting point so that people know what programs are out there, how they can get the forms in, et cetera.

The other thing that I am really proud of that they do is actually go into elders' homes. They help them in Indigenous languages for people who struggle with English as a second language. That is phenomenal. That is something that we couldn't pay enough for. Basically, in a nutshell, I am a strong advocate. I think they are a great service in the small communities, and it is one way to help people have access to our programs and services in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that great promotion of the hard work that our GSOs do, and I recognize that, as well. We just need to complete the network. I want to ask the Minister whether there is a plan to actually complete the network for all of our communities, including the regional centres, and, if not, why?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I don't know if there is actually a laid-out plan. I could do a plan that says we have so many small communities and this is how many we have and this is how many I

want to get to. I am more big on getting the work done. I do know that we are still working on it. The next one will be going into the Deh Cho region. My commitment is, because it is a great program, I think that we need to make sure that we try to get them in every single small community before we even start talking about regional centres or the capital city. I know people would like it everywhere. The reality is that the whole point was to be able to have access to services and programs. That is what my goal will be, to make sure all the small communities are covered first.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I, too, agree that we want to complete this network, probably with an emphasis on small communities, but Yellowknife actually has the largest Indigenous population of any communities in the Northwest Territories. There are a lot of unilingual speakers right here in Yellowknife, as well. We have to find a way to provide services for them. There is already a model for how we could do some of the regional centres. We have the Services TNO office here in Yellowknife. I want to ask the Minister whether she can tell us whether there has been an evaluation of the services provided through Services TNO and whether this can serve as a model for all regional centres.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes. I believe that there was an evaluation done. The 2018-2019 service evaluation was conducted. It was shown to be very positive; 352 requests came through in one year from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019, requests in French. The difference with that model is that model is actually based in Yellowknife and provides services to the whole Northwest Territories. The single-service window model is specifically each small community having access to somebody where they can walk in. Not everyone in small communities has internet. Maybe some of them don't even have cell phones. It is about being accessible on the ground for them. That is a different model. It is the same concept but a different model.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. There are actually a lot of people in Yellowknife who don't have access to a computer or cellphone, either. We have got to find ways to reach out to them and provide the service. Here is another idea I would like to toss the Minister's way. We have a great Service Canada storefront operation here in Yellowknife. I have used it myself for passport applications. It would seem to make sense that maybe there is a way to get that office to offer information about GNWT services. Would the Minister commit to investigating whether the

Service Canada office in Yellowknife could offer access to GNWT services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** At this point, we haven't actually thought about putting a single-service window in Yellowknife. I have no problem asking Service Canada if they would consider keeping some of our brochures. I am not sure if I would want to go to the point of asking them to keep all of our application forms, the information, all of the different aspects of every department because, even though people in Yellowknife or in the major centres may not have access to internet or telephone, there is access to government buildings here that they don't have in the smaller communities. My priority will be on the small communities first. After that, I am open to new ideas. I do think that we need to have more interest, but my priority at this point is making sure that the small communities where they have no government offices have single-service windows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 62-19(2):  
IMPROVING INCOME ASSISTANCE  
ADMINISTRATION

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I have questions for the Education, Culture and Employment Minister. Mr. Speaker, does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment have sensitivity training in regards to local workers in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Client service officers undergo quite a bit of training. They participate in statutory training which includes review of the legislation, regulations, policies, code of ethics for income security employees, code of conduct, and service management. They are also trained in certified service professional, mental health, first aid, motivational interviewing, verbal judo, non-violent crisis intervention, and, starting in May 2020, all CSOs and managers will be training in trauma-informed practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** As part of ECE service-level commitments, the department's website says they conduct periodic customer satisfaction surveys to ensure services for the community such as fuel, rent, wood for our elders. When was the last time these surveys were done on the needs for each community?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I don't have those numbers on hand, but that's a good question, so I will find out, and I will get back to the Member.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Minister, for that response. I have a lot of people on income support in my riding. I think a survey would be really needed. We are privileged to have that income assistance because people go through tough times in our small communities right now. Will the Minister commit to having a client satisfaction survey in my riding of Nunakput and maybe the whole territory or northern communities?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I will speak with the department, and I will find out how they go about doing these surveys. This is relatively new, the service standards. It's an exciting initiative to post in a government office that: this is what you can expect; we are going to treat you this way, and, if not, then, there is recourse for it.

If the Member has issues with income assistance, if there are service issues, I am always happy to hear them. I have gone to the Member's office, and we have put constituents of his on the phone, and I've heard directly from them. I am happy to do that. If there are enough concerns, clearly there is probably something I have to look into. I commit to doing that with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 63-19(2):  
YELLOWKNIFE CITY CHARTER

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues with having municipal, territorial, and federal government is that we control the legislation for municipalities, and we often take our time to deal with it. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Will the City, Towns and Villages Act be brought forward during the life of this Assembly?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The legislative priorities for the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly have not been finalized. At this time, MACA has identified the Fire Protection Act, Property Assessment Taxation Act, Seniors and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief Act. At this time, we have not identified the Cities, Towns and Villages Act for amendments during this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I believe this is why persistence is key, because without bringing the City, Towns and Villages Act to the floor in the life of this Assembly, a Yellowknife city charter is not possible. Is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs willing to begin negotiations with the City of Yellowknife to hear their concerns and see what a possible city charter would look like?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** With the negotiations for the charter amendments or the charter act that is proposed by the City of Yellowknife at this time, it's a southern model that has not been initiated in the Northwest Territories. We are looking at it. We are in conversation, but we have not implemented anything. We are far from that. Going forward, I really want to be mindful that, in the Northwest Territories, we do have self-government negotiations going on right now, we do have land claims that have not been settled. Looking at this new approach would definitely need a lot more conversation and a lot more thought into how this would be integrated in the Northwest Territories, but we also have to be mindful that we do have Indigenous groups that are currently in negotiations.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am very mindful that we have ongoing negotiations, and, in many ways, this goes to the heart of what the future role of the City of Yellowknife looks like once we have devolved our powers into the smaller communities. This is what these conversations largely are about. Would the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs be willing to provide the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and the City of Yellowknife of what a process would look like to ultimately have a city charter?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** This approach is very new to the Northwest Territories, and we have detailed, in conversation. MACA is preparing to receive information from the City of Yellowknife on the charter proposal. We are open to meet with them in discussion and concepts, but I think the key is to better understand the specifics of this area. The city is seeking to increase their authority through the city charter. We will, of course, also want to gather other relative information that the city would offer so that we can begin to build a full understanding of what is being discussed and proposed. As I said, this is a very new approach for the Northwest Territories, and I would like to be very mindful of how we are going to start speaking with the City of Yellowknife in making sure that going forward it is done correctly, and mindful of the Northwest Territories as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 64-19(2):  
IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSBOUNDARY  
WATER AGREEMENTS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In light of the existing tar sands projects and the legacy tailings ponds, and the proposed \$40 billion tech resources tar sands projects, and the possibility of a \$40-billion worth of tailing ponds, I wanted to touch upon the Transboundary Water Agreement, specifically the implementation site. Agreements are important to both upstream and downstream communities in that they help to ensure that upstream activities do not unreasonably harm the aquatic ecosystem of downstream waterways. Water-quantity and quality monitoring is necessary to ensure these commitments are being met. My question to the Minister of, I believe it's ENR: do these agreements include any provisions for monitoring and testing of water quantity and water quality? Mahsi.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department's bilateral agreement or the Government of the Northwest Territories' agreement with Alberta does actually have that. It is actually part of the evaluation. It's the quality and quantity there, and it is actually at the Slave River and the Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Minister, for that answer. Are there currently any reports of any findings of all this quality testing available?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Since 2015, two annual reports have been released under our Alberta-NWT transboundary agreement, and a report for 2017-2018 is currently being finalized for release.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Can the Minister ensure that the reports will be shared with the public, especially the effect on First Nations in the Akaitcho Territory, the Dehcho Territory, and K'atloodchee First Nations?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** All reports are publicly released and available on the ENR website, but specifically to the Member's question, we will make sure they get a copy of the report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 65-19(2):  
 NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND  
 MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS:  
 CALLS FOR JUSTICE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are going to be for the Premier. Over the last few years, I've had the pleasure to attend different events with the Premier in regard to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women inquiry, so I know that it is important, as well, to her. My first question is: will the Premier ensure that each of her Cabinet reads the calls for justice? This is not only for the Minister responsible for Women, but all Ministers, so they work with their departments and they can ensure that they use them to guide their work, as there are many small changes that can be made with big impacts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start by recognizing the honourable Member for noticing. It is a huge issue that should not only be important for all Indigenous women, but it should be important for all women, and all men, actually. This is a serious issue that is affecting our people, and it's not okay. I do know I kind of had to get some okay's because I have looked at the recommendations and I know that they are huge binders, so what I will commit to, recognizing that, is I will share the binders, all of the report, with the Ministers. I will ask that they read the second section of the binders, which is really the recommendations. The first part is actually the stories of people. For myself, it was heartbreaking, having a friend in that book, but what I will do is ask the Ministers to read the recommendations from the review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I would also like to ask the Premier to commit that she would have all senior-level management read the final report, because I think a lot of our senior managers may not know the stories and the history, so I feel that it's important that they read it. The reason why is, I feel like how can they provide direction to their departments without the complete understanding of the history of the people they're providing service for?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes, I will extend the recommendation to read it, or the direction to read it, to our senior managers, as well, at the deputy-minister level, and then they can decide from there.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I have one last question: can the Premier ensure that there are sections on both the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report and the TRC in the cultural awareness

training for all staff of the GNWT that is being piloted right now, and, if not, can they ensure that it's in there?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I'm a little bit cautious because I do know how big the reading is and training is not usually at that level. What I can actually request for departments is that they look at any cultural awareness training that they actually have key points from all of the recommendations and calls to action in their key points. I don't think it would be appropriate to ask every person in training to read the whole report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 66-19(2):  
 FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, now that we have the snow blower, we have to widen the airport. The widening of the airport is the next thing. Northwestern Air Lease was only informed of the lights being changed and replaced, with no mention of the runway narrowing, until a week before the work was to start. My question is: why were Northwestern Air Lease and Air Tindi, which is a medevac supplier, not consulted prior to all of these airport infrastructure changes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department talked with the Northern Air Transport Association, or NATA, and Northwestern Air Lease and Air Tindi are members of that association. The runway level of service did not change, therefore the aircraft used by Air Tindi and Northwestern Air Lease were not impacted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** When was the decision made to make all these airport changes, and why were the major users of the airport and the Town of Fort Smith not part of that decision?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** The decision was made in September of 2017. The level of service at the airport did not change. Only the air carriers as part of the Northern Air Transport Association were approached, as the airport operational certificate was maintained. Any aircraft that Air Canada or WestJet could operate in the Northwest Territories can land in Fort Smith.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** It was noted last summer by Northwestern Air Lease that the Electra water bomber now has to taxi all the way to the end of the runway in order to turn around, thus delaying fire

suppression activities. Was this risk factor taken into account when the decision was made to narrow the airport runway?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** We feel taxiing down the runway does not pose a significant delay and thus can perform fire suppression activities accordingly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there was a need to bring in heavy air tankers for the fire suppression, would these aircraft be able to use Fort Smith as a reloading base, or would the tankers have to reload in Hay River or Yellowknife, thereby delaying fire suppression activities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** The Fort Smith airport is designed for a 737. The geophysical features allow the operation of water bombers; the same level of service is maintained. Every aircraft that can land in Hay River can also land in Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 67-19(2):  
ACCOMMODATING WOMEN AT NORTH SLAVE  
CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. Media is reporting that a woman was held on remand in RCMP cells for 11 days because of a number of reasons. Can the Minister say why this choice was the best one available at the time? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few years, there has been an awareness that women need to have alternatives available to them if they can't be transported to Fort Smith. In the last few years, part of the facility at the North Slave was designated to have four spots for women, specifically. Indeed, in December of this past 2019, those four spots were full, and, therefore, a woman was not able to stay there. Usually, she would then be transported to Fort Smith during remand. Unfortunately, on this occasion, despite efforts between the RCMP and corrections, that wasn't possible. There were four different appearances that this individual had back in court. As such, they weren't able to coordinate the flights. What I have done right now is to look at the reasons for that, to look at the nature of the appearances, to look at what was said, and to try to

figure out if there are, in the future, going to be better ways that we can accommodate someone within the justice system so that they don't need to spend that kind of extended time in the facilities at the RCMP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the Minister's proactive approach to this. Could she say how conditions in the cells compare to those available for women at either NSCC or in Fort Smith?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** RCMP's detachment cells are simply not designed for any sort of a stay past a very short day, two days at most, nor is it the role of the RCMP to act as a custodian for someone who is on remand. They are not corrections officers. That is not their primary function. Cells in the RCMP detachment don't often come with the kinds of frankly still fairly limited amenities that one would see within a corrections facility. They have the ability to turn down the lights, but the lights are on. There are no windows.

My understanding is that, when faced with a situation like this, the RCMP do their best to try to accommodate the individual and make them more comfortable. At the end of the day, it is not a place that is suitable for an extended period of time. I am certainly very well aware of that, and I trust the Member is likely aware, as well, that there won't be the mattresses, there won't be blankets, there won't be any kind of entertainment. Again, notwithstanding that, the RCMP do their best to accommodate and to help and to make someone comfortable. It is not the same level of care as what one would get at a correctional facility.

**MS. GREEN:** This is obviously a last resort. I think one of the disturbing points of this particular case is that it went on for 11 days, not just for a day or an overnight, but for 11 days. Can the Minister give us any insight into why that length of time?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** That is the same question that I had asked when this came to light, to my attention. As I have said, I have looked into the nature of the four appearances. There were four appearances, and my understanding is that it was challenging to coordinate a flight down to Fort Smith because this individual had to appear back in court. Now, there are, no doubt, ways to avoid that. I think there are going to be, hopefully, ways to avoid that in the future, whether it is through encouraging and improving video appearances and access to video appearances, whether it is by encouraging the various parties involved to find alternative ways of securing that appearance, working with partners in the prosecution service around being conscious and aware that, when someone is in these circumstances, that we all, as partners in the delivery of justice, need to be doing our part to make sure we are aware when

something like this is happening and that we are all looking for ways to try to support someone and to support the justice system so that an individual doesn't wind up exactly in this situation of having to spend more time than necessary in facilities that really aren't designed for an 11-day stay.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that response. Certainly, it is my hope that, with a brand new jail in Fort Smith for women, video appearances would be facilitated there right now. When I toured North Slave Correctional Centre last year, I noticed that there was excess capacity in the youth wing of the facility, which is no longer as full as it was when it opened. Can the Minister investigate whether more remand cells for women can be created in that space or another space at NSCC? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** It is a good-news story that there is excess capacity at the youth facility following changes under the Youth Criminal Justice Act. There indeed is extra capacity there. Hopefully, it stays that way. It can't be repurposed for adults, though. The Youth Criminal Justice Act has limitations on who can be present and limitations that prevent youth from intermingling with adults, individuals who might be on remand or in any form of custody. That makes it challenging to potentially have a youth person at the facility with any sort of adult. If there is a consistent way or consistent availability of space over a time, whether that could be renovated, that is a much longer-term issue. Really, what I would like to make sure is that this isn't a consistent issue for women who are not able to be transported to Fort Smith. I have no evidence to suggest that it is a consistent problem now since there are the four spots in the North Slave correctional facility going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 68-19(2):

CHANGE IN AURORA COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, I am still getting a lot of feedback from the public on this whole Aurora College. I do have possibly one question to the Premier. That is: when the Premier terminated the Aurora College president -- I am not referring to an associate deputy minister. I am referring to the president -- what did she base her decision on, what in the Aurora College Act, or was it the Public Service Act or other areas of acts that I am not familiar with? Can she please provide me and also the Members a copy or a section of such act that she based her decision on to terminate the Aurora

College president a couple weeks ago? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** [Microphone turned off] The Minister of Education would like to address the question. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be signing the revocation papers for the statutory appointment of the president of Aurora College. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I would still like to know the process of what happened. The public needs to be aware how the decision was made. All I am asking for is: what was the decision based on? If that can be provided to me so at least I have some information in front of me that I can share with the public, as well.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Last week, the Premier and I sat with the Regular Members in confidence, just the elected Members, the Regular Members, the Premier, and I, and we discussed this issue in detail. We took questions from the Regular Members. That is where it is going to stay because this is an HR issue.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I am not mentioning names here. I am mentioning the president of Aurora College. The document the Minister is referring to is not a signed document yet, today. Other signed documents in the past have occurred based on what decision that was made from the Premier of the day. I would like to know. The public would like to know. Here, we talk about being a transparent, being an accountable government. Please provide that information to me so I can have and I can explain to the public this is what occurred based on the facts, based on the act that was before us.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try this one more time. I tried to explain many times the other day that hiring and firing the employment contracts is separate than appointments. I will give some firmer examples. My job is to hire and decide termination of assistant deputy ministers, deputy ministers, et cetera. Ministers are allowed to appoint to positions such as boards, presidents, et cetera. I'm going to use an example that perhaps the Member can understand, because he was a Minister, I believe, for at least four years, of education. Within that, when that was happening, under the Education Act,

Principal Certification Regulations, the Minister may appoint a director of the Principal Certification Program. This does not mean that the Minister must be the person who terminates the employment relationship. Under the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Act, the Minister may appoint a director of Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification. This does not mean that the Minister is the person who terminates the employment relationship. Under the Child Daycare Act, the Minister may appoint a director of child daycare services. This does not mean that the Minister must be the person who terminates the employment relationship.

As the previous Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, I'm assuming that the Member would be familiar with these statutory appointments and should appreciate that, just because a statutory appointment might be part of a person's job, it does not mean that the applicable Minister who made the appointment is responsible for governing the employment relationship.

I'm not sure why this is so confusing, Mr. Speaker. I do know that the Member was also the Minister of Justice. However, if we need further clarification on the difference between employment contracts and an appointment by a Minister, I am more than willing to have our justice department sit with the Member to explain the difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how difficult it is to provide the answer of a policy-based decision. What was it based on? Was it based on an act? I'd like to know. I was being forthcoming with the Aurora College Act, stating in section 19 that a Minister, through consultation with the Aurora College Board, shall appoint the president of Aurora College. I'd like to know, the Premier, when she made her decision, what was it based on? Please provide that in writing to me. Which section is it based on, of the act, if she is referring to an act, so I can have that information? It's not only me who is asking; it's the public, so I can share with the public who are asking those questions. I think we need to clarify that, Mr. Speaker. Masi.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I did give many examples of places where Ministers do appoint, and that they are not responsible for employment offers. However, since the request is to have the answer in writing, I will make a commitment to have it in writing, but I also stand by my commitment that, if the Member is still confused, even though he was the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, my offer is still

there that we will have someone from the department of Justice sit with the Member and explain the difference between an appointment and an employment contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Colleagues, our time for question period has expired. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, report of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

#### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 13-19(1): HOUSING IN BEHCHOKO

TABLED DOCUMENT 25-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 26-19(1): EVICTIONS FROM PUBLIC HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 26-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 33-19(1): TEMPORARY EMERGENCY WARMING SHELTER IN HAY RIVER

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Questions: Housing in Behchoko;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question: Evictions from Public Housing;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question: Temporary Emergency Warming Shelter in Hay River." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

TABLED DOCUMENT 27-19(2):  
THEIR VOICES WILL GUIDE US – STUDENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

TABLED DOCUMENT 28-19(2):  
CALLS FOR JUSTICE – RECLAIMING POWER AND PLACE: THE FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table "Their Voices Will Guide Us – Student and Youth Engagement Guide" and "Calls for Justice – Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2019-2020

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister of Finance. Bill 1 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2019-2020

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had its second reading. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories; Tabled Document 17-19(2),

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020. Members, by the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business of the House. Thank you. With the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the Chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee, Mr. Norn?

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Does the Premier have any opening remarks?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2019-2023 mandate for the Government of the Northwest Territories. This mandate is built on the priorities we set together as newly elected Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly in October 2019. Under the current process conventions, Members of the Executive Council discussed how we might implement these priorities in the best interest of all Northerners and in our current operating environment. I sat down with the standing committee in November and heard from each Member about the needs of our regions and communities, and the actions we might take in each of these priority areas. We met again in December and in January to further discuss and refine the mandate document. This dialogue is essential to open and collaborative government, and consistent with the guiding principles of consensus government.

Our government will focus on what we can do as a territory to find new and innovative solutions to the

challenges we share as we implement our mandate. We will be creative and ambitious, while taking a hard look at what we are doing so we can make it better. We will seek out and examine new evidence, and use the real world experience of our staff and residents to improve our decisions, programs, and services. Building on the input and involvement Northerners have given the Government of the Northwest Territories over many years, we will start taking action so that services are improved and we achieve results. We want to position our people to be partners in addressing the things that matter to them and their communities. Through implementing the mandate, we want to help people build the personal and community capacity to work with us to make their families and communities stronger, healthier, and happier.

We know that accessible and affordable housing is the foundation for strong, healthy families; and our mandate commits us to getting more people in the Northwest Territories into homes. We know that people want good jobs in their home communities; and our mandate commits us to growing and supporting those sectors we have always relied on, like mining, while also looking to expand into new sectors that may have been overlooked in the past. We hope to find new opportunities for our communities and regions. We want people to have a good life. Our mandate commits us to helping our people get the education, health, and social supports they need from government to feel they are living secure, personally meaningful, and dignified lives at all ages.

Our mandate commits us to addressing the barriers that are holding our people back, and to creating a prosperous territory that shares benefits with all residents and all communities. We recognize and respect that we are not the only government in the Northwest Territories. Our mandate commits us to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous and other governments, and to supporting their capacity to help us to make this a better territory for all.

The people of the Northwest Territories want to succeed on every level. We know we can do a better job of supporting our residents take advantage of the opportunities available to us. The 2019-2023 mandate will help the Government of the Northwest Territories focus what we do and how we do it so we can make progress on the things that matter to our people based on the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair. This concludes my opening remarks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Premier wish to bring witnesses into the House? Please escort the

witness into the Chamber. Would the Premier please introduce the witness?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On my right is Mr. Martin Goldney. He is the Cabinet secretary and the deputy minister for Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will now open the floor for general comments. MLA for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to start by reflecting on some of the challenges of developing a mandate. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been developing mandate documents to guide its work since the 1999 agenda for the new North set the vision for a post division Northwest Territories that no longer included Nunavut. In the last 20 years, subsequent consensus governments have been challenged with developing an agenda that articulates a shared vision of the Northwest Territories, one that reflects the aspirations of all Northerners while staying rooted in practical actions and goals that can be measured as we move toward our vision.

Finding the right combination of vision and action has been a challenge during the government mandate-setting exercises. Another has been crafting a mandate that respects the balance between the authority of the Executive branch of government to deliver programs and services and the responsibility of the legislative branch of government to provide oversight.

I think we can all agree that there have been some successes and failures in mandate-setting exercises and that we are continuing to learn from past experiences. The mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly was set collaboratively between Cabinet and Regular Members, based on priorities set by all 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly. Having spoken to Members of the previous Assembly, I would think it would be fair to say that the collaborative effort to be inclusive resulted in an unwieldy mandate. The key mandate objectives were mixed in with day-to-day government business, resulting in a lengthy laundry list of hundreds of mandate items. There was also some duplication in the actions identified and varying degrees of detail about the work to be done.

Another shortcoming of the previous mandate is that it did not easily lend itself to measurement. For example, if the mandate identified improving food security as a goal, it offered no method for determining what progress was made to increase food security. The inability to measure progress

hampers accountability, Madam Chair. I believe that some of the lessons learned have positively impacted the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly that we are reviewing today.

Before I turn my attention to that, I want to start by thanking the Premier and her Cabinet for working collaboratively with Regular Members to develop this mandate. As a new Member, I found this collaboration to be one of the first real consensus challenges as an MLA. To avoid creating a lengthy mandate, Members had to make difficult choices when setting priorities. The priorities that emerged from our discussions are not necessarily the priorities that any one of us might have selected as individuals. However, they best reflect the overall priorities of the 19 Members as an Assembly.

You may have heard the saying that, if everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority. We kept that in mind and made some tough choices. As a result, some things that are important to my constituents might not have made the list of priorities determined by the Assembly, but they reflect the needs of all NWT residents, and, as a Member, I stand behind that. Once the priorities were set, the mandate was crafted by the Executive branch of government. It identifies not only what the government will do, but also how it will be done. As importantly, it also identifies the timeline for completing the work and sets out measures for determining progress.

I want to thank the Premier for listening to the important requests of Regular Members and ensuring mandate progress is measurable. This will be incredibly helpful to hold government accountable throughout our term and to demonstrate that we collectively achieved something real at the end of the Assembly.

I understand we will be working through 22 mandate priorities and the actions identified to achieve those priorities in detail, so I will hold my comments on the specific priorities until we come to them. There are, however, some important factors that will have an impact on our success in achieving the priorities we have set.

The first is the importance of good communication. Timely, honest, and accurate communication has the ability to unite our territory toward a common goal and empower Northerners to become involved with clear and encouraged democratic participation. Poor communication results in misunderstandings that distract the government and this Assembly from the important work at hand. I believe the GNWT has not paid enough attention to the importance of communication in the past. I believe that, in the past, there was reluctance by government to communicate with the public for fear of judgment or public criticism, but we are getting

better. Communications have evolved in this connected internet era. The public's expectations have also evolved. People don't want spin. They don't want to be told what to believe. They want the facts so they can judge for themselves. In all the work the GNWT does to achieve this mandate, I encourage my colleagues on Cabinet to be as communicative as possible with the Members of this Assembly and with the public. So much can be resolved, simply by preventing misunderstandings in the first place. It is also important to acknowledge errors when they are made. Mistakes will happen. What matters is how we address our errors. We are all human, and none of us is perfect.

We have heard lots of talk about the importance of partnerships to help this government reach its goals. Effective partnerships are another essential ingredient for achieving a successful mandate, partnerships with community governments, stakeholders, non-government organizations, intergovernmental partnerships with Indigenous governments, and public-private partnerships. There are many types of partnerships, and they are all fundamental to good governance and progress. However, to be successful, partnerships must be built on shared objectives, mutual respect, and trust. For the GNWT to be successful in its partnerships, it has to be prepared to meet its partners as equals and to listen to the needs and concerns of those we choose to partner with, and who choose to partner with us.

The GNWT also needs to be consistent in its approach to its partners. A strong partnership between an Indigenous government and a GNWT department can be undone if the same Indigenous government feels it is receiving poor treatment at the hands of another department. In addition, we cannot drive a legacy of relationships and partnerships without moving the needle on lands, resources, and self-government agreements, and increase regional decision-making. Ministers need to listen, not only to the advice of their senior managers, but to the organization's clients and residents that government works with and for. As politicians, you are best positioned to have your finger on the pulse of the electorate and to provide clear political leadership to the public service.

I have said it before, Madam Chair, our priorities are all connected. While large budgets are always exciting, not every priority requires huge pots of money to move the meter. Some require the fluidity of being able to provide our public servants with the space to be creative and think outside their cubicle. For example, we have multiple departments working to attract people to the Northwest Territories, whether it is to stay for a week as a tourist or to stay for a lifetime as a new Northerner. Industry, Tourism and Investment; Health and Social Services; Finance; and Education, Culture

and Employment each has a mandate to bring people to the Northwest Territories, but each work on attracting these people within the context of their own department mandate. NWT Tourism brings a beautiful, interactive experience-based booth to its trade shows and events, but what are we bringing to job fairs to attract nurses? We aren't selling nursing jobs. Every city, town, and island has a nursing job. We're selling an experience. How can we bring these public servants together and empower them to expand their creativity and work together to sell a common goal of experiencing the Northwest Territories? How can we work across silos to reduce costs and increase productivity? I believe that this Assembly can make its mark by leading a change in the government's approach to providing programs and services. We have a long history of government acting as a gatekeeper for access to public information, programs, and services. I believe that my colleagues on Cabinet want change in that system as much as I do.

This mandate will not improve the lives of Northerners unless we improve our service ethic. Every single employee of this government should be encouraged to adopt this ethic of service to the people of the Northwest Territories as their highest priority and bring this attitude with them to work every single day. I also believe that our public servants benefit from having a robust legislation and policy, providing a framework that affords them the ability to apply discretion when doing their jobs, to ensure that our clients, the members of the public, do not experience undue frustration in their dealings with the government. I hope that having an Ombud in place will help the GNWT to improve its procedural fairness in its dealings with the public.

Finally, Madam Chair, as Ministers work on defining the budget allocations that will be used to meet our priorities, I ask that they be bold in their leadership. Our legacy will evolve from a union of the way we drive accountability, what we leave Northerners and the 20<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and also what meter Cabinet chooses to move. Given our fiscal restraints, we cannot do everything. I ask that Cabinet make the tough decisions on what meter to move and to not make that decision lightly. What will drive the success of Northerners for generations to come? What will enable Northerners to thrive? Be bold. I am counting on you and believe this Assembly, in collaboration with every single department, has the potential to make change. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. I will give it to the Premier to respond. We're just doing general comments. I will just continue on, then. Member for Nunakput

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The mandate was to develop Cabinet-based priorities to

be set by all 19 Legislative Members. It sets out what the government intends to do during its term to achieve these priorities. I will have comments on individual priorities and move through them page by page. However, first, comments to the mandate and in general.

Madam Chair, the Legislature of Ontario governs 14 million people, roughly, for every MP. For 115,000 people, Legislature of Alberta, just 4 million people, roughly. For one MLA for 49,000 people, it governs that we have a population of 44,500 people, meaning that one MLA serves 2300 people roughly. Why does that matter? Because not governing tens of thousands of faceless people that we will never meet and governing our friends, families, and our neighbours, that gives us a unique opportunity to govern the compassion and respect. We know the people are doing that are directly impacted in decisions that are made in this House. It makes a huge difference in responsibility on all of us.

To do better for the people we know, love, we've been doing in the past. The GNWT budget is nearing \$2 billion. It's such a big number. People can't even imagine how much money that is. It's like 2,000 million dollars when you look at it. That means territorial government is big business in the NWT. The government has all the responsibilities of provincial government to provide education, healthcare, social programs, and infrastructure. We have added challenge in delivering these programs. These services are in small and remote communities, scattered in a large land mass. This increases the costs of everything: food, building materials, wages, gas, power, you name it. The North costs more.

Given this reality, it makes sense the territorial government must spend carefully to keep an eye on the bottom line, however, prioritizing the bottom line has been ingrained in generations of public servants over the past 50 years, and it has deeply affected the corporate culture of the NWT. I believe the GNWT public servants, from deputy ministers to front-line staff, are expected to act as gatekeepers, controlling the public access to government services, to protect the public purse. The outcome is corporate culture. Members of the public often encounter attitude and resistance seeking access to government programs and services. They feel that they are being judged or feel unworthy of the jobs and support of the programs offered by the GNWT. What does this mandate have? Simple, we do things that are important to us. The Premier and the Cabinet have made a pledge to do things differently. In evidence, I grant, they're still early days. I believe what is needed is a dramatic change in how the GNWT responds and serves. The government needs to radically alter the corporate culture and focus on client-centred service. It also

needs to rethink and prioritize the regional centres over smaller communities.

In implementing this mandate, I want the GNWT to put the "service" back into the public service. What I mean by this is I want a more client-oriented approach. I'd like every public servant empowered to support and serve the people of the NWT, no matter what the needs are. I want to see public service training and front-line staff. I want to see more of our people becoming employees and senior managers and more travel from senior managers into our communities so they can know and understand the challenges that are facing our people, who they work for. What I see, Madam Chair, is attitude, a service where the government and employees, when they come to work in the morning, they should be saying, "How could I help the people today in the Northwest Territories?" instead of thinking, "How can I protect the bottom line of the government purse?" I'm suggesting that we're not being fiscally prudent. We do, but employees need to be taught the ethic of service of the people, not the judgment of them.

Before I close my general remarks, I want to point out what is important. The government must recognize that the focus of past governments on big infrastructure projects has come at a cost. It has taken time, attention, and resources away from things that are needed in people's everyday lives: adequate housing, jobs, good schools, quality health, and financial support of the most needy among us. In delivering this mandate, these are things that matter most to the people. We must not forget that.

What matters most to the people in my riding of Nunakput is jobs, decent housing, adequate funding for the community government, dealing with shoreline erosion, affordable taxes. When I look at the successes and failures of our government in delivering this mandate, I'll be looking to see improvements in these areas, real, meaningful, and tangible improvements in the lives of the constituents that we serve. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. I will turn it over to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. As I stated on December 11, 2019 in this House, I have a number of concerns with the priorities that were developed by the MLAs. We produced a list of 22 priorities versus the 25 in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Hard choices were not made amongst big infrastructure projects or even between those projects and investments in social spending that should include housing, polytechnic university, universal childcare, and guaranteed basic income.

I do not support some of the priorities developed by this Assembly. I will put people first over infrastructure. Some priorities work at cross-purposes with each other, such as increasing economic diversification or trying to increase mineral exploration. Other priorities are extremely vague: reduce core housing needs or advance universal childcare. The priorities provide very little direction for the work of some of the departments, agencies, and Ministers. I look forward to an opportunity to review the mandate letters as soon as they are available and well before they are formally issued by the Premier.

On to the mandate tabled late last week by the Premier, I want to firstly acknowledge the good efforts on the part of the Premier to work collaboratively with Regular MLAs in developing the mandate. We spent over two full days in direct discussion with the Premier, which is an unprecedented and welcome change from the last Assembly. We had intense discussions. Sometimes we agreed to disagree, but I think the results clearly show the influence of the Regular MLAs in shaping the mandate.

I had pushed for a structured approach to each of the priorities. I suggested clear timelines, measurable targets or outcomes, steps necessary to reach the targets or outcomes, and accountability for the proposed actions and coordination of them. I think this was largely achieved with the mandate that's before us. However, many of the outcomes or targets are very low. For example, increasing our housing stock by 100 units over four years is only about a 4-percent increase and will likely not even keep pace with our growing waiting list of residents wishing to get into public housing. As another example, there are supposed to be about, I think, 16 active negotiation tables for land rights and implementation of existing agreements. The mandate sets a very low target of two agreements to be concluded at the end of four years. I sincerely hope that these are the agreements that cover the Dehcho and Akaitcho territories, but surely we can do better than two agreements.

The mandate also contains vague commitments in some cases. These include words such as "advance," "working with," "increase opportunities," and similar words. Voters elected us for real change. That needs to start with a bold vision and goals. I think the mandate can and should have adopted clear commitments to this type of change, with more ambitious targets, outcomes, and deliverables.

I have a number of concerns with some of the actions proposed to fill different parts of the mandate and would like to highlight some of those now. The climate change sections are particularly weak, with few specific actions or outcomes to

establish internal leadership, accountability, and improved decision-making. The infrastructure section is silent on whether and how we can possibly afford all of these projects at the same time. There is nothing about changing our messaging about the NWT being a great place to live, work, and do business to attract investment, instead of the tired old complaints about our regulatory system, that scares away investment. The roles of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation in our energy future is not even discussed, and the focus is on large energy projects that will do little to build energy self-sufficiency and lower the cost of living. The education section is rather lean, and there is no clear commitment to universal childcare. Clear targets should have been developed for food security, in my view.

In closing, I would like to thank the Premier, though, for working with the Regular MLAs and delivering a much-improved version of this mandate, and I'll have further comments and questions as we work our way through the document. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Are there any other general comments? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a different mandate-setting exercise than we experienced last time, and, mostly, that's for the better. I am particularly grateful that it was developed through an iterative process, which the Premier outlined in her comments today, the times that she met with us after we, as all 19 Members, had set the 22 priorities.

The mandate has many strengths in terms of the topics it covers, and reflects the needs and wants of my constituents articulated during the election campaign. It doesn't contain everything that I want, but I am going to choose not to focus on the things that are not in this mandate, which is already too long, and instead look at the things that are here and to say that, in consensus government, you don't get everything you want. That's a reality that I've come to terms with.

I appreciate the use of the SMART goal tool, where SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. I don't think it has always been successful in this context. Some things just don't fit within that measurement tool. I think that using it and trying to quantify 100 new houses, 100 new homeowners, 30 new jobs, I think that kind of specific attention to detail is useful. I think that what we have been able to do by using this SMART goal-setting tool is to create a document that is not primarily aspirational but one

that has specific actions that will happen at a particular time and for which we can measure progress, and that is what we are going to do.

I appreciate Cabinet's willingness to collaborate. In the Premier's statement when she tabled the mandate, I trust that all Members of this Assembly will see that their insights, ideas, and suggestions reflected in this mandate would not have been spoken by the Premier of the last Assembly. I appreciate the inclusiveness that it suggests. I want to acknowledge that many of these mandate items are not going to be affordable. I think that there are too many of them, that we are going to end up whittling some out simply because of the cost of trying to do everything that is in this document. Having said that, I think that we can make real gains in policy, such as increasing Indigenous participation in procurement, addressing benefit retention, and better service coordination, among other issues. Even while I don't expect us to have a lot of money to spend, we can make the lives of Northerners better by improving the policies that we have as a government and how they are implemented. With that, those are my opening remarks. I look forward to discussion of the document as a whole. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to reiterate the comments that my colleagues have been making. They have kind of taken my opening statements from me. I think we are speaking at the right level, that this is pragmatic realism in what we can accomplish. I also think there is a recognition in this House that there needs to be more service-oriented government. I will have a number of questions regarding the substance of each item in the mandate, but I wanted to speak to form.

I think there is no doubt this is the best mandate the Government of the Northwest Territories has ever seen. The Government of the Northwest Territories is a rather new government, and it has been evolving from these kinds of vague priorities. Now, we have finally gotten into wording where things are measurable; they are clearer. This is our job as politicians, to hold the government to account, to provide clear direction to departments. It also allows the public to hold us to account. I would like to thank all of the people in the departments and my Cabinet colleagues and the Premier for the hard work that went into this, making sure this is clear and measurable so that everyone can play the role that is required.

I struggle a little bit with the substance in that I think everyone here knows if I was going to write a

mandate, it would look a lot different than this. Each individual Member could say that. That is consensus government. I have made a pledge to myself that I have bought into this mandate. We set those priorities in Caucus. We agreed to this process. We gave it to Cabinet to go and develop. I will ask lots of questions, and I will hold the government to account to accomplish this mandate. Although I may not agree with everything that is in here and although it may not include some of the things I would like to see, I am committed that this is the guiding principle for this government for the next four years. Let's get this done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I don't have anything written because I think I can speak from the cuff. I know that the 22 priorities were put together by all of the Members of this Assembly. I may not agree with some of it, just like some other Members, but I want to stress some of the things that are dear to my heart and some of the things that I think sometimes people talk very loosely about, the Aboriginal and Indigenous people of the North.

As a former leader for 10 years, I think that the settlement and the implementation of the outstanding land claims must be a priority if we are going to move forward. I feel that mandates have to be given to the negotiators, and we can't be a barrier. I think that it is very important because there are possibilities that we would move forward if we settle these claims because most of the money comes from the federal pockets. Then our people could move forward with us. It is a very important part of the whole pie.

I also want to ensure that we have to balance the economy with the social envelope. If you don't have an economy, you can't do all these other programs. I hope that we project that we are going to be open for business. I am very excited, and I don't see something on the Taltson expansion up to date on this House except something very brief in the document. It is 75/25 it says, but it could be 100 percent if we have the Indigenous governments taking part in the other 25 percent. We have to be innovative, and we have to look forward to making sure this is clean energy. I think that it has to happen, in order for larger proponents and for jobs in the future, with Aboriginal and Indigenous buy-in so that there is ownership instead of IDAs. I think that this is the way to go. We talk very loosely in this House about "Indigenous." Lots of people get up and say it. I lived it. There are always those barriers, just to get the federal government to recognize two reserves in the Northwest Territories as reserves north of 60, and they still do not. That is

unacceptable. This government should be making sure that this happens.

The other thing I want to say is, the increase in the regional decision-making authority, I think that is a good thing. I think that it is time. I think that people in the regions feel that we shouldn't have to come to headquarters every time a decision has to be made. It benefits the smaller communities, and it benefits everybody in the community. This is the way to go, and I am very happy that this is one of the priorities. I really believe in reducing the municipal funding gap because the municipalities have a lot of infrastructure that hasn't been addressed for many years. Hopefully, in due course, we are able to do that within our mandate. Most importantly is to create the polytech university, a polytech university that will be at arm's-length from the Government of the Northwest Territories, with it is own board, and that we all buy into, and everybody benefits from, and the whole of the Northwest Territories and the students and the people who work there will be very happy with. I look forward to that.

There are many things that I could talk about, but we are going to be asking questions. I am proud to be part of these 22 priorities, even though some of them are more important than others to me, just like everybody else. I will always make sure that I speak on behalf of the people of Fort Smith. I celebrate that they are my members of the community that are very dear to my heart. We have to be more compassionate in delivery of services. Thank you so much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. I will now turn it over to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. After much thought and deliberation about the mandate and our list of 22 priorities, I personally feel like I would have done things a little differently, like you mentioned. We're all very strong alpha males and females in this room, and we wouldn't be here if we weren't. We all have 19 different ideologies and 19 different ways of doing business, but I'm very happy we came to a consensus and came to this document.

For me personally, I think it would be extremely helpful to have knowledge of our current financial state before going into this exercise, but that's how we learn. We learn and we move forward and do the best with what we've got. I know, as newly elected MLAs, a lot is expected of us; and, in fact, there are a lot of new faces here. People wanted real change, and we have to give it to them. They deserve it, but now we have this mandate, and I think, for lack of a better word, this is really our paddle for the canoe that we've got in this uncertain

time. I'm going to believe in that and get behind it, and I'm going to think about that single mom who might be living in an isolated community, you know, struggling to support their kids. They could be in Lutselk'e. They could be in Lidlii Kue. They could be in Thebacha. It could be an elder who is having trouble getting by on their old age pension, and that's who we have to think about.

Overall, there are some items in this document that I'm glad to see and I'll be supporting; the Joint Committee on Indigenous Reconciliation, for example. It's a very good idea. However, there is one aspect that I would like to see added, and it's more inclusion with elected Indigenous leaders. If we really, truly want to reconcile, from the inside out, we need to invite our fellow Indigenous elected leaders to the joint committee. The same goes for "establish an internal working group" which this government plans to create. I hope to see, at some level, involvement with Indigenous leaders or Indigenous governments with the creation of that working group.

Regarding employment in small communities, I would like to see a higher number of jobs that will be created by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly. A figure that was listed, I think, as a fairly low number, but nonetheless, I expect to see at least a few more jobs being created within my riding. Something that really, really angers me and frustrates me is how we always seem to have outside entities, like the Americans, southern companies; they come in and they take some very good business opportunities and jobs away from my community. I will say this until I'm blue in the face: any money that leaves the territories will hurt the Northwest Territories. We have to keep our money here. Again, our people deserve it.

In regard to tourism, I'm happy to see that there is an effort for increasing tourism to the regions outside of Yellowknife. That makes me happy. One aspect that I would like to see included is something about expanding our tourism market. Given the recent outbreak of this coronavirus -- I'm not going to go too much into that -- our tourism industry is probably going to take a hit for this. I hope to see efforts by this government to try to get people from newer markets.

On climate change, I wish there had been something regarding Indigenous guardians of the land. There is no mention of it anywhere in this document, and that is something that all regions would have appreciated. I think, overall, we need a balanced approach. You know, you can't just organize one group or sector over the other. We need a balanced approach going forward, and we can't do that without a healthy economy. We need a healthy economy to go forward. We need jobs, it's important, and more self-sufficiency for our

Indigenous governments. That is how, I believe in my heart, we're going to achieve success.

I got a little bit emotional there because I still think about my great-grandmother when I saw the elder, the one prior to me mentioned about elders, and letting elders age in place with dignity, because we still have a lot of work to go in that direction. I'm hoping, if my great-grandmother is still watching, I'm hoping she's giving me a little nudge and supporting me. I'm thinking about her, and I want to say mahsi cho, Madam Chair. That's all I have to say.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Norn. Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Madam Chair. [Translation] This mandate that is in front of us today, it's a big document. We have 22 mandates listed. When we first started, we had a lot more issues than this which is not on this list, but we've been on this job for four or five months, now. We still have another three-and-a-half years, when another election will happen. This mandate is here only for three-and-a-half years, so I think we want to tackle the mandate as soon as possible. Sometimes when we talk about issues, we're always trying to find a solution to resolve our issues. When one of the Members has spoken, talked about how their constituent situation is, we want to try to help our people as soon as possible. We don't want to do any more research; we want to work on the issues right away. Madam Chair, I'm not going to say too much. All the MLAs have touched on the issues I wanted to say. We know that we all don't agree on issues, but, in order to go forward, we all need to work together. We need to respect each other and each other's words. That's the only way to go forward.

Madam Chair, if you notice, I seem to be the only one speaking in my language, but sometimes I hear a little bit of language from some of the Members, but I especially always speak in my language. This document is not translated in any of our languages. Even if I spoke in my language, they're not listening to me. As an MLA on this side of the table, I will try to speak on it as much as I can. Even though my issues are not in here, I will still talk on it. I think our language is very important. It identifies who you are. When we speak our language, they hear us and they know what we are talking about. When we talk about the Northwest Territories, we're losing a lot of our languages, especially one language group, which is Gwich'in. They are really losing their speakers. We don't have a mandate for that, so how are we to talk about it? Sometimes, we only talk about it. Nothing is listed here as a mandate for our languages. I have spoken on this. I will always speak in my language. That is most important for me. I want to put it as a mandate. In the Northwest Territories, we have 11 official languages. Within

Canada, when you take a look at this, we should try to make that as strong as possible. When we look at Nunavut, their language is very strong, and you can see it in their regions. When we look at our own regions, it's like, even though we have 11 official languages, we say we have official languages, but there are not a lot of things happening with those languages. So I can't say anything beyond that, but it is my mandate to talk about the issues of my region.

A lot of my elders have said in the past that I'm speaking my constituents' words. They are the ones who have given me the mandate and the issues. They voted me in. I have to talk on their issues; it's their issues. I will not stop, so that is the reason why we are elected and we are here. We need to be aware of that, and also languages, we should try to speak our language as much as possible. Even though it's not translated in this mandate, I want to speak in my language.

We have 22 mandates, here. We know that we might not be able to complete it, but, when you take a look at this document, there are a lot of big mandates. Where is the budget for it? I don't see the budget in here for it. Sometimes we may think that it's a good idea; it's just only something that's written. We have three-and-a-half years here. Can we complete this mandate? I don't know, but maybe in another two years we're going to review the Executive, whether they did their job or not, so all the Ministers will get their evaluation. Everything that's in here, we have to try to complete it. We'll see whether they can do the job or not.

Madam Chair, as my closing, I did want to speak in my language. I wanted to increase and make my language stronger. That's the reason why I'm speaking. We do have interpreters, and even a lot of the interpreters are really advocating for languages, and Mary Rose is one of them. I'm really thankful for her and all the other interpreters who are here pushing for languages. Masi. [End of translation.]

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. I will go to the Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any notes. Well, I've got a few little notes here I jotted down, but I guess, when I look at the mandate and, like I said earlier today, as I look at where we are fiscally, we are in a tough position; but, again, this is a new government, new ideas, new hope to make the NWT, I guess I could say "great again," but we're already great, so better with what we have.

My focus, I guess, is going to be on the economy and business. I think, with the 19 Members that we

have here, we've pretty well got all the issues covered off. There is interest in every area, and that's what I'm going to count on. I'm going to count on people who have a stronger interest or more knowledge than I have in certain areas to help me make the right decisions; but, when it comes to business and the economy, I'm glad that we have diversification in there. It's going to be a real positive impact on the region and smaller communities, but it's important also that this government takes a look at collaboration between departments, because I think that's been lacking in the past, like with housing and different projects. If the departments work together, there are only 45,000 of us here, there's no reason why we shouldn't all be working, just looking after ourselves, basically.

Having a strong economy, as well, you know, there is some despair out there; there are people losing hope, and it's up to us to at least give them tools to give them that hope back and make it stronger. So I guess, for me, it's all about the people. At the end of the day, I'll do what I can in this House, but, as an MLA, there are people who call me and text me and email me with their issues, and those are important. It's important to them, and it's important to me. Usually, they want you to deal with it right away, and most times you can see why they want you to deal with it right away.

One of the things I find with this government, when I look at some of those coming in and I think it's something this government should look at, is we're sending emails on to you to look at and deal with issues that should be routine and that should be able to be dealt with in your departments, in the communities and in the regions, yet we're taking time away from, you know, you should be doing bigger things, and we should be able to deal with the community issues, but we have to be able to somehow find a way where we can work with the departments and the regions; as an example, the Hay River Health Authority. You know, I guess maybe I'm supposed to be bringing any issues up to the Minister here, but my sense and the way I've always operated is just go to the source, make a decision, deal with it, and get it done, and people are happy.

So I think everything has been said by everybody here already, and I just want to get down and get to work. We have to roll something out to the communities and to the territories, and, if we don't do that, if we just sit here for another two months and they still haven't got anything, you know, we might as well just pack it up and let somebody else take our places. It's that easy. So I look forward to working with everybody, and there is still, I think, maybe one Minister who is giving hugs, I think Paulie; I'm not sure if anybody else is, but that's

good. We're still getting along. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right, thank you, Member for Hay River South. I almost said Yellowknife South. I will now give the floor to the Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. I represent the majority Aboriginal Dene people in my riding of Deh Cho, and I've also got two treaty groups that are at the table, the K'atloodeeche First Nations out of Hay River and also the Dehcho First Nations, which represents 10 Aboriginal Dene groups and two Metis groups, also. I think their struggles have been ongoing for quite some time, as every other claimant group. It's good to see that there are three that have reached self-government and are their own government bodies. I think that's what we're all aspiring to, to get to those points. I know there are difficulties in moving forward on many fronts, but I believe there is progress there, at the same time.

What I'm mostly encouraged about is that, you know, there are a couple of items within the mandate that we have selected that are at the top five that we're looking at, and I'm just kind of concerned that the Regular Members' voices are not really being heard when we want to move forward because, as I mentioned, when I first came to this House, the Assembly, I had a vision. That vision is the GNWT, the government of the day, works and walks hand in hand with all the Dene people of the Northwest Territories, as we are a majority population. All the groups there in the Northwest Territories, that we walk hand in hand to Ottawa and say, "Hey, this is what we have. We're working together. We recognize there is an Aboriginal Dene territory, and we're working with them, and here is what we want you to do," you know, to say that to the federal government, and to put meaning into wanting to settle and implement all the self-government agreements and treaty negotiations. You know, that's what we would really like to see, and we want to see it.

I said I wanted to see a committee at the beginning so that we can direct the negotiations team and not have it work the other way around. That's kind of what I saw, so we can say, "Hey, relax your policy or your demands a little bit and work with the Aboriginal groups." You know, dealing with subsurface rights, let's have a serious talk about this so that we can move forward. It's good for economic prosperity when we look at that picture in that sense. Maybe we have to look at, you know, we're talking about the UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Maybe we should put that first. Let's pass that. I don't believe that's going to cost us any money at all. What it's going to cost, I guess, is probably to

look at our legislation and policies and making some changes in there. Those are the two biggest ones that I just wanted to mention at this point here. I probably have more questions as we go along. I thank the Chair for allowing me to speak. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In general, speaking to the mandate, I feel lucky because it did list a lot. If you've seen my pamphlet that I was handing out when I was doing my campaign and in my first remarks in the House of what I heard, I feel lucky because I did get a lot of the stuff that I spoke to in this mandate.

Housing was clearly identified in my region, and what we have in here, there's a start. There are a lot of issues. Regional decision-making, being part of a health authority that lost regional power, it is really important that the regions have their voice, and I think having that in our mandate will help give that back. Cost of living, I just recently received another \$500 flat power bill that doesn't go along with everything else that I have, so the cost of living and especially in the Territories is driving the people out of here. They can't afford to live. That's in our mandate. We need to fix that. Education, we have early childhood in here. We have programs. We talk about the Polytechnic, and I am glad that we've got the Auditor General report now because we know from those middle years, we have issues. It is not in here, but we, as a government, have to continue business. We've got to provide good education for our students. Whether it's in here or not, I know we're going to work towards fixing that. Seniors: like my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Willideh, I, too, was raised by my great grandparents, and they had the opportunity to live in their house almost until the day they passed. That was something that they wanted to do. They never wanted to live in a facility, so I hear what my colleague from Nunakput says. Our elders do not want to be placed in facilities where they are away from their families, and so, we need to make sure they age in place with dignity and that we come up with really outside-the-box thinking, plans to keep them there. Increase in food: at my last position, I wrote support letters and referrals to Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative for families to buy food because they couldn't make it to the end of the month for their income support. These are things that are the realities in our communities.

Another one is the culturally respectful community and mental health addictions and aftercare. Our people are crying out to get help, but they do not want to leave. Again, like I said today earlier in my Member's statement and yesterday, people don't understand the things that Indigenous people have

gone through and what their trauma is, and how is an outsider going to help us fix our trauma. We have to fix it from within. We're not asking for bricks and mortar. We are asking for places like the Indigenous wellness healing camps in our regional centres, in our communities. I spent one hour there last Friday, and, wow, I left there feeling refreshed, and I encourage you all to try it. Another area is residential health. Our people deserve to see the same person when they're telling their story. They shouldn't have to tell their story over and over and over again, every single time they walk into a health centre or speak with a physician. I am glad that we are going to try to increase the number of resident healthcare providers, and I'm just hoping that will help with our people wanting to access care again because that has been a barrier. That's all I have in regards to this. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Seeing there are no further general comments, comment, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There was quite a bit said. What I heard, though, was clearly "people, people, people," and I think that that's reflected in our mandate. I think all of the Cabinet is very people-focused but recognizing still that you have got to have a strong economy and to support social programs. Anyone that's in the social program area field knows that there's got to be money to pay for programs. You have to have a balance.

I heard: if everything's a priority, then nothing's a priority. It's a very wise saying that has been around for centuries, and I think it's true. I think that all of us recognize that, if we were provided a different financial picture at the beginning, before we became elected Ministers and Premiers and this mandate became, we would have had a more condensed list of priorities. We can't take back what's done. It's done. My job as the Premier and with my Cabinet was to actually make the mandate and address the 22 priorities that all of us know are probably a little bit too ambitious, knowing where we are fiscally at this point.

I know that good communication is key. We all have to work on that. Even though I am a social worker and was for many years, I have to work on my own issues. If I'm big enough and old enough to admit that, I think that we all have to work to admit that, and we have to work together. Together doesn't mean only Cabinet. It means all MLAs, all of us as MLAs, working together to advance the priorities of the people. That's what we're here for. We are trying to listen better and trying to work better together. I hope that we've addressed, maybe not

every single concern, not every single concern of mine is in here either, but consensus model says that we all have something in here.

Working together, it's not about just working together as ourselves as MLAs. It's working with our Indigenous governments, our municipal governments, our employees, and the residents of the Northwest Territories. I had made a commitment that it will be in mandate letters, and that will be in mandate letters. We're just in the process of doing them now, now that this work is finished.

I know that some people have said that the outcomes and the targets are low; example, the housing is only 100 units. Honestly, I struggled with that because we've talked about think big, and we ended up with 22 priorities that are unrealistic. We talked about be bold. I am willing to be bold, but I also recognize that not all Members are on the same page, so some Members are saying, be bold, and we will look at the mandate and see if it's realistic in a couple of years and see if we can get it. I'm not so sure that all Members will actually only look at the mandate and see if it's realistic because I've heard some Members will be evaluating my Ministers to see if they can achieve every one of those mandates. That made it difficult for me as a Premier. My job is to try to work with everyone and make it bold, but at the same time, I'm not going to set my Ministers up as scapegoats and say we're going to solve world peace in four years and then get crucified and all of us taken out of our seats in two years because we didn't do it. There is not one of us that's here that I believe is naive enough to believe that we can solve world peace in four years. We have to do what's achievable. It was a fine balance between being bold and being realistic so that I could actually try to protect on both sides, hear the Members, protect the Ministers from getting pulled from their seats because they can't do everything that is expected.

Keeping our money here? Absolutely. I am all about keeping our money in the Northwest Territories. I think that we have work to do with the federal government, with the people, in our own policies and procedures. Every dollar that leaves the Northwest Territories is a dollar lost. Every dollar we can keep in the Northwest Territories revolves around and around, and that same dollar might end up going from different hands and end up being \$10 for the amount of times that it is actually changed hands.

The other thing I want to say is that people say that we want to get it done and get the mandate done so we can get the work done. I want to reinforce that this mandate is a mandate. It is based on your 22 priorities, but the work has not stopped. The work is still going on. I will use my own department

as the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. Since I have been elected, without this mandate document, I have phoned every single Indigenous government and had personal calls with them. I have met with the Intergovernmental Council and told them we are doing business differently. I have had biennials and talked about doing things differently. We are doing things differently. I am scaring them, in all honesty, because we are meeting after. Traditionally, it was: we sat there; we did the issues; they went away; negotiating team did the issues; they went away. I have sat with the chiefs myself after we did our biennials and said, "Tell me what the issues are." We are already doing things, and we are doing things differently. I hope that you recognize that it is not all there.

Going to Ottawa with Indigenous governments, that is something not in the mandate. Not every single action is in this mandate. We have already had discussions with Indigenous governments about making a federal strategy and actually going to Ottawa. That is already in place. It is not here, but we are already having those discussions with Indigenous governments. Not everything is in the mandate.

Again, Madam Chair, I think the biggest thing for me is remembering that the 22 priorities were done by 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly with, in my opinion, not the correct financial information. The money was right, but we weren't told about the forced growth and the unions and the costs that would come out. We all thought there all was more money on the table than there is. I am hoping. I believe that myself and my Ministers are committed to working hard. They all came here for the needs of the people. I do not believe any Minister sitting here has come here just for themselves. I do hope that you will hold us to account with this mandate but that you will also recognize when the time comes to review this mandate. You will step back and say, "Our job is to review the mandate and see if it is accomplishable or not. Is it realistic or not? What can we do in the final terms of this government?" versus saying, "Do we take down every one of those Ministers and the Premier because they did not solve world peace in four years?" Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Seeing no further general comments, does the committee agree to review Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, by priority?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will begin on page 6, increase the number of

affordable homes and reduce core housing need. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could have some explanation of how the 100 units built and transitioned out work. Presently, we have a cap of 2,400 units. If we are unable to transition units out of the Housing Corporation, is it possible that we end up with 2,500 units? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the issue. It is an issue I struggled with for many years. That is why I came in to be an MLA in the first place, was because of housing and working with homeless people. This is my passion. We cannot increase the number of public-housing stock. In 2038, the operating maintenance money is gone. On average, we are spending \$22,500, I believe, unless it has changed in the last two years. That was when I was two years ago as the housing Minister, \$22,000 on average for every single public housing unit is what it cost the GNWT. We can't increase that stock because the money is off the table in 2038.

How we can increase it? That is about thinking outside of the cube, did you say, or box? I would say box, but I think somebody used a better term. That little cubic thing that you move around. Thinking outside the box. If we can't afford it, then why are we stuck with saying they all have to be public-housing units? Why don't we move into homeownership? Treaty people have been saying, "They promised us homes." For centuries, they have been saying that. Public housing is saying, "We don't have the money to maintain. We can't grow anymore." They have been saying that for years. They couldn't even give me an answer on when we stopped adding on to the number. The answer is: give people homes, not setting up people to fail. I do not believe that people who cannot succeed should be left on their own. There are many, many people who can afford to be in homeownership programs such as the lease-to-own. One of the Members talked about single parents, single moms. I was a single mom with two kids and lived in a dump of a trailer here in Yellowknife and so proud of that trailer. When I sold that \$40,000 trailer, I bought myself a \$100,000 house. When I sold that, I bought another one. It was the start. That is how I say we can do it. We bring in 100, and we get rid of 100 through homeownership. If we keep doing that, we will increase the number of homes for people in the NWT, and that should be our ultimate goal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. My question just mostly relates to holding this to account. We are going to get rid of 100 units, and we are going to build 100 new. We will stick with 2,400 units. To me, this is what the Housing Corporation has always been doing. We all recognize the Indigenous governments are much better suited to get federal money for housing. If the Indigenous governments build 100 units in partnership with the Housing Corporation, will we have met this mandate item?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the goal for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Again, I am sorry if I get passionate too much, but this is my passion. We will have 100 new homes, and 100 people will be moved into homeownership. The Indigenous governments, that is aside. The previous government with housing was always saying to the federal government, "Give us the money, and we will put it out there." This government, I have met with the federal government; I have met with Ministers; I have met with our Prime Minister. We have a different tone. I want houses in the North. I have been saying to the federal government, "Give it to the Indigenous governments." All I want is housing in the North. We are not in the way. We are not fighting the federal government and Indigenous governments. People have said, "If we work hand-in-hand, we are stronger." If we work hand-in-hand with our Indigenous governments and they can get housing money and we can use our housing money, then we are doing better service. It is not about one or the other. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will go on to Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My first question in regards to these 100 units is: how do you intend to ensure that the construction work done on these units is actually going to go to northern employers? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am trying to remember. I think northern business was a priority in here. I have looked at this mandate so long it is starting to blend. However, even if it is not clear enough in there, it is a priority of Cabinet. Amongst our Cabinet priorities that I shared with Members, Cabinet as a whole, we have taken a stance that we want as much as possible northern businesses doing northern work. None of us is happy with

sending the dollars South. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have also noticed that in other priorities, there was indication of some other housing units. For example, on page 32, it does say that for mental health and addictions programs, there are nine transitional housing units that will be added to several communities. Will that number of housing units affect the 100 housing units committed in the first priority on page 6?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just confirmed with my Minister. Absolutely not. Those are in addition. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you. I think I am good at this time.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will move on to Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. I am convinced of the Premier's passion on this issue. I know she has got lived experience. I have already seen evidence that housing is going to be a higher priority with this Cabinet, and I am very supportive of that. I just question the number here, the increase in 100 units while we're also going to transition 100 units for home ownership. It looks like it's going to be a wash. Maybe I am misunderstanding this. I get where the Premier is coming from. I think most of us share that priority. If she can explain the numbers a little better to me, that would be helpful. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The old model with the housing corporation was we waited till a building deteriorated until it was unusable. Then, we ripped it down and we put another one on. One house, one family.

This model is the same. I have already said, we can't exceed the 2,200. I think it's 22. Is it 24 now? 2,400 and 200 market. The 2,400, we can't exceed that. We're not going to exceed that. Instead of waiting until they deteriorate and ripping them down and then put another one up, which was the old model, why aren't we giving those houses better, in

good repair, not junk. I'm not okay with giving away shacks. I lived in a shack. I know the problems with living in a home that's not appropriate. Give 100 homes away, build 100 more. You're right, we stay at 2,400. But if I use it one and one because it's easier. In the old model, we have one house. We wait until it deteriorates. At that time when it's deteriorated, we rip it down, and we put one more house on. We have one house.

This model says, we give 100 homes away. We build 100 homes. We have 200 people living in homes versus 100 from the old one. We're not increasing. We cannot afford to increase our public housing stock. We don't know how we're going to figure it out. We can't leave our future governments in jeopardy and say, well, this government will be done in 2038, which isn't very far if you think about it; that they can deal with that. We have an obligation to protect our future. My goal is to have people in homes, irrelevant of whether it's public housing or not. In fact, I'm not even a big fan of public housing, period. I'd rather have all people in home ownerships. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I understand the math a little better. What I want to do, though, I want the Minister to think completely outside of the box. There is this glass ceiling of 2,400 units. We have to break that glass ceiling if we are going to ever get all of our residents housed properly. We cannot live within that limit. We are going to have to find more ways to raise revenues. We are going to have to get more money out of Ottawa. If we ever have a hope of actually getting adequate housing, suitable housing, affordable housing, for all our residents, we've got to get rid of that cap. I think it's as simple as that. We just have to find other ways to do it. If we can't house our people, there's no future here. I want the Minister, the Premier to think a little more seriously about that. I understand there are costs associated with this, but if we don't have housing for people, there's no economy. There's nothing happening here. We've got to get rid of that cap. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I hear the Member's concerns, but I want to go back to the philosophy. One, the Government of the Northwest Territories is not the only housing provider in the Northwest Territories. I've already said earlier that we are working with Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments are going to Ottawa and getting money. IRC is a great example of that, that they got

money in the last Assembly for housing. I know that Dene Nation is putting their name forward for housing, for money. I'm not fighting those. Those are extra.

What I'm saying is that, out of 45,000 people, 2,400 houses for public housing that people can't afford should be sufficient if we can get people into home ownership who can afford it. There are many people in our public-housing units who are not low-income, and they need to be moved into home ownership. If we had more than 2,200 people forever who are in public-housing units, we have bigger problems. We have poverty problems. Our goal should not be to increase the number of public-housing units. Our goal should be to decrease poverty for people so that people don't have to be in public-housing units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't want to prolong this. I think we share the same objective. We probably just disagree on maybe how we're going to get there. I just think that housing needs to be our top priority, probably, and that we can't let this glass ceiling get in the way of this. I'm not convinced that, even if we increase the housing stock by 100 units, that's even going to start to take care of the waiting list to get into public housing period.

In any event, I think we agree on where we need to be. I read the On Level Ground report from the last Assembly, where it would cost, at least a few years ago, half a billion dollars to get all of housing at a core need. We need to get a plan to do that. If part of it is home ownership, I get it. Getting the Indigenous governments to be partners and do some of it, that's fine. We've got to get rid of this. We cannot let this glass ceiling hamper our efforts on housing. That's all I have. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will take it as a comment. I didn't hear a real question. I do appreciate that we're on the same track. We just talk different, though.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I just want to remind that we are only doing one round of questions per priorities, so, Members, I encourage you to use short preambles for your questions, and I encourage the Premier to respond completely but briefly. Thank you. I will move on to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the transition of 100 individuals and/or families to home ownership. I think it's so important, this item. I think that, if people have ownership in their homes, they'll take pride in it. They'll take care of it. I'm looking here at how. When we go through this exercise, the how is the most important thing, how we get there. I'm looking at the lease-to-own policy developed and promoted. I would like to ask the Premier: if this policy is developed and promoted, how is land tenure part of this? Is it included in here? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you for your comment. The land tenure issue and the home ownership issue are two different departments. Department of Lands would be dealing with the land tenure, and housing would be dealing with the home ownership program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We will have to look into it, but I do believe that public-housing units are on their own property, so the land tenure wouldn't be an issue. It would go with them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** I am hearing a couple of different accounts here. I just want to make sure I get this straight in my head. Do I need to direct this question to the Minister of Lands? I didn't hear that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had to get clarification. It has been a couple of years since I was the housing Minister. Housing owns their own property. The housing units that would be transferred to home ownership, the land tenure would go with those homes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I am good here. The Premier answered my question, and I'm satisfied with the answer. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We'll move to the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Like the Premier, my career immediately prior to coming into the Assembly was with housing, a non-profit

housing agency, and I just want to talk about the numbers for a second. The first is that a significant portion of the housing stock, something like 30 percent, is 40 years old or older. That means that, out of those 2,400 houses, about 800 of them are going to be finished their useful life within the next 10 years. That's 800 houses. There are 900 people on the waiting list for housing across the NWT; about a third of them are in Yellowknife. Some of those people are on the waiting list because income assistance demands that they be there, but some of those people on those waiting lists need housing. They are not income-assistance recipients; they are low-income earners, or there are no other housing alternatives in their communities.

The next thing I want to say is that the vast majority of high-income earners in public housing are in Yellowknife, and there are no ownership options in Yellowknife. I am really struggling with understanding how 100 houses is going to make a dent in the age of the homes, the number of people on the waiting lists, and the homeownership options that are available in Yellowknife, so I would be very interested to hear from the Premier on these points. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** There are homeownership opportunities in Yellowknife, our large capital. The homeless assistance program, I can't remember the acronym for it, does help people try to get into their own homes. I'm trying to think if it was income support; I've had too many portfolios, now. Housing does the housing supplement; the rent supplement program is with housing. So the rent supplement program is with the Housing Corporation.

I was in social work for over 20 years and working in Yellowknife with homeless people, and I never even knew about the program, so I think that what we've done wrong, and, again, the government, I've said that for the last four years, the worst thing about the government is we're bad communicators. We're just so busy trying to keep on top of the water that we forget to get things communicated. I think that the rent supplement program needs to be promoted more, out there more, because that helps the majority of middle-income and lower-income families, and then the rent for income support needs to be utilized more for low-income families. Again, the federal government is supposed to be coming with another initiative that they will be providing housing support. Hopefully, that will come through fairly soon, and, if not, then we have an obligation to step up.

So there are housing needs in Yellowknife. There are huge housing needs in Yellowknife. We have to

look at expanding our rent supplement, but we also have housing needs in every single small community, and we can't forget the small communities. Because Yellowknife has 100 wait list; the small community, one community might only have 10 people on a waiting list, but those 10 people on the wait list might all be living in one home, and so that is the balance that we always have to meet. We will never have enough to do everything in four years, but we have to start chipping away. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Premier, I am never going to apologize for looking at the needs of Yellowknife residents. The waiting list in Yellowknife is 350 families or individuals; it's even harder to house individuals. I am not saying that housing isn't important in other places; I'm saying housing is important in Yellowknife. Where I live and work in Yellowknife Centre, there is also the largest group of people who are in public housing, and they are not necessarily looking for a rent supplement program. If they are high-income earners, they may be looking at purchasing homes, and it's news to me that public housing will facilitate the purchase of market housing in Yellowknife, the purchase of it; not the rental of it, but the purchase of it. High-income earners prefer purchasing because they are able to acquire an asset, as you did in your own life story. That makes more sense for them in the long run, so, as we often say in this room, one size doesn't fit all. The circumstances in Yellowknife are unique, and they need to be part of this solution of providing more housing, so I want you to consider those needs, as well.

I also want to reiterate the point that my friend from Frame Lake said. I know that 2,400 units has been the ceiling for a long time, but it doesn't make sense for it to be the ceiling indefinitely. The demand is simply too great. We're putting out money for health, we're putting out money for education, we're putting out money for employment, but, if someone doesn't have anywhere to live, then are we really using that money wisely? This is really a place, as my friend from Kam Lake said, for some real innovation, some really out-of-the-box thinking about these big numbers that are about need, about waiting lists, about the age of the existing stock, and coming up with ways to try to make a bigger dent, if at all possible, than 100. I mean, we have to start somewhere. I recognize that, but 100 units with 900 people on the waiting list, you can do the math and see that that's just not enough. That's me rambling on, and I don't have a question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Would Madam Premier like to respond?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Very quickly, I'm going to try. Absolutely right, we do have to get more. I mean, and there is work. We have to stop thinking that this is only GNWT. If we settle the self-governments, we have self-governments that are wanting to draw down things, so, you know, we have to work with our Indigenous governments and our federal government. We've already gone to Ottawa. We're trying to promote the need for our housing, so it isn't something that we're just looking at as: this is it. I would like to see more than this. I'm trying to be realistic. If, in two years, when we look at the mandate -- not the Ministers; we're not pulling Ministers out. That's not what we agreed to do. We agreed to look at the mandate and see if it's doable. It would be interesting to see where we are and see if we could actually increase it for the last two years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to if we decide to, I guess, sell off houses in a community, will there be a house there to replace that one? Will it stay in that community? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you for your comment. Going forward, I just want it to be really clear that there seems to be some confusion over the 100 houses that we are to be building during the next four years. The Housing Corporation is really emphasizing Indigenous partnership and hopefully wanting to receive federal funding this year. Looking at the approach going forward, right now, we're looking at our stock that is, currently, we're going to offset them and we're going to turn them over. Our main focus is to enter into a partnership with Indigenous groups, and eventually they would be able to, if we had five units in Hay River, those five units, my first contact would be with Indigenous groups, meeting with them and working in assistance with them, that they would be wanting to take over these units in partnership. Also, at a federal level, the Indigenous groups have the access to a co-investment fund that is offered through the federal government, so for them to come and approach us and for us to achieve the 100 units throughout the Northwest Territories, it's a partnership that I'm wanting to work with. If we were to guide and help and support the Indigenous groups, the stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories, to meet us halfway with the funding that

already exists there, then we are able to multiply on those units. One hundred units doesn't seem very much for the next four years, but 100 units is what we have to work with, and I look at that going forward and wanting to have people enter into homeownership is the main goal of the Housing Corporation and not setting them up for failure, to honestly give them that ownership that these are their homes, and then to try to eliminate and work with that waiting list that we have.

When we're constructing in the communities, if we're taking five units out of Hay River, I want five units back there, working towards that and really looking at we do have social impacts of poverty line, and the list goes on. That really contributes to our problem with the shortage of housing in the Northwest Territories. I hope that answers your question, and I am absolutely passionate about the portfolio, as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's hard to believe that she's that excited about it. When we talk about 100 units, is there a dollar value to those units? Like, I look at it and I think, well, 100 units, but is it 100 houses that have 10 bedrooms to them, or is it just a dollar value? I expect that we could have more than 100 units. With the way people's lives are changing nowadays, we don't need bigger units anymore, and so I'm expecting that the Housing Corporation will look at that.

The other thing, too, is we talk about the 100 units, but there is also the opportunity for developers in the communities to develop properties and house some of the people who require it, as well. So I guess, when I think of 100, I think that, you know, we could hit 200. It just depends how we do it, and it depends on how much money we have to play with. The partnerships are great. We have to do that; and, with Indigenous groups, that's a no-brainer; we have to have them on-side, but there are other avenues, as well. I'm not sure if there's a question there or not, but anyway, thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier, would you like to respond?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** She's as passionate as I was in the last Assembly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The 100 units that we're forecasting, I want to do 24

units going forward. I know that looking at can we exceed that amount; 100 units is what is forecasted and, looking at the federal funding that is available to Indigenous groups and to people across Canada who are able to access, if we were to have \$1 million, and we're over that \$1 million, we're only going to build two duplexes; but, if we have \$1 million and we have Indigenous group stakeholders that have entered into the co-investment fund and a \$500,000 duplex and the Housing Corporation is only putting up \$100,000, then that gives me the incentive that we have enough money to go across the Northwest Territories. If I can work in partnership with the Indigenous groups and with the stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories, I would like to stretch that money as far as we can.

I think the other thing is that, going forward and looking at the community plans that we're developing, you did have some comments on what style of houses and what units are we constructing, those community plans are going to give that information to the Housing Corporation. Based on each of the communities, I want the communities to tell the Housing Corporation: this is what we need. We could go in and we could build single units, three-bedroom units, but is it adequate for that community, depending on what it is that they want and what they want to see going forward?

The other thing is that, a lot of people who have their current units right now, they are looking at homeownership and repair; homeownership, home repair, seniors aging in place. We do have programs that support that. So, going forward, depending on what the region, what the communities want, would be the style of units that are going to be going into each of the communities in each of the regions.

The other thing I really want to emphasize is I want to tie it in with education and training, as well. These units are going to be stick-built. I want them to create employment in the communities, and, going forward and looking at that initiative, it gives a lot of independence and a lot of hope for our community members and throughout the Northwest Territories. Also looking at homeownership is the ultimate goal for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I would like to see people own their own homes, access our programs. Advertisement is key, as well, as I want people to know the types of programs that we have, because I feel that they need to reach the needs of the Northwest Territories.

The programs are already existing. I see that they are adequate. Coming from a smaller community, I get it; I see it. I know what it's like to be living in a home where there is no plumbing, there's no furnace, and whatever, but going forward I also know what it's like to become a homeowner and the

pride that you have and the skills, as well, of maintaining that home. So, going forward, the priority for the Housing Corporation is homeownership. I would like to emphasize that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. I know you're passionate, but can you try and keep your answers shorter?

--Laughter

Would Madam Premier like to...? Okay, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** This one, you can just say yes or no. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm kind of confused here, now. We're talking about 100 units. Is that 100 units based on developing and receiving funds through Indigenous groups, as well, or is that just 100 units based on GNWT dollars; just on GNWT dollars, yes or no?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes, it's GNWT only. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I like the idea of the increased homeownership. I'd like to see the terms of reference that you're going to put out and if there is going to be a means test, you know, or is it going to be that you're just going to turn over the home to the individuals? Because, you know, I was thinking about this. Most of the people in housing, public housing, are Indigenous, and, as you know, Salt River did a program with the Government of the Northwest Territories, but there are a lot of other people. I want to make sure that we don't make it very difficult for the home ownership, the increase in home ownership. You have to make it so that they don't fail. Sure, there has to be a means test; sure, you have to make sure that they're able to pay for the utilities, and there are lots of people in that category.

I think that it's very important that the Indigenous governments are involved. In Fort Smith, it's Salt River and the Metis Nation, the Fort Smith Metis Nation. I think it's extremely important because it's mostly our own people who are in those houses, so they have to have input into how distribution takes place. I think that we could be very innovative and business-minded, like Rocky said. We could get more units built; like, if you have five designated for Fort Smith, or 10, we might be able to make it 20. You know, Fort Smith is always open to new ideas and to make sure that we get as much as we can.

The other thing I want to mention, though, is we also have to have support to develop the reserve. We have no developed lots on reserve. The water and sewer in the lift station is a must on the Salt River Reserve. The federal government is not taking ownership for this to happen. I'm sure that you had discussions with the Chief of Salt River, Mr. Poitras. I fully support and always will support the development of that reserve. It is all in place. Everything has been done. It is just a matter of them signing the papers, saying that they're going to go ahead with the development of the service lots, the 30-some lots on reserve and the lift station so that they can move forward. Salt River has the ability to move forward, and so does the Fort Smith Metis Nation. I have a lot of confidence in the Indigenous people of Fort Smith. If we all work together to make it happen and distribute equally, I fully support your initiative.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there would be a means test, although I want to clarify. Sometimes means test limit. Low income people can't get into housing, so I am going to be watching that as well very closely because, if someone's making \$87,000, I think in Yellowknife, you use 87,000, the philosophy is that they deserve to be in public housing. I never made \$87,000 in Yellowknife when I was living in my \$40,000 shack, so I need to make sure that, just because people are making less than that, that our government doesn't penalize them and say, you can't do it, because I think people can. We cannot set people up to fail, so the terms of reference have to be really good within that.

I think that it's important that we need to work with our Indigenous governments. Salt River, its former chief, was a great example of what we can do when actually the GNWT and Indigenous governments do work together to provide housing for people. As for the support to the reserves, it's something where we've talked to the federal Ministers already. We will be talking to the Prime Minister. It was just an introductory meeting, not as in-depth as I would have liked. As we move forward, it is something. It is not acceptable that we have two reserves in the Northwest Territories and that they are not getting the same services as the rest of the reserves in the south. I do not accept this, and I think that we will continue for this government to advocate that the reserves in the Northwest Territories get recognized by the federal government, and get the funding that comes with reserves in the South. In the meantime, I will not turn a blind eye to supporting of people on reserves. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** It's okay to talk, but I want to see it in writing. I think it's very important that it's written, a letter is written on behalf of the reserves, both reserves including Salt River, that the development of the reserve of the water and sewer in the lift station is supported at Salt River. Hay River has water and sewer on their reserve, but we don't. It's a new reserve, and that's part of the implementation of the reserve. There are no lots available for building houses. It's a very important part of their development, and I think that we have to ensure that happens. It's a great asset, not only for Salt River, but for the entire community of Fort Smith. Anything that happens within the community is good for everyone. I want to make sure that this happens. You can talk about it and we've done that. I want to see it in writing, that the Minister gets a letter saying that you support this, and carbon copy the Salt River Reserve and myself.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will commit to providing a letter that I will share with both reserves. Give me a little bit of time. I want to meet with the reserves first to make sure that it's the letter that they want because we are talking about advocating. Once we've met with both reserves and we know what we're going to bring forward to the federal government, I will stand beside them in that battle, and then we will provide a copy, as long as the reserves, I'm being careful now, agree that we can open it up, and we will provide a letter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I have no other questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. If there are no further questions on the increase number of affordable homes and reduce core housing needs? Seeing none, the committee will move to page 8. Settle and implement treaty, land, resources, and self-government agreements. A reminder, Members, we'll do one round and have ten minutes. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** The settle and implementation treaty, land, resources, and self-government agreements is extremely important for the development of the Northwest Territories. We all talk very loosely in our discussions around the table of ensuring that Indigenous rights are respected, Indigenous people are looked after. We have to sort of walk the talk.

I am very passionate about the subject. I am going to go back to the two outstanding. One

implementation is the Salt River claim, the outstanding claim of the NWT Metis Nation within my area, and the Dehcho claim, the Akaitcho claim. I mean we could go on and on. I wonder if the will is really there to settle. I've often wondered if the people that are actually settling the claim from Indigenous Affairs, the negotiators are actually the ones that we should really be using. Sometimes, I wonder if they really understand what's on the table. I think that it's extremely important that we do not be barriers to settling these claims and these implementations so that our people could move forward with everybody else instead of waiting for social assistance or public housing and all these other things that we seem to be a burden to. I think that it's extremely important that we understand that the federal government also could be a big barrier.

Ever since devolution, the more I heard around the table when I was at the table with Indigenous governments is that the main barrier since the lands have been turned over in devolution, that we have been a big barrier. That's got to change. The mandate has got to be put forward in good faith. Meaningful negotiation has got to take place. The negotiators that go to the table have to understand where everybody's coming from and mediate through those claims in good faith. I don't see that happening. People are still coming to me, and I have chiefs phoning me all the time because I know them. I sat with them. I saw their struggles. I saw the way they tried to help their people and how they feel. When you settle these claims, it's going to be a benefit to that community and to the Northwest Territories, just like the way Salt River has done, even though we have no support for the implementation.

It is very dear to my heart because being there in leadership for 10 years, anything you do with the settlement of a claim has always benefited not only Salt River but all the community. Anything you develop supports the whole community. We don't have to depend on government all the time. You're more self-sufficient. I did wonder how you're going to be able to ensure that this actually happens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is why I didn't commit to settling every single one of them. They have been on the plate, some of them, for 30 years. We have committed to doing business differently. Like I said, I have talked to the Indigenous governments. I have met with a couple of them now. I have been saying the same thing I said in the House the other day. I have been telling them, "I don't see us as federal government, GNWT, and Indigenous governments. I see us as federal, GNWT, and Indigenous all working together at the table." I talked about

meeting with them after because it has only been negotiators at the table. I feel that the Premier wasn't there enough. Every single bilateral that we are having now is going to have a time with the Premier and the chief alone to talk about negotiations, a more intense struggle.

I can't commit that it is going to work, but what I can say is that we did have one Indigenous government that was backing away from the GNWT and saying, "We are not working with you, period. We are only working with the federal government." Talked to them, and they are back at the table. That says if we had an Indigenous government that was saying, "We don't want anything to do with you," and now they are saying, "We are willing to come back," and that chief told me he said, "Because I worked with you when you were the housing Minister, and I trust you." I know it is not a lot to go on, but I think relationships are key when you are working. That is all I have to offer, the honesty and the relationship that I carry forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I think it is extremely important that if the negotiators who are appointed do not work out with the actual people at the table in that particular claim or whatever that they have the option to ask for someone else who actually understands land claims and mandates and the implementation of a claim because many times we have these people who do not understand where we come from. You struggle with wording. You can have an "and" here and a "the" there, and it is entirely taken out of context sometimes, even in the implementation. The fellow sitting beside you understands where I am coming from.

When you are passionate about something and you are held up especially by lawyers who do not understand where a First Nation is coming from, it is a process that is unbelievable, disgusting, and not in good faith. I just want to make sure we as a government are going to move forward to ensure that the mandate is there in good faith to ensure that these claims and these implementation of claims are settled. The good example for me is always Salt River. They signed the claim in 2002. It is 18 years, and they have not come to an agreement and they are not recognized as a reserve within Canada. That is unbelievable. I am not going to ask any more questions, but you have to know where I am coming from. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I already said that relationships were critical. I have to recognize that one negotiator at

one table might seem like the worst person in the world, and the next table, they might be the best. I have seen that because I have had people come to me and say, "You need to fire So-and-so." Then I went and met with another Indigenous government, and they said, "That is the best person we ever had." What it tells me is: we need to have more than one negotiator and be willing to move them up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will move to Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Pursuant to Rule 82(1), no Member shall speak for more than 10 minutes at any one time in Committee of the Whole. I am seeking unanimous consent to amend it to five minutes for the purposes of the mandate discussion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to limit questions to each priority to five minutes. Do I have unanimous consent?

---Unanimous consent denied

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We will resume, keep it at 10 minutes then. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is: in self-government agreements, we have two agreements concluded. Can I just have a little more explanation of where that number came from? Do we have any idea of whether they are the self-government land claim or which two, just some more background on that point? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, I am not willing to name them because they are not settled. It would be inappropriate for me to say, "These are going to be settled," and then I go into a meeting and I get slaughtered. It is like, "What do you mean?" We have a few that are fairly close, but they change day by day because one that we thought was close wanted to be off the table. I had to go and mend the relationship and say, "Come back." That same one is back on the table. It is impossible to say that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will go to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make a quick statement about this. Out of all our 22 items,

if I had to label a keystone item, this would be it. I think a lot hinges on this mandate item. I want to just make a quick comment about Oliver Edjericon, who is my great-grandfather, who signed a Treaty 8 in Deninu Kue in 1900. I often think what he would say if he was in here. I could imagine him saying, "What took you so bloody long?" I think in honour of our relations who signed that, I think we have to do it right and do it properly. To echo what my colleague from Thebacha said about having consultation, not just consultation but meaningful consultation, and get these meetings done right. My question: I am looking at page 8 again. It mentions that there is a special joint committee here. Will the Premier be open to having any of our elected Indigenous leaders to sit on this joint committee?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this moment, I am not willing to make that commitment because I need some time to think about it. It is too rushed to make that commitment. We have a whole bunch of Indigenous governments that are at the table. Am I going to pick and choose or have one of each? Then when does it become a land claim negotiation versus a joint oversight committee? I am not ready at this minute to make that commitment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you for that response from the Premier. Thank you for that. I am looking here at what we will do to review, update, and publish territorial principles and interests to reflect GNWT's new priorities and mandate and there's a "how we will demonstrate progress for terms of reference being developed." Again, I'm going to go back to saying how it's really important. So how is the Premier going to proceed with developing these terms of reference, and is there going to be any consultation with any Indigenous groups for the development of terms of reference?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had to check and make sure there were no political bombs coming off with that. Absolutely, this joint committee, I mean, in theory it's supposed to be between Regular Member and Cabinet, but we don't foresee -- you never know what will come out of the woodwork. At this point, we don't see a problem with sharing it with our Indigenous governments, to get their opinion on the terms of reference, as well, recognizing that it would take communication with that, because they

need to be informed of what is going on, so we have to make sure that we have communication to make sure that they're clear. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all I have for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. I'm quite encouraged by the Premier's optimism for working with the Indigenous governments on the same level and that she has been in communication with them on, I suppose, an ongoing basis. To make this thing work, I guess, I myself have been after forming a special committee or some sort of a committee, and I'm glad to see that it has made it here. I'm just kind of wondering if we can, because it says "in the summer 2020, form special committee." That could be several months away, and there's just an eagerness, I guess, on my part, and maybe on the Indigenous side, too, to get the ball rolling. I would like to see that we escalate forming this committee and also the terms of reference for the committee, if that could be possible, because all these things can be done. I don't see why we need to wait any longer.

Also, because the terms of reference are pretty important, I guess, you're saying now we have to go to the Aboriginal governments to review the terms of reference for this committee, but they're not going to be part of that committee. This committee is going to be between Cabinet and the Regular Members, so that, this committee, we can hash it out on the floor, where we meet, on how we should be progressing. That's how I'm seeing this committee here. We can share terms of reference, all right; just maybe, if there's a final one, to show that this is what we're going to be doing, and it's agreed to by the Regular Members, also.

We also need to know, like, I understand from the last Assembly that there may have been a committee of some sort looking on the negotiation side, but it didn't do anything, and I'm just hoping that this committee will have meaning to it. That's all I'll go for, now. I'll wait for the Premier. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Do you have a response, Madam Premier?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just heard that part of the reason he thought the joint committee didn't work well was because it didn't meet frequently enough. That

might be an issue. It is hard to get everyone together.

Madam Chair, respectfully, I won't bump up the summer 2020 because, if you look at the wording, it says, "the internal working group will be established and the terms of reference developed by summer 2020." We're coming up on spring; it's not going to be very much time. This is going to take a process, and so I will not at this point be willing to move that up any further. Thank you, Madam Chair. If it happens earlier, though, great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list is the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Pardon, did you have anything further, Member for Deh Cho?

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm really optimistic, you know, alongside of you, also, and I would really like to see this escalated and moved forward as soon as possible. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that as a comment. I also want to see this move forward as soon as possible. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you. Anything further, Mr. Bonnetrouge? No? Okay, next, MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under this section, I picked up from a couple of the comments and it's something that I hear and live and talk about all the time in my community: committed to doing business differently. The Premier has stated this over and over and over again, that the GNWT is committed to doing business differently and they want to work unilaterally with our Indigenous governments at the negotiating tables; saying that, and having this as a mandate, but yet our negotiating teams continue as a unilateral, by themselves. The federal government is not pushing it. Core principle objectives, CPOs; this is what I hear about from different leaderships, is the GNWT continues to push CPOs at the table, and Indigenous governments feel that this is a barrier for it to move forward because, and I'll discuss that further when we get to the next section, if we're going to the table to negotiate land claims, self-governments, and we're going to respect the rights of these negotiations and we're going to the table, then how are we pushing CPOs that are government CPO standards and they have the right to change them whenever they want to change them, and

Indigenous governments, it's kind of "take it or leave it?" Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a few questions in there. For one, we are trying to do this differently. I've already met with Carolyn Bennett and told her that she needs to come to the table, as well. Instead of just negotiators, we need to actually have the leaders at the table sometimes. I think I caught her off-guard; she didn't give me a solid commitment, but it's a start. I mean, I realize that people have to be kind of talked to a few times.

The core principles, I mean, that is something that I would have to give more thought to. They're basic principles like, for example, an income support. You know, everybody has a right to, I can't remember them, but they're very basic principles on people's rights. I would love to be able to say, "Throw them out the window." The reality is there are three people at the table, not just ourselves, the GNWT and Indigenous governments; there is the federal government. They have principles that we have to abide by, for example, the principles on health. They just brought out the Child and Family Services Act. They're looking at that. That has core principles in it. So we can't just say that we're going to throw them out at this table here and not recognize that there are principles across Canada that we have to abide by, as well.

However, I think it's a discussion that we should be able to negotiate and talk about. Like I said, the NWT core principles, it's only a little, tiny booklet. It's probably one of the smallest things I've read since I've been a Premier. They're very basic. They're not huge. They're more like a human rights thing, so I think it's an item for discussion, but I can't commit that we would throw them off when there is more than just one party at the table. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Further, Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that these core principle objectives, though, are being pushed only by GNWT. No other negotiators are pushing them at the tables, and the Indigenous groups are feeling kind of -- and I'm not speaking for every Indigenous group, because I haven't talked to every Indigenous group, so I can't speak to every, but the ones that I have and I do understand is that that may be a barrier, because it is almost saying that we are a tiered government. If we are going to the table to negotiate, what you're saying is the way you need to have it done, and what we're saying, as an

Indigenous government, we can't -- like you said, that needs to be at the table where -- and the negotiators, and I mean, maybe that's going to help better with negotiators having a mandate that is going to tell them to be able to do these kinds of things.

A lot of times, what I'm hearing is they go, and they're not even coming back with the things that they say that they're going to follow up, so I think that there are some issues there, and I think that those need to be -- in order for us to move forward with this, I think that those things need to be looked at, and whoever is in charge of meeting with the negotiators needs to be saying, "Okay, what are the challenges? What are these, and how are we going to move forward? When the Premier is meeting with these Indigenous groups, what are the challenges, like it says in there? And how can we move forward, and how can we" -- because if that's the case, we're never going to move forward. Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Like I said, I think that everything should be on the table and open for discussion. Anything that's within the Government of the Northwest Territories' purview, then I am open to discussion. I have to make sure that people do have basic rights, but I think that the core principles are something that we could negotiate. It's something that some Indigenous governments are fine with now, other ones who are fighting a bit more. It might not be a one size fit all, but, I mean, if it's only in the GNWT, I am willing to sit down and talk to them about it. That was my commitment to all of the chiefs, is that we will be sitting down and talking about all of the obstacles. I imagine, if that is an obstacle, it will come up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I have next on my list the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to finish in less than five minutes. I have one comment and one question, if I may. My comment is that the last Premier said that we were going to get all of the negotiations completed in the last Assembly, and we had one agreement-in-principle reached. The bar was too high with the last Assembly. This one, I think it's too low, with just two of maybe 16 tables. I think, hopefully, we can get somewhere in between.

That was my comment, Madam Chair. My question is the advisory committee that's mentioned in the "how we will demonstrate progress," the very first

item there, "quarterly reports provided to advisory committee." What is that advisory committee, and how is it related to the special joint committee that is identified in the bottom of the second column? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Every single MLA in this building has certain strengths, and one of the strengths that I will say about the MLA is he catches things. That is actually wrong; that should say "joint committee." Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further? Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Next on my list, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I've got one quick question, as well, hopefully. We have all, around the table, agreed that settling and implementing treaty land resource and self-government agreements is a top priority for this government, and we need to move the meter on this one. My question for the Premier is: does she feel that we need to actually accomplish priority number 3 of "implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People" before we can justly accomplish our priority number 2? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It would help, maybe, to do that first. However, I am not telling people to wait for it. There are issues happening, and the federal government is going to be doing it. BC claims that they were the first; they've got it done. BC is having problems with it now. I mean, they've just said that they've got it made into legislation, and now they've got a pipeline that the Indigenous governments are saying, "You never even consulted us."

It's one thing to put it in policy. I'm not willing to put it into policy. I mean, that would be my get-out-of-jail-free card. I think this is more than just putting it in the legislation and just saying, "Whatever, we'll keep going about business." In the phone calls that I've made, we've committed already to the Indigenous governments that each one of them -- we're already asking them, "What do you see UNDRIP looking like?" This process is going to take time, if we do it light. If we just want to make it a legislation policy, that's the get-out-of-jail. Please tell me, all of you, that you want that, and that's my get-out-of-jail-free, but I don't think that that's what we should be doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Members, are there any further questions on "settle and implement treaty land resources and self-government agreements"? Seeing none, committee, we will move to page 9. Are there any questions on "implement United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the goal to "implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," I think one of the things when I'm reading in the "what we're going to do" and our timeline, what I heard when we met with the Indigenous leaders, for me, I feel like it's not enough. I know the Premier has said that we need to do this right, but I feel like, at some point, we just need to put this in our legislation in order to move it forward.

I'm going to say it again and again, because I think, in order for us to act on this and in order for us to respect the rights of Indigenous people, we need to start looking at everything that we do with that lens. I think it needs to go into legislation, and I think it needs to go into the mandate letters to the negotiators, and I think it needs to go into, you know, mandate letters to all the departments. That's how I feel that we need to be moving forward, if we're really in the true spirit of going to reconcile.

I feel like, sometimes, when I look at this, we might be letting the Indigenous governments down a little bit, because when they've seen it, and then what I see now, I'm Indigenous, so I'm kind of like, you know, you get excited and then, kind of, the bubble gets popped. That's kind of how I'm feeling. If the Premier is meeting with these groups, and they say they want to move this faster, is the Premier willing to look at that and move it along faster? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. If I can get all the Indigenous groups to say that they would have the working group established before summer 2020, which is just a few months, I would be all over that. I don't think that we're going to.

This is about asking the Indigenous governments what they see UNDRIP should be. It should not be about the GNWT saying what UNDRIP will be. If you look at the UNDRIP philosophy or whatever it is, one of the key things, it says, "Ask the Indigenous people." It doesn't say that MLAs should sit around and do this. It is about talking to the Indigenous people. I read that, I took that to heart, and this is something that I think that Indigenous governments should define for us, as long as it doesn't break the law. That is my commitment, that

I will be working with them, and if they want to make it faster, then I am right beside them. Everybody knows I run fast. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know I have said this before, and I know I have said it to the Premier before, I feel that, when we talk about the priority before and we talk about UNDRIP, they go hand-in-hand. I almost feel like we can't move forward without them. You know, it's kind of hard to say, how do we settle these things where there are barriers, and we're not respecting -- so we're not putting these legislations in place. I feel like, to move forward on priority number two, we need to ensure that we have priority number three because I feel that they go hand-in-hand. Does the Premier agree to that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely, I agree to that. If you look at the timelines, I mean we're already talking about what you want to point out, Madam Chair. Just because we organized this pamphlet with housing number one and land claim number two does not mean those are our order of priorities. At no time did I hear any of the MLAs agree to which was priority 1 and which one was priority 22. My impression, every single one of these priorities is number one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I didn't mean that there was a priority two. It's just in the order that I am talking. I just feel like in order for us to move forward and settle these land claims, and settle the self-government, we need to have legislation established because I know that a lot of the Indigenous groups are looking at the future. In their self-governments, they want to ensure that all their rights are protected, and, if one other group gets something. It's a big -- so on one hand, we need to have this. I feel like we need to have some legislation on this, and I'm hoping that that's what the Premier will be hearing, especially once we get this group established. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, it's all about Indigenous people speaking for themselves. I have committed to actually sit with them, form a working group.

They will commit. I, again, will reiterate. I do not want to be the territory that says we got legislation and then the next thing we know is we hear about something major that's happening and Indigenous governments are saying, "But you didn't even consult us."

Put in a legislation act and actually make this a live document are two different things. I'm sad to say, but that is the reality of life. I want more than just an act. I want action on this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further? Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Next on my list is the Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Putting the onus on Indigenous governments, on the leadership of Indigenous governments to move this forward is not acceptable. Leadership by the Government of the Northwest Territories to move this forward is acceptable. If you are going to wait for the Indigenous governments and you're going to divide and conquer, it's never going to happen. We have to make sure that we show leadership to ensure that this passes. Why can't we at least do something in the meantime, and you do AIP's for agreements in principle. Why don't we have an agreement-in-principle to implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous people, and worry about all the other things after? At least, we have stated and said that this is what we're going to do. I think there are other ways of moving forward with this and not waiting for years and years. We have AIPs all the time. Why can't we have an AIP that we are going to move forward and do this? It shows that we have leadership as a government. We are all on board about that, and it moves the Indigenous governments a step forward in the right direction. That's all we're asking.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We already have a mandate commitment that we will implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous governments. I'm not sure if an AIP will strengthen that or not. What I do want to bring it back to is, the summer of 2020, the working group of Indigenous governments will sit around the table and talk about: what does this look like; what do we need to do?

It's not about divide and conquer. We can't even get 19 people in this room to agree on --- well, maybe, if we tried. We haven't fought on adjourning yet, but this is huge. This is so huge. To have all 19 people, all Indigenous governments on the front page probably won't happen. This is about getting

consensus to try to figure out from them, getting the most and them moving forward. If it's about, like I said, it's going to happen in the summer of 2020. If they say, "We want it now," I will be moving it as fast as I can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Just a clarification on my comments. I'm saying why couldn't we agree with an AIP, with all the governments, all the Indigenous governments, to ensure that -- we do it all the time with Indigenous governments as a first step in negotiation, that we're going to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It's an agreement-in-principle really. All the other things will be worked out later.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If the Member can actually meet with me later and maybe talk, I'm open to talking. I mean we have it in our mandate. It is a priority. We are going to have a working group. Terms of reference will be done. I'm not sure why it's stuck in AIP, which is an agreement-in-principle, because is it the terms of reference we want or an agreement-in-principle? We haven't even settled all the agreements in principle with Indigenous governments. That might end up being a block. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I'm sorry, Madam Premier, but I'm just so passionate about this whole issue. It's just the concept. I said the AIP. We do AIPs all the time. It doesn't have to be AIP. It could be an MOU saying that we are going to be doing some of these things, and we are going to implement this. We have 19 or 20 or 33, I think it's 33, First Nations or Indigenous groups in the territories. I don't know exactly how many there are, but there are more than that. We get them to sign that we're going to end up doing this, at least have something so that people have an understanding that we're going to do this. If you're going to put the onus on the First Nations and wait for them to get this together, that's not going to happen. I want us to show the leadership to actually do this.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What I can commit to: as soon as we get the working group in the summer of 2020, the first conversation we'll put on the table is, do you want an AIP or an MOU or a terms of reference to be able to do this? That, I can commit to and work

from that. I'm not seeing that we're downloading it and we're going to say, "This is all about you." What I'm saying is that we need to make sure that they are the voices that we're listening to, not just a whole bunch of bureaucrats. Because we all agree, I think, that just having a whole bunch of bureaucrats do it might not be the best practice. This is about Indigenous people. It's not about passing the buck or waiting forever. It's about doing it right. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I understand where you're coming from, and I know your heart is there, too. Indigenous people have always taken a back seat for a long time, especially on some of these issues. It goes hand-in-hand. My former colleague says that with the settlement of claims and the implementation of claims and all these, it's a very big issue because we can't do development in a lot of these areas because of the claim issue. It's just going to benefit everybody much more if we do everything in a more, I guess, in a fashion that won't take years to do. Eighteen years after a settlement of a claim and we are still waiting for the implementation is a bit long. I hope we are not going to wait that long. I will never see this happen. Thank you so much. I don't have any other questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the passion. I don't take it as anger or anything. I know that we all have passion. I appreciate the Member's words. This is close to my heart, too. We will move it as fast as we can, in a respectful manner, not trying to cram it down people's throats, but actually working in the consensus model. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Committee, we will take a short recess and resume to the tabled document.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We were at the tabled document on section "implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," and I will give the floor to Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's clear that the GNWT Department of Justice got their hands all over this one. I want to note that we are implementing it within the constitutional framework. We are passing legislation and policies that best reflect the principles set out in UNDRIP.

Some history here: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was vetoed by Canada at the United Nations, because it provides free, prior, and informed consent to Indigenous peoples for any resource projects taking care on their land. Since that time, in Canada, we have kind of evolved, and there has been this conversation, "Well, consent is not a veto," which I think is really a watering down of what UNDRIP was trying to accomplish.

Can the Premier please clarify: when we implement UNDRIP, does it provide Indigenous peoples the right to veto resource projects on their lands? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had earlier said that I am glad to have a lawyer in the House. I am glad to have a few lawyers in the House. To answer the lawyer's question, I will allow Martin to answer that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the short answer is "not necessarily." When we say implement it within the constitutional framework of Canada, I don't think that we're saying anything different than the Government of Canada has said, and we have to recognize that the constitutional framework is the supreme law, and whatever we do has to fit within it. This is why it's important to have discussions with Indigenous governments, to come to as much of a common understanding as possible of what do we mean when we say we're going to fully implement UNDRIP in Canada. It's important to come to that understanding.

There might be circumstances where consent will be required, just as there is now in our constitutional framework, but it might not be every circumstance where our constitutional framework provides that Aboriginal rights can be balanced against other interests as well. Very much looking forward to continuing that conversation and getting as much clarity and common understanding as we can.

I should also point out, though, that the French version of UNDRIP says, "We'll aim to achieve the free, prior, and informed consent," which is language that the federal government has also adopted. There is much to talk about, though, to get as much common understanding as we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Spoken like a true Canadian lawyer, using the French interpretation.

My second question is: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides Indigenous people the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in their own languages. Right now, the closest we are in the Northwest Territories to doing this is the Tlicho, with their self-government.

Are we intending to amend the Education Act, amend the education formula that would come with that, change the role of the education councils to allow Indigenous peoples to have the right to control their educational systems; and are we willing to do that without necessarily settling and implementing treaty land resources and self-government agreements, the priority prior to this? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely, Madam Chair. The whole intention to review the act is that Indigenous governments are moving more into self-government. They have a right to draw down aspects, such as education, health, et cetera, and so we would need to make sure that we open the pathways so that that can happen. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will move on to the Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Premier, I recall you stating as soon as you got into office that you were phoning all of the Indigenous groups to have discussions. I am not certain if you did go into the communities, but I am kind of wondering if any part of your discussions mentioned these two mandate priority items, the settle and implementation and the UNDRIP.

Also, rather than waiting, I don't know why we're waiting for summer. I think, inside buildings, it feels like summer; it's warm. Even tonight, I would suggest, you know, to draft up a letter to all of the Indigenous groups on these two items and have them come back with their comments. Moving forward, I realize you still want to sit and meet with them, but I'm pretty sure that they are well aware of this UNDRIP for quite a number of years and probably really want to see it implemented because it helps them. Also, it's the territorial government, recognizing them as the true peoples of this country, this territory, and that we work and move

ahead on these priorities. I'm wondering if you have comments on that one. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. That was the whole purpose of the initial calls, was to talk to them about their negotiations, to do an introduction, talk about doing business different, and we also talked about the UNDRIP and it being in our priorities. We have been soliciting feedback from them. We've already got, I think there are two or three that we've got already on this, so it has been put forward and there is already movement on it. I do want to clarify, it's not all Indigenous groups that I've met with; it's Indigenous governments. Because, if I was to call every Indigenous group, I don't think I'd be sitting here today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi. Just to clarify, was that the regional governments? Is that who you're talking about? Like, there's the Akaitcho, there's the Dehcho. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To clarify, yes, it's the regional governments. The ones that are in the land claims and the settlement negotiation are what I focused on, although some of them are not regional because not all of them are part of a regional land claim or a self-government negotiation, so sometimes I had to phone the chiefs in communities versus actually a regional rep. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. All right. So, if there are no further questions on this? Oh, Mr. Simpson, Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you. I guess it's part of the government's mandate, it's part of our priorities, so I see it's something that we have to initiate, whether it's, you know, writing letters or contacting the Indigenous groups and saying, "Okay, we have to sit down and talk about this, and come up with something to move ahead." Because I guess, in the territories, throughout the years, I suspect at one point in time it was mostly Aboriginal First Nations people here, Indigenous peoples, and as time went on more people, non-Aboriginal people, came in, came from the South to provide us with programs and services, and eventually it's going to flip where it's going to be more non-Indigenous or non-Aboriginal people here. So we have to make sure that the Indigenous groups are

involved in this, and, you know, we've got the Constitution to think about. We've got the Indian Act. We have land claim agreements. We have self-government agreements. I think all of that has a bearing on what this is. We have to start somewhere, and, just like everything else, like the Constitution and the act and all that, there is case law related to all that. I suspect, at one point, when this is implemented, when we implement this, we're going to see some case law with that, as well. There are going to be challenges. You know, some of it might be straightforward; other parts, some Indigenous groups are going to use that to their benefit, but we have to do something, just like everything else out there. Something was done at one point, and this is just something else to strengthen Indigenous rights in Canada. It's up to us. It's part of our priorities. It's part of the mandate. We have to take the initiative and go out there and meet with the First Nations and the Indigenous groups, and establish a plan of action so we can do something with it, sooner than later. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Even if this wasn't in our priorities, the land claims and self-government agreements, I would be pushing this anyway. I believe it's a win-win situation. We've had Members talk about no economy means no social programs. The Indigenous governments, and I will use IRC as an example, who did settle, I look at where their nation is going. The economy is growing. More people who get jobs means fewer people on the GNWT burden, so we have fewer people on income support, fewer people in public housing, so it's a win-win. I've been putting that forward to every Indigenous government. This is not about us giving something up. This is about us working together, and, if we look at it as a win-win, then we're coming in with the right attitude. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions to this item? Are there any further questions on "Implement UNDRIP, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People"? Seeing none, committee, we will move on to page 10, "Increase regional decision-making authority." Questions? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Chair, I just want to make sure that I just wanted to say that this is an excellent priority. I think, when the decision-making was taken away from regions and communities, our people in the communities and regions do not want to come to headquarters for decisions. They would like to have those decisions made at their level. I think that's an excellent move, and, on behalf of all

of us here, when we made this priority, I want to thank everybody in the room for that. Thank you so much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you. I'll take that as a comment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Thebacha, did you have anything else? Okay, so I'll move on to the Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. During my time here with the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, I've had the opportunity to get to know a lot of the Members who sit around this room, and, although I grew up in the North and felt I had a very good understanding of everything that happened in the North, I've learned that I learn something new every day from my colleagues here. So my question would be: how does the GNWT intend to work with people from the regions to decide what powers need to be devolved to the regions and how they're going to do that in a meaningful way? Thank you.

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

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the expectation is to begin with an inventory of where decision-making rests within our organization now, identify opportunities where it might be better placed in the regions and in communities, and have discussions with regional staff and community staff to verify some of that. We might learn through those discussions there are things that we've missed, so it's very much expected to be an ongoing conversation that starts with that departmental review of what the authorities look like now and leads to implementation of more authority in the communities through that type of engagement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see here that there is a spot for training provided to make sure that communities are well prepared to take on the decision-making authorities. Will there be ongoing check-ins and ongoing support to make sure that we can keep that decision-making authority within the communities and empower them to continue on that road? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Chair -- Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** You can call me Madam Chair.

---Laughter

Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely, and, as to training, as well, training is only as good as the people who receive the training, so it shouldn't be something that is done one time and just left. It should be something that is ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will move on to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. It sounds like, earlier, you got another promotion there. I really like this mandate item, as well. I really got a good sense of it when we sat around our roundtable in October with all the regions. That was so powerful, just hearing them. What really surprised me was they were telling us that they had never met with us in that forum before. It blew me away. I think that needs to happen more, that collaboration. We need to work with each other. For too long, I think there was that division between the GNWT and the regions. I feel like the regions felt ignored. We are starting to bridge that now. That makes me very happy, and I think this is a good direction to go in. My question for the Premier is: I am looking here at the timeline summer 2021. It says, "How we will demonstrate progress," and there is a training program that will be developed. Can she just expand a little bit on what this training program is going to be like and just give us some high-level content? What is going to be in that training program?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The training right now doesn't have a blueprint. It will depend on the first item within it that talks about that we will be looking at where decision-making can do. Then we will be having to assess what training is needed. It is a bit early today to say what training will look like when we don't know what we are dealing with at this point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response, Madam Premier. With this departmental review, it says the winter of 2021. What steps are we going to expect to get this work done over the summer? What kind of work are we going to do between now and this timeline? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was a little bit confused on what

timeline. It is actually this winter. We are already starting to get the departments to do the review. I am not sure if that was the answer to your question or if there was more you wanted. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. You are good? All right. I will move on to the Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just be brief here on this. In the regions, we do have some regional authority there right now. Some of it is good, but the problem is that it depends on who the person is who has that authority. A lot of times, it lacks fairness. We see that. I see it in my community, and I suspect others see it in their communities, as well. I think that, when we look at devolving some of this, we should come up with something and put something in place so that we can monitor that. One way to monitor is that people come to us as MLAs and complain, but there has got to be something, some training and some ownership, by the people making decisions. There has got to be a process that can be followed and that just provides fairness, is the big thing. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I agree, Madam Chair. We need to have some kind of a way of monitoring it and evaluating it. On one hand, over the last four years, I have heard, "Train our people. Give our people the skills. Put them in our jobs." On the other hand, I hear, "You can't have my people in there because they are friends with this family and that family." We do have to make sure that there is a monitoring to make sure that biases do not persist, especially in the smaller regions where that is more of a liability. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. If there are any further questions on the increased regional decision making authority? Seeing none, committee will move on to page 11, "reduce the municipal funding gap." Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The municipal funding gap, it is not exactly a fixed target because it grows with inflation. Can I just confirm whether we are going to close the gap by \$5 million, factoring in the fact that it is consistently growing so that this priority would actually cost something more than \$5 million? Is that correct?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The expectation is that we will try to

avoid grouping them in, that we will close it by \$5 million, recognizing, I know, that we might get challenged that it is not enough money, et cetera. It is the best we can do with the resources we have. Tough decisions have to be made. The territorial government, if we did an assessment of what we are short, I think we would blow ourselves out of the water. I know that the communities always cry \$40 million, and I feel it. I also feel our own debt. We have to be realistic within that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Sorry. I am not sure that clarified my question. We have thrown money at this before, but, if you don't put enough money to keep pace with the deficit as it grows, you don't actually close the gap. Can I just clarify that? If it is 40, the goal is to get it to 35, and then this will cost us more than \$5 million. Is that correct?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of the thinking for that \$5 million number was recognizing, yes, that the old numbers we have might not be current but at the same time recognizing that, if we were to do that all over again, it would lead to more work and discussion. I think the commitment we are trying to express is that, at a minimum, we improve the fiscal capacity by adding investments of at least \$5 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I suspect that I will ask this question at a later time. I think there needs to be some analysis of whether we are just providing \$5 million flat or whether we are closing the gap by \$5 million, because those are different numbers. My next question is: this is coming in the next three budgets, 2021, 2022, 2023; is the anticipation that those will all be equal amounts of the \$5 million and whether it is \$5-million-plus? Will it be equally distributed?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have agreed to work with the NWT Association of Communities on this. There is a funding formula, but, in fairness, some communities, the \$40 million gap is not across the board. Some communities, when they did the assessment, were above. Previous governments said they would be grandfathered. Is it fair that they

get another share? Those are questions that we need to work with the association of communities on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not sure throwing \$5 million at it is going to do anything if we just keep it, try to stop it from growing, because the problem is that our communities have aging infrastructure that we have to deal with and that is what we have to throw money at. I think that we are looking at trying to reduce the debt. I think what we should be doing is trying to just maintain it so it doesn't get any bigger and then try and grow the economy, try and deal with some of the other issues. And it gives us a little time to kind of regroup and really think about the issue. Just a comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. I will take that as a comment. Madam Premier, did you want to respond?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The only thing I will say is there are three pots; I am trying to remember what they are. It's capital, operating and maintenance, and wastewater? It has been a while since I've been MACA. Water and sewer. The difficulty that I have noticed over the years is that the communities keep screaming, "We need our \$40 million, \$40 million, \$40 million," but we have almost matched them for the operating and maintenance and the water and sewer. The piece that is left is the capital.

However, what they are not including in that is that MACA has done an awesome job over the years of actually getting federal money for the capital. At no time has that federal money been taken into account on this \$40 million, and that is what I struggle with as an MLA, is that they are saying, "It's still \$40 million; we need the money," but they're not adding the money from the federal government.

Sometimes you have to do this. If you look at our mandates, some of this is about them generating their own, giving them the ability so that they can generate their own. We have to do a better job of communicating that it's not only the GNWT. They need to take into account the federal money. They need to take into account their own ability to earn money. We're all in a tough spot; I think I heard that today again. The only way that we can make money is from royalties, federal government, and taxes, but many of the governments don't want to raise taxes, and neither do we, but we all have to take ownership in this, because not one of us is in a

position that we have money growing on trees. We're all in debt. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree. The communities have to do something themselves. We have been doing the same thing, the same way, for years. We have to reinvent ourselves somehow. I guess I think about Hay River, and I look at the bylaws, and I look at all that. People are looking for tiny homes, yet we say you have to build a house a certain size on the lot. Well, times are changing, and we have to make those changes. If we can do that, sometimes if you can maybe reduce the cost a bit, if that brings more people into the North, that's another \$30-some-thousand for us. Those are the types of things that we have to do, but those are conversations that this government has to have with the communities as well and let them know that, you know, there has to be some active change here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Agreed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions on the "reduce the municipal funding gap"? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my question is: reducing the funding gap by \$5 million, if the funds are going to be distributed evenly over the communities, including Yellowknife, how much does that leave for a community? How is it going to be done? Is it going to be done by demand, or is it going to be done per capita, or is it going to be done by -- I would like to know that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will try to make this short. I wanted to express that, with the funding gap that MACA currently has with the \$40 million, we try our best to not let the communities feel that breakdown. We have entered into new opportunities. One of them that I am kind of excited about is the lotteries for the Northwest Territories, that we are taking it over as a government to generate revenue for our sports and recreation, which is probably our largest expenditure, as well, too, and looking at the water and waste management for the smaller communities, and the upgrades, and land tenure, and looking at the function that they hold as a municipality.

Going forward, I would really like to emphasize the property taxation, as well, too, and really putting out a lot of emphasis on it, so that communities would come to more of a clear understanding, to look at generating revenue at a local level, but I really want to stress that 87 percent of the funding that MACA receives goes out to the smaller communities. We do our best to not let the communities feel that cut, but then, actually looking at the infrastructure that is built, they do have funding that is available to them. They do come up with their own capital plan, their own budget, and they identify how that money is going to be spent at a community local level. I just wanted to make that clear, if that's good. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier, did you have anything to add?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What I would like to expand on is, we talked about \$5 million, but if you look down further, we are talking about a process to transfer lands. There is a value to lands, when we put that in. For example, when I was the -- I can't remember which Minister I was at the time, but we brought in the hotel tax so that communities could actually take that tax and actually implement that, and it's still not off the ground.

Like the Member had said, we need to work with the governments. We can give it to them, but my worry is, we're going to give them land; we're going to make legislation to make it easier; we're going to give them the \$5 million, and they're going to still say, "We're still \$35 million short." At some point, we're going to have those tough conversations that says, "This land is equal to that," and a tough conversation that says, "When you got federal government money for your capital, that is equalling off of that." Those are conversations that we have to have, because there is a value to land. There is a value to all of these things that we are doing for them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think either one of you has answered my question. I said, is it going to be by need, or is it going to be by per capita, the \$5 million distributed?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do know that there is a funding formula that is worked on with the NWT Association of Communities. We work closely with them on this. They represent all communities. All communities have a say in that organization, but I will commit to actually finding out more information for the

Member. All I know is that we work with them, they help us allocate, and they represent all communities. They allocate where the monies go to, and that is done in partnership. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** So it's not by need; it's by per capita?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Perhaps I will clarify, and I won't have to come back and give an explanation. The original, when we did the needs assessment of the deficits in the municipal governments was done by need. There was no per capita. It was, "What do you need in your community? Do you need a water treatment plan? Do you need a sewer plan? Do you need roads?" It is by need. It has always been by need. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions on the "reduce the municipal funding gap"? Seeing none, committee, we will move on to page 12, "strengthen the government's leadership authority on climate change." Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I see here that one of the actions is this Northwest Territories climate change council, and that's great, but what is our government going to do internally to make sure that ENR is the lead on this matter? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister of ENR would like to take this question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Department of ENR is proud to lead in regard to climate change, but we work closely with all of the other departments. Again, it's not just ENR, but it's the Government of the Northwest Territories trying to deal with this. We are taking the lead. We are working with the departments, but each department needs to be working together to help us deal with this climate change issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister for ENR. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I will say that, as with the last Assembly, there will be committees formed with Cabinet. One of the committees will be around climate change, and the economy, and environment. We will, all Ministers, applicable Ministers, will be sitting around that table, so it will be interdepartmental. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I haven't heard anything different from the way this was handled in the last Assembly. The Auditor General of Canada, the climate change audit that was conducted here said one of the main problems was that there was no policy, no legislation that clearly established responsibility and authority when it came to the climate change issue. I don't see anything here that addresses this issue. There's this climate change council, which is external. It will include the GNWT, presumably, but there's nothing in here about how we're going to organize ourselves internally. We had a climate change committee of Cabinet last time around, and it didn't lead to any kind of leadership. Should I be reading into this somehow that there's going to be a Cabinet-approved policy or legislative change that's going to set up the right kind of structure and authority and responsibility internally within the GNWT to make sure that we don't end up failing another audit? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Those are discussions we haven't had yet, but what I can say is that we are working with the other two territories across the North to actually look at how we address climate change. That meeting will happen in the spring, so, after that, I will have more information on where all three territories are going. At this point, I don't have the information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I commend the Premier for working with Nunavut and Yukon. We have a lot in common on the climate change issue, and that's great. That still is not going to help us get any better organized internally within our own government. The Minister said that's not something they talked about. That kind of astounds me because that was the main finding of the audit, and we haven't actually addressed it. It's in the Climate Change Strategic

Framework, and the discussion in there is that there's something that they're going to look at some options and further studies. This is a failure in our mandate, to not address that issue. I will be on the Minister and the Premier about this for the next three years, but I'm hoping that they will see the light and agree that we need to get ourselves better organized, whether it's a Cabinet-approved policy or legislation to make sure that we have the right structure and authority in place. That's all I have. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I want to reiterate that I'm not averse to making a policy on it. I think the better strategy is to work with the three territories so that we have a stronger voice. Once the three territories have decided what we're doing, it may end up being in a policy that we implement across. I'm guessing that there would have to be something that we would have to implement across. At this point, I think if the questions come to us after the spring, we would have more information on what that looks like. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions on strengthening the government's leadership and authority on climate change? Seeing none, committee, we will move on to page 13, "Ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions." Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. What specific tool, legislation, policy, is going to ensure that, when significant and important decisions are made by the government, climate change becomes a consideration? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There will be a number of things. One thing we are looking at, like I said, within our Cabinet package, we've talked about climate change being a standard that we'll look at all the time. Without disclosing too much of what goes on in Cabinet, we do have with every decision that comes on, there's kind of a risk-management description that comes with that. We can add climate change within that risk management so that every decision that comes through our Cabinet table does have that climate change focus on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Never having been in Cabinet, an FMB submission or a request for funding, whatever, are there guidelines or is there a template that determines how it's laid out and what risks are outlined and considered and discussed in the submission for funding? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With every decision that comes across Cabinet, absolutely, there is a risk-management assessment that happens. For example, two that come to my head right now are: are there any legal ramifications of this? The other one is financial. Are there any financial ramifications? Again, to add to climate change, are there any climate change impacts? That's something that would be done. Every department that puts forward a proposal to Cabinet has to fill those out. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't think the Premier understood my question, so I will try again. Is there a policy? Are there guidelines? What is the document or the authority that says that legal considerations need to be discussed in an FMB submission? Is it possible that that could be amended in some way to include climate change? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought that's what I said, but I'll let Martin Goldney expand on that for me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there are submission guidelines for both Financial Management Board decisions that are being requested and Cabinet decisions that include some of the factors that the Premier has described, and, yes, it is the expectation that climate change can be added to those factors so that departments are required to consider them when making those submissions and that they'll be assessed and reviewed and advice provided to both the Financial Management Board and Cabinet as they're considering those decisions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is one tool that will be different. We will still have our environmental economy Cabinet committee, but I took heed that that was nothing changed from the other Assembly. We are looking for change, so we will add the climate change into our decision-making at the Cabinet table. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. How do we demonstrate to the public and how can Cabinet convince Regular MLAs that climate change does become a consideration in important decisions or FMB decisions? How is that going to be documented and reported in any way? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Cabinet decisions are confidential. We won't be reporting on Cabinet decisions. That is something that has remained in Cabinet. However, we are doing the yearly reporting on our climate change action. You will see some of that information in there. You can also challenge us on the floor. You can ask us. Every department, even when I was housing, the whole move was moving into getting more energy efficient. I think our energy rating was 80, if I remember right, and it was getting better, triple-pane windows and solar panels. So that's already happening. It's just a matter of solidifying it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I am challenging the Premier right now about how we ensure where the evidence is going to be, and how the public is to find out about that evidence, that climate change will actually become a consideration in terms of funding new programs, services, infrastructure projects, those kind of trade-offs. I guess that I am hearing that there are some kind of guidelines that might get changed, that there might be a Cabinet committee that looks a little bit different. I am not getting a lot of comfort that this is actually going to result in evidence-based decision-making and some sort of change in the way that we actually do business here.

Maybe I need to have an offline discussion with them, and maybe I don't understand the process clear enough, but there should be either a policy or legislation that clearly sets out that climate change has to be a consideration in major government decisions, and that has to be documented. I

understand the need for Cabinet confidences and all of that, but how do we actually demonstrate to the public that climate change is something serious and that this government is actually considering it when it makes decisions? I'm just not really getting the kind of clarity, I guess, that I'd hoped for. Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't really know how much more I can push this, because I just don't detect that we're going to have in place the kind of policy, legislation, leadership that the Auditor General called on us to do to demonstrate climate leadership. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Like I said, we are working with the other territories so that we are a unified voice. There will be some action coming out of that, public announcements coming out of that. We will be doing a yearly reporting on these issues. What I would like to recommend, Madam Chair, is we are open to listening. If the Member or other Members want to come and provide suggestions, we are more than open to listening to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions on "ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions"? Seeing none, committee, we'll move on to page 15, "increase employment in small communities." Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at this priority, I notice that there is a section here for developing mentorship programs to support emerging entrepreneurs. I am wondering who is involved in this mentorship program, and does it involve northern business owners? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, I am not sure who would be on the mentorship program. We will have to get back to committee on that, but I think that we are open to have businesses on that. It would make sense. Thank you, Madam Chair. If you want to try the Minister?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** The mentorship program has not been developed yet, so they are open to any sorts of suggestions. One thing that I have found with ITI is they are definitely not a "this is the way it has to be" kind of department. They

are pretty flexible in some -- well, you can ask Kevin, but they are very flexible sometimes in their ways of doing it. When we have been discussing all of these sorts of changes that we are going to be doing, a lot of it will be end user feedback. I have had that conversation a lot with the department, so if there is a need, and clearly, if we are going to talk about business, we'd want mentors to be businesspeople. I don't see why they wouldn't be part of that program.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to watching the development of this mentorship program. I think that mentorship is a huge opportunity in the North, especially for people who do want to get into business, but I think that business ownership is far more than being very skilled at a trade. There is an element of being fiscally responsible that is very important, especially when we are supporting people through business development, through SEED money, or anything like that. I think it would be prudent that we make sure that we are setting people up to the best of their ability. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We would make sure that we cover the full spectrum, because the Member is right. You're not going to just take any business. A lot of businesses fail very quickly, but we also have other programs, business development, incorporation, et cetera, that do specialize in that, so they'll be working hand in hand. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any other questions? I will go to Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am wondering what the metric we are measuring this against is. If you actually look at the labour market forecast, we are going to lose far more than 125 jobs in the next four years in the small communities. That's just the economic reality that we are facing. When we see "increase by 125," do we mean that we're actually, despite the projected loss of jobs, going to increase 125, or are we just talking about ITI going out and creating programs that then offsets the projected loss by 125? What are we pegging this against? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a small community fund, actually, that we provide to communities to start

their own jobs or skill development. I think that I have said already in this House, when I was the Minister, my difficulty was -- and I have said that vocally, and I will keep saying that -- we tend to throw out money. It's like, "Here's \$5 million; spend it," and then people would get two weeks here and two weeks there, and so I have been saying for the last year or so, when I started to realize that this wasn't a good idea, I have been talking to communities and saying, "Instead of hiring that truck driver to haul gravel into your community for two weeks, why don't you buy the truck, so that you can hire the truck driver that always has?"

We're trying to move into a more sustainable model of small communities using the money that we have, instead of just saying, "Here's the money, spend it, and make sure you give me a report on who you hired for every two weeks," because that model is not working. We're not seeing the benefits of that, other than short-term employment, and that should not be where we're looking at. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yes, thank you. This just, once again, goes back to that accountability piece. It is going to be very easy for us to, you know, create 125 new jobs if we create some programming and then claim those new jobs that emerge, but my question is, you know, is this taking into fact the labour market forecast, the needs assessment, which says we're going to be losing jobs over the next four years? Is this a net increase of 125, or is this just 125 that can be directly correlated to GNWT projects and programs? If there's not an answer to this right now, I am glad to have ITI or someone come back to committee. I just need to know: are we expecting to outpace the labour market forecast in all of the projections we have right now? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our commitment is to getting 125 jobs in small communities. This is not talking about Yellowknife or bigger regions. We can't control the market and who's going to move and come, but what I can say is that there is a lot less mobility going south, people, residents, leaving from small communities than there are from Yellowknife or larger centres. This goal is specifically for small communities. There is less migration out of small communities outside of the territories. They tend to come to Yellowknife or Inuvik. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think the Minister wants to say something.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to comment on the increase of employment in smaller communities. Coming from a smaller community, there is a limited amount of employment that is existing. Looking at this initiative, I was looking at the partnerships that could be created. Being the Minister of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and putting houses on the ground, we are looking at employment and training and creating employment for the residents in the smaller communities that way.

Also, looking at partnerships, speaking to my colleague for Minister of Lands and identifying that we do have protected area strategies that are under way as we speak now, and they do have program development where we end up entering into partnerships with the GNWT and the smaller communities. Looking at forecasted projects that are coming forward, I wanted to just comment on the Tulita bridge that is under way. We do have environmental assessments and planning going forward, and that is going to create employment in the smaller communities area for the Sahtu region. I just wanted to be clear on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Madam Premier, did you have something to add?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you. Just a quick note, Madam Chair, if you look at the second thing, it says, "support new employment in collaboration with Indigenous governments, including opportunities associated with established and candidate protected areas." With the protected areas, there's opportunity for recreation and culture; for tourism; the guardianship programs; the housing Minister talked about apprenticeship programs. There is opportunities for small communities to have sustainable jobs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. We'll go on to Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess when it comes to employment in small communities, that's something I guess I want to see. I want to see opportunities there for the people who are living there. When we look at that, it's more than just saying that we're going to create jobs. We have to look at the programs that we currently have in place and the institutions. We have the BIP. We have to use that properly. We have ITI programs, SEED, et cetera. We have the BDIC. We have

community futures. We have the NWT Metis Development Corporation, which isn't part of the government. There are federal programs. There's Education, Culture and Employment with respect to training. We have Infrastructure, which does have projects and supplies available work.

In the small communities, though, I see arts and crafts is a big thing. For years, they've been talking about a tanning facility in Fort Providence; never seen anything happen with it. We have tourism. In small communities, there may be opportunities for private housing maintainers and that type of thing. We have requirement for trades, and in Fort McPherson, we have Tent and Canvas, and whether it makes money or not, I don't know. It would be nice if it made money. It may not make money, but it provides jobs. It helps maybe with education. It gives people, I guess, some hope, and it allows them to, you know, show their kids and that that there are opportunities out there, no matter where you are.

I think, when we look at this, it's a bigger picture than just creating jobs. We have to look at everything else that we have in place, and it's housing. You know, people have to have a place to live as well. I think, when we look at this, I think that it's really important that we tie all this in together, but I don't want to be looking at it for four years either. Timelines are good. Try and get something done. It's just easy to go out there and do a few little things and get them going. I am optimistic that something is going to happen, and again, when it comes to business and employment, that's going to be my area where I want to push, and you'll hear lots from me about that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, and thank you, Member, for giving the examples. You're absolutely right. One thing that I would like to say, within our definition of how we would do it, we do talk about Makerspaces. There are a lot of artists in our smaller communities. That will help them as well.

The other thing is that a lot of times these mandates overlap. We talk about increasing childcare spaces. In that way, we're talking about our income support and housing policies that say you can't operate childcare in your house. Those will bring employment in. If we need to deal with the lack of childcare in some of these small communities, we open up the housing policies that say now you can provide licensed childcare provision in your home. Those are small community jobs that will stay there; they're sustainable. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to say that I was really pleased about the amending of the policy to the NWT Housing Corporation to allow appropriate home business opportunities with their units. I mentioned during our roundtable before we were assigned our portfolios that we have to help those single parents out there. This is a perfect one. I talked a little bit about humanizing our policies. This is it here. This made me really happy. I am glad that we are moving in that direction, and hopefully we see more of that from the department of housing and the department of health, but that's another battle.

When I look at this, I try to visualize a struggling single parent in their home. The kids are asleep, and they're on the computer, and they're trying to work out their next big thing. I look at these business opportunities for people within their units, and who knows? The next Amazon, the next Apple, the next big idea could be happening in one of those living rooms, and this is an opportunity that made me happy. That's the idealist coming out of me. This is a good start. I want to say I am very happy about that.

My question is to the Premier. I want to talk a bit about the distributions of 125 jobs. We have a breakdown of our KPI, our key performance indicators, from the fall 2020 to fall 2023, but there really isn't a breakdown by region. I know each of us in our own regions, especially for us in the small communities, you know, we could still be jobs alone in our communities, so that's something I think that should be addressed a little more. I will ask the Premier: how is do you project this is going to look by region?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is pretty conservative. Again, I realize that some people are going to be judging us in two years on the mandate to see if it's accomplished or changed, and other people are going to be judging us and trying to take us out of our seats, so I purposely have done that. I know that; that's fair.

There is no way, actually, to say that we will have ten jobs in this one and ten jobs in that one. Once we open up just the public housing alone, it might just flood. We've got people, I know, that are

making slippers. I'm going to be careful here, because I buy my wood from Behchoko, and I hide every time the wood is delivered. Once we make these legal, who knows what's going to come out? I think it would be inappropriate to actually give it a number and say this much per region. I want to see as much as possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Madam Chair, I think the Minister might have an answer. Do you have an answer? Okay, she's going to give you an answer of how many per community.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to elaborate on the question, because I went and started to look at this, kind of, like, in the same way that you've seen it, and I want to emphasize on the government and infrastructure projects that we do have throughout the Northwest Territories, where those numbers will increase, where I would like to see a lot of emphasis on the government programs that we have for small businesses to take advantage of.

I just wanted to share a short little story with you. In the Sahtu, we had this lady who went ahead and received some money from ITI, purchased a food truck. She ended up with a \$5-million contract from Imperial Oil, and right now, she is a business owner, sole business owner. Looking at projects like this throughout the Northwest Territories, trying to measure them, depends on what activity is happening within those regions, but also emphasizing on the programs that we have, the funding programs that people can actually apply for, and educating them enough to become successful and to have more successful stories like that throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister Chinna. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the responses. I just have one more quick question on this policy. I mentioned earlier about home business. This might be more a question for the Minister for ECE, but are we going to give home business better public units, some grace period to not have their rents just sky-rocket because they are making a little bit of income or have their income assistance be cut off because they are just starting off; they have a start-up business? Are we going to allow for a little bit of space for them to breathe, to get them started? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the question was about income assistance and whether or not there will be a bit of a grace period when someone starts making money. Right now, if you start making money, you get a full-time job and you make too much for income assistance, that means income assistance no longer pays your rent, they do not pay your heating, they do not pay your electricity, you might not have healthcare, and so the Member is pointing out that perhaps that's keeping people from getting and maintaining meaningful employment. Those are discussions I have had with my department. Those are discussions that I have had with the Members, and those are discussions that I am going to have to have with Cabinet, as well, because we have been doing the same thing for a while, and we see that there are improvements that could be made, so I am open to having those conversations. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of ECE. All right, so are there any further questions on "increase employment to the small communities?" Seeing none, I will call upon Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** I would like to rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. May I 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 Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and would like to report progress, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Hay River 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

#### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2019-2020

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020 be read for the third time, and, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** The Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 1 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 13, 2020, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions

8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 3-19(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 25, 2020
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories
  - Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 13, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

