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**LEGISLATIVE  
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**HANSARD**

**Thursday, February 13, 2020**

Pages 163 – 178

**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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**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**  
(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**  
(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**  
(Sahtu)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**  
(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

**Ms. Julie Green**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

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

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Hon. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*  
*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**  
(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)  
*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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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>163</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>163</b>
12-19(2) – Notice of Budget Address (Wawzonek) .....	163
13-19(2) – Three Phases and Upcoming Critical Milestones in the Transformation of Aurora College (R.J. Simpson).....	163
14-19(2) – Arctic Inspiration Prize (Chinna).....	163
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>164</b>
Education Legacy in Fort Smith (Martselos).....	164
Closing the Municipal Funding Gap (Jacobson).....	165
Oral Health Care (Semmler).....	165
Coronavirus Impacts on Tourism (Green).....	166
Thaidene Nene Status (O'Reilly).....	166
Elders' Mobility Issues and Aging in Place with Dignity (Norn) .....	167
Matrix Organizational Structures (Cleveland) .....	168
Fuel Tank Farms (Bonnetrouge).....	168
Integrated Case Management (Johnson) .....	168
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>169</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>169</b>
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>176</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>176</b>
<b>MOTIONS</b> .....	<b>176</b>
3-19(2) – Extended Adjournment of the House to February 25, 2020 (Johnson) .....	176
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS</b> .....	<b>177</b>
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b> .....	<b>177</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b> .....	<b>177</b>



## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, February 13, 2020

**Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, 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 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 12-19(2):  
NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Tuesday, February 25, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 13-19(2):  
THREE PHASES AND UPCOMING CRITICAL  
MILESTONES IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF  
AURORA COLLEGE

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has been tasked with transforming Aurora College into a polytechnic university. This work, which will span the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assemblies, is no small task, but I am here to tell you that we are well on our way. The transformation consists of over 200 projects and 2,000 individual tasks. In order to be successful, we need to make the right changes, in the right order, at the right time.

To help keep things on track, the transformation is divided into three phases. Phase 1 is focused on strengthening the foundation of the existing college and preparing for transformation by ensuring we understand the detailed steps ahead of us. This is the phase we are currently in. Much of the work has already been completed in this area, much is under way, and there are some exciting and important projects that will be completed before the year is out.

This work will ensure that the college is ready to enter phase 2, which is where the real transformational change will begin to occur. This will require wide-ranging changes to the organizational structure of the college, a return to board governance, and changes to the Aurora College Act to ensure that governance is truly at arm's length. These changes will allow us to meet and exceed the standards that the college needs to live up to in order to complete the transformation and become recognized as a polytechnic university. This final transformation will occur in phase 3.

Transparency is the key to maintaining confidence and building trust, so, in the coming weeks, I will deliver three Minister's statements describing each of the phases in detail so that we can celebrate the successes we have already had, describe the next steps, and let everyone know how college staff, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Indigenous governments, and the public will be able to contribute to the decisions that are made moving forward. We cannot do this alone, Mr. Speaker, and we are not going to try to.

To keep the public better informed, we will be launching a new interactive web page and a quarterly report to track progress and celebrate our successes. I will share these reporting tools with my colleagues and the public as they are released.

Mr. Speaker, the transformation to a polytechnic university is a critical step in the economic and social development of the territory. We are not just creating an institution; we are helping create the future of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 14-19(2):  
ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to highlight and celebrate the recipients of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Arctic Inspiration Prize, Northern Compass and The Dehcho: River Journeys. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Arctic Inspiration Prize Awards Ceremony was held in Ottawa, Ontario, on February 5<sup>th</sup>. At the ceremony, Northern Compass

received the grand prize of \$1 million, and The Dehcho: River Journeys project received \$370,000.

The Arctic Inspiration Prize recognizes and promotes the extraordinary contribution made in the gathering of Arctic knowledge in the design to celebrate and bring further awareness to organizations and their plans to implement this knowledge to real-world applications, for the benefit of the Canadian Arctic and the Arctic peoples. I had the honour of presenting to Northern Compass with their \$1-million prize in Ottawa last week, and would like to share with you an overview of their award winning program:

- Northern Compass is a skilled team of educators, students, and community members from across the North.
- The team includes representation from a program that has been supported by the GNWT over the years, the Northern Youth Abroad program.
- Northern Compass provides northern youth with tailored support and tools that will allow them to overcome the barriers that they may face when transitioning from high school to post-secondary education. They aim to:
  - "Dramatically increase achievement amongst Northerners pursuing their education and career goals after high school, enabling them to become full participants in their communities and beyond."
  - The project motivates youth to graduation from high school and for them to make informed decisions about their future. It also provides support and increased access to training and programs that allow northern youth to pursue and achieve their goals.

Thank you to their nominator, the honourable David Joanase, Minister of Education, Minister of Culture and Heritage, Minister of Languages, Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

I would like to congratulate the team leaders, Jim Snider, Karen Aglukark, Lois Philipp, Rebecca Bisson, who have put in so much time providing accessibility and the relevant resources with information on funding, housing, budgets, and other areas related to the northern students' success.

The Dehcho: River Journeys project was also a recipient of an Arctic Inspiration Award. This project did:

- Travel on the Mackenzie River, from the Deh Cho to the Delta, and bridged the past and the

present, offering a multi-media experience that explores how the past 100 years have been transformed on that river.

- Students have collaborated on two short films, one based on materials and the other based on modern-day journeys on the river with the present-day elders. The elders will describe and explain the changes that they have seen during this lifetime.
- Throughout the project, the development of the interactive and educational online experience will allow students to view the films and then use their new-found knowledge to resolve real-life environmental issues of the Mackenzie River and the watershed today.

Thank you to their nominator, Dr. Frank Tester, professor at University of British Columbia School of Social Work. Team Members include Dr. Gordon Christie, Alison de Pelham, Brian Jaffray, Terry Jaffray, Martina Norwegian, Brenda Parlee, Daniel Seguin, and Sharon Snowshoe. Thank you for your work on this project, and congratulations on your achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATION LEGACY IN FORT SMITH

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, education legacy in Fort Smith has always been a topic that has been dear to my heart. When Yellowknife was named the capital of the NWT in 1967, Fort Smith was designated the education centre of the NWT. Fort Smith's education legacy is very prominent, and we are so proud to be leading the role in this field. Many of our former leaders, including Premiers, Ministers, former and current Members of Parliament, mayors, chiefs, and others have all gone through Fort Smith to advance their education. I say this because I want to remind people of the tangible value that Fort Smith education has contributed to the development of the NWT. People tend to forget that Fort Smith has been the focal point for education for many years in this territory.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Auditor General's Report on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories, which was tabled last week. While there were a number of troubling aspects identified in that report, I am confident that the gaps identified will be addressed by the members of the district education authority, the

local education authority, and by senior management and staff in the community of Fort Smith. In order to address the education gaps in this report, proper funding must be allocated to the local and district education authorities.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight the important work that is done at the level of the district education authority and all staff at our elementary and high schools in Fort Smith. Every single person who works within these institutions contributes in some way to the development of our children, of our future citizens and leaders. Whether it's people at the janitorial level or at the superintendent level, they all play a role in our children's development, and I want to thank them for their service, including all teachers from junior kindergarten to grade 12. Thank you for introducing Aboriginal languages and cultural-based programming with best practices to enhance the education system at all levels in Fort Smith.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and appreciate the strong academic background that all the staff at Aurora College Thebacha campus hold. We have a very well-educated group of instructors who teach in all areas at our campus, and I would like to thank them for choosing Fort Smith as their preferred venue to teach. I want them to know that our community values their knowledge, and I certainly hope that the education system as a whole for the NWT will also value their knowledge.

As Aurora College transfers into a polytech university, it is vital that we recognize the strong academic background of the staff at Aurora College Thebacha campus. Our academics and staff at Aurora College must be supported and celebrated. [Microphone turned off]

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, the staff must have a say in the development of the future transformation of the polytechnic university. Their experience, hard work, and dedication to post-secondary education must be recognized.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that, going forward into this 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, my goal is to see the entire board of Aurora College be reinstated and to be at arm's length from the Government of the Northwest Territories. I want to see a northern-based polytech university with the highest of national standards be developed. Yes, the headquarters should remain in Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLOSING THE MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2014, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs conducted a municipal formula funding review. The purpose was to update community governments and funding models, to ensure fair and transparent funding. This has revealed a significant gap between the needs of municipalities and the funding that they are provided.

The Minister of the day of Municipal and Community Affairs, the honourable Alfred Moses, advised the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly that the gap was approximately \$39 million. In 2016, in the mandate, the GNWT committed to developing a strategy to close the funding gap over the next nine years. The Standing Committee of Operations expressed concern about the accumulated impact of this funding shortfall on communities on a year-by-year basis. Committee repeatedly asked for the annual shortfall, but to no avail. Committee asked for the gap to be updated annually to see what progress was being made to reduce it. Committee pushed the Minister for a strategy to close the gap.

To report the funding gap, it was quietly tabled in the last sitting day of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, making it impossible for the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly standing committee to review the department's work. I have had a chance to read the report. The findings, Mr. Speaker, are shocking. The report says, "The total annual funding deficit for community governments is approximately \$24.5 million." This takes into account the \$29 million provided annually through MACA's public infrastructure policy and \$16 million provided annually through the federal government's Gas Tax Agreement. This is a lot worse than a \$40-million deficit over the nine years, and I am encouraging my colleagues on the government operations to review this report in detail.

Mr. Speaker, community governments are the heart and soul of our communities. This work affects the lives of every resident in the Northwest Territories. The GNWT has to stop offloading the responsibility onto the community governments and recognize how it is vital that we have to be working with them and fund them properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ORAL HEALTH CARE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to discuss oral health care in the NWT, especially for communities outside the capital. In my community, we have a dental clinic that serves

not only Inuvik, but the Beaufort-Delta. That is not enough. I would like to refer to an oral health action plan released by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, ITK, in 2013. I quote from the executive summary: "The 2008-2009 Inuit oral health survey highlighted the need for urgent and comprehensive measures to overcome the unacceptably high rate of oral disease that is two to three times that of the rest of Canada."

Mr. Speaker, in the NWT, there is an Oral Health Action Plan that was created, and it is a three-year action plan from 2018 to 2021. The Minister at the time wrote in the Minister's message in that action plan: "We know that good oral health is an essential element of our overall health. We know that healthy mouths in children are crucial for adequate nutrition, growth, language development, school performance, and social well-being. Yet, dental caries is the most common chronic infectious disease of childhood and places a substantial burden on our population."

Mr. Speaker, in the same document, in the introduction of the action plan, it states that oral health is an important element of our general health. Oral health is an important element of our general health. Healthy mouths and teeth in children promote healthy growth, nutrition, speech/language development, good school performance, and social well-being. Sadly, chronic pain and tooth loss from untreated oral disease can impair a child's ability to eat, speak, sleep, and learn. In adults, oral disease has been linked to an array of chronic and systemic diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, and pneumonia.

We know all this, but yet we are still failing in providing equitable dental services to our communities. Instead of prevention, we continue to arrange medical travel for surgery for essential dental work in our children. Mr. Speaker, dental therapists used to be able to work in the communities to do this work, but, since the closing of the last dental therapist school on November 2011 in Canada, there are few left.

Mr. Speaker, we can't un-know what we know. What is this government going to do about it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CORONAVIRUS IMPACTS ON TOURISM

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tourism has been a bright light in the NWT economy, experiencing growth other sectors can only dream

of. The number of people who are visiting the NWT and the amount of money they spend here are significant. I'm going to review a few numbers from Industry, Tourism and Investment. In 2018-2019, we had just over 120,000 visitors come to the NWT, and together they spent \$210 million. Of that total, we had about 42,000 aurora visitors, and together they spent \$67.7 million dollars. These are large numbers. Almost 16 percent of visitors last year came from China, a 19-fold increase in six years. Some aurora tour operators reported having their best December ever and looked forward to record visitor numbers in the new year. Then the coronavirus struck, and the Chinese government shut down group travel to reduce the spread of the virus.

Where does that leave the aurora tourism industry in the NWT? Media reported at the end of January that the company Aurora Holiday had more than 200 cancellations for hotels, rental cars, and day tours following the Chinese government's decision. These cancellations represented half of their bookings through the busy winter period. That is just one of many licensed tourism operators. Those numbers are for direct spending. There will be impacts for indirect and induced spending, as well. It seems likely that small businesses, especially those based in Yellowknife, will take a hit on the \$67.7 million spent by aurora visitors last year.

As someone who lives and works in Yellowknife, I notice a difference. There are fewer groups touring here at the Legislative Assembly. There are fewer groups walking in downtown and walking down the hill to Old Town. It is clear to me that, once the coronavirus crisis is resolved, NWT tourism will have some rebuilding to do, re-establishing markets, reassuring Chinese visitors they are welcome, and assisting tourism small businesses to rebuild. I want to see this as a priority investment by government, given the importance of tourism to our economy. I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON THAIDENE NENE STATUS

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. A number of agreements were signed to formally establish Thaidene Nene as a national park and protected area under GNWT legislation in August 2019. This was a monumental achievement in terms of building a conservation economy, and was very important for the community of Lutselk'e that spent decades negotiating this area. While our government attended the signing ceremony, there



was no news release, and not even a Minister's statement. Quite frankly, the GNWT had to be dragged into the arrangement and resisted it at almost every step. This, despite the visitor, operations, and heritage centre that will be built in Lutselk'e, creating initial direct employment estimated at 18 positions, including eight full-time jobs. Canada will invest \$40 million toward infrastructure in the national park reserve operations in the first 12 years, and 3.4 million annually for operations thereafter. Canada has even committed to invest \$7.9 million toward the establishment and operation of the GNWT portion of Thaidene Nene. The GNWT has only committed to spend \$290,000 annually for the management of its portion of the protected area.

I was on the Environment and Natural Resources website recently and could not find an actual public registry as required under the Protected Areas Act. That's where I had hoped to find up-to-date information on the progress toward full establishment and implementation of Thaidene Nene. There is no public registry, and the information about Thaidene Nene does not appear to have been updated since last summer. I could find a regulation setting out the boundaries of the GNWT protected area that is a portion of Thaidene Nene, but no regulation for an establishment agreement and nothing under the Wildlife Act to establish the conservation area that is going to be part of Thaidene Nene, as well.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources about this government's commitments to building a conservation economy and fulfilling its obligations with regard to Thaidene Nene and the Protected Areas Act as a whole. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDERS' MOBILITY ISSUES AND AGING IN PLACE WITH DIGNITY

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to talk about elders aging in place with dignity. I know I sound a little bit like a broken record, but I'm going to keep on with this. I spoke about this issue last night and last week, but I want to take this opportunity to touch on the issue of mobility problems not being addressed for elders.

One of our 22 mandate items is to enable seniors to age in place with dignity. The treatment I have seen from this government toward our elders is unacceptable and undignified. I sincerely hope that all of our government departments start treating elders to a much higher standard than how they

have been treated so far. I know we, as a government, can do better for them. When I say that, I am not just addressing any one department. I am saying it to the government as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I was raised to hold our elders to a very high standard. They are our knowledge keepers, our trusted advisors, so they deserve utmost respect and top-quality treatment for whatever their needs may be.

My intent with this Member's statement is not to put any blame onto any particular department, but rather try and point out and root out the pervading, systemic treatment that elders have been receiving over the years by our government. I am sensing a strong sentiment from our department that this is the way things have always been done, so therefore, we must accept it and move on. There has got to be a better way of doing business.

However, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that I refuse to simply accept in the long term, so just consider this image for one moment. I have an elder who is wheelchair-bound, and each and every time he or she wants to enter or exit their own home, they have to have assistance to move up and down their stairs, just to get some fresh air or to go visit, and they have to be picked up and physically carried in a wheelchair.

I wanted you to think about that for a moment. Just think of if your family member or friend had experienced that day in and day out. In my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker, this is highly undignified, and it should be remedied immediately.

Mr. Speaker, in cases like these, we should be prioritizing the immediate needs of our constituents so they, at least, can enter and exit their home without any burden or worry. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on, if we truly support independent living for all elders, then let's show it. Let's start making our elders' homes more accessible for things like wheelchairs, for the walk to the bathroom, to make it more friendly to use and easy to use. If there is bureaucratic red tape for preventing this from moving forward, well, it's time to start cutting some of the red tape and allow the elders to receive the best service available to meet their needs. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MATRIX ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, the GNWT employs over 5,000 capable, hard-working Northerners who provide programs and services to over 44,000 residents. I believe the majority of public servants are passionate about the work they do and want to be as effective as possible. It's therefore concerning to hear of frustrations that come from working within the GNWT's siloed structure. The constraints of these silos are preventing the public service from making the most of what it has to offer.

Matrix organizations are workplaces that cut through silos, incorporating diverse talents and perspectives to solve tough problems. They are created when urgent problems require all hands on deck. Matrix organizations work both laterally and up and down; people are empowered to make things happen. Functional expertise and administrative accountability are serving the same ends. Leadership arises from all levels, and everyone has a role in success.

Changing our workplace culture to empower creative teams is hard, but the GNWT is making gains that we need to celebrate. The integrated case management team is a proactive matrix team run by Justice; Health and Social Services; housing; and Education, Culture and Employment. The program provides wraparound support to some of our most vulnerable. It acknowledges that not all people start from the same place and not every person requires the same supports. Over the course of its pilot term, integrated case management received 426 program referrals. This program employs pathfinders who connect Yellowknifers to a network of supports, building their capacity and confidence to access government.

Cross-functional, integrated teams can be more flexible, more creative, and more effective. Most importantly, they learn from both their successes and their failures, but they need room to fail fast and move forward faster. Our social and environmental problems are unique. Cookie-cutter solutions won't work. Much of what we need to do has little precedent. Integrated matrix teams need to be mandated and given the latitude to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, there are challenges associated with moving from a siloed to a matrix style of organization. Ministerial authority, as established in legislation, can be rigid, and legislation and policies will be required to support a matrix structure. I am pleased to see the progress the GNWT has been making. The deputy ministerial committee structure sets up cross-departmental working groups to ensure that GNWT departments are not working at

cross-purposes with one another. In the last Assembly, the ATIPP Act was amended to permit the collection and disclosure of information to deliver common or integrated programs and services. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am not clear on is whether these initiatives are happy accidents, or whether they represent a commitment by the GNWT to move to a more matrix-style organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FUEL TANK FARMS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is on fuel tank farms. I believe they sprouted up in the early years, possibly in the 60's. There were private tank farms, and there were government-run tank farms. I believe, at that time, there were possibly no rigid regulations as to the set-up and the installation of the tank farms, nor ongoing inspections.

I understand that no tank farms, whether they be GNWT or private, are grandfathered from the early years. In most instances, there are known fuel spills or leakages from the tanks, and those are damaging the environment in those areas, especially the private ones that are run by private businesses, because I understand that we don't have inspectors going onto those lands. I believe we are regulating tank farm installations. At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to build on the statement given by my colleague from Kam Lake. There have been many successes of the integrated case management approach, many individual successes, but, ultimately, those pathfinders are trying to run a person-centred method of helping people in a system-centred institution.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the writing is on the wall with the upcoming evaluation of the integrated case management project. What will happen is that unit will have discovered many barriers to systemic

change; there will have been many successes for people with complex needs; yet, they are not empowered to bring about the regulatory, the policy, and the legislative changes required. That is our job in this House.

I don't believe that these solutions are that complex. They require front-line workers making a "yes" the default answer. They require our front-line workers having flexibility to interpret policies that, when a person with complex needs is in front of them, they can allow the policy to work for that person. They require our departments to talk to each other and create case files for individuals with complex needs. They require our departments to email each other on the front lines.

Right now, when we want to make policy changes, we have to go up, all the way up the chain and then all the back down, and what actually should have been an easy policy shift that happened when the complex-needs individual was in front of them takes months. Mr. Speaker, we need to make housing and income support talk to each other better. We need to extend the time period that a person can be on income assistance so that they're not struggling with monthly reporting and fear of eviction and complex health needs all at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our integrated case management unit has discovered many of the systemic problems in this GNWT. I believe that they have the solutions. The question now is: are they going to be empowered to bring about the systemic change and break down the silos in our government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice on integrated case management.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if he's here right now, but, earlier in our session, my constituent and well-known photographer Pat Kane was in the gallery. I would like to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 69-19(2): CLOSING THE MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The report that the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly did, I'm wondering if the Minister read the report. As the former Minister says, the MACA Minister, "I want to acknowledge that we are unable to definitively answer when and how the funding gap will be closed," in regard to the local community governments because of shortfalls there and people and communities are struggling. Does the Minister have any comments to this, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that you can feel the funding gap very strongly at the community levels. Coming from a smaller community, I realize that, a lot of the government funding that we provide at that community level, you can feel the cutbacks. It's drastic.

Going forward, we are looking at solutions to try to work within our department to access federal funding. I don't want to elaborate on it too much, because we are in discussions about this and how we are going to be working to fulfill this, and we do have our budgets and our mandates that are just barely new. Discussions are happening within the department, and I want to follow up with the Member by email or I'll be speaking to him, because it's a very sensitive topic, and I just want to make sure that, once our department has reviewed what we have, I am displaying it for the whole of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** MACA's own business plan has the acknowledgement that, "If the department remains unable to provide adequate core funding to community governments, the consequences could include the inability of community government to adequately deliver core services and maintain capital assets."

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Can I have the Member repeat his question?

**MR. JACOBSON:** MACA's own business plan has acknowledged that, "If the department remains unable to provide adequate core funding to community governments, the consequences could include the inability of community government to adequately deliver core services and maintain capital assets." Is this government prepared to take the risk in having a tainted water scandal or

catastrophic event result in chronic municipal underfunding of the community governments?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** While new funding is important, "reducing the municipal funding gap," this mandate item, is about more than just new funding. MACA is also looking at actions that can be taken to mitigate expenditures or provide additional opportunity for own-source revenue.

For an example, the department intends to work with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to support implementation of the NWT Waste Management Strategy. This strategy includes actions to support training and develop support to waste site operators, identifying funding to remove bulking hazardous waste from landfill sites, in order to extend the lifespan of the existing solid waste sites and working with the regional land and water boards to support tools which will assist community governments in managing their solid waste site in accordance with their water licence. The activities should improve on local waste management practices, but allow the government to support some of the cost to contribute to the community government.

Furthermore, MACA is working with the Department of Lands to develop and implement a process for the transfer of vacant Commissioner's lands to the community governments, which will take on authority and responsibility for land administration and provide potential own-source revenue for the sale of some land. The process will include such things as developing and implementing land administration training through MACA's School of Community Government to give community governments skills in land administration.

I want the Member to know that I am very mindful of the funding gap that does exist and the effect that is felt in the smaller communities, but I also want the Member to be mindful that the departments are funded, and they do have to come up with their own capital plan and their budget of how they are going to be spending their money going forward. MACA is very open to what projects they're going to foresee, and we are there to support them through the process. We will be working very closely with the community governments.

**MR. JACOBSON:** That's a lot of good news for a question I did not ask, but I'm thankful to the Minister. Thank you so much; that's good news for me. Core funding, Mr. Speaker; that's what I was talking about. It's not the new funding. Our community governments are struggling, because we're getting less and less. It's not so much less and less; it's the cost of doing business in the community, right? Like, I sat on council for three years. We struggle, struggle, struggle. We stretch everything, Mr. Speaker.

Core funding. Has the department presented its findings to the NWT Association of Communities? If not, when does it plan to do so to work with our community association to try to bring that funding gap closed so that we could properly allocate or properly fund our local community governments who provide services to the whole Northwest Territories?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** My response to the Member was to give him some insight on what MACA is actually potentially forecasting in order to come up and work with that municipal gap that we do have. We are trying to work with the community to look at other solutions of how they can collect revenue at the municipal level. We are very mindful of working with the solid-waste sites, the water stations, and making sure that we do have the quality of service and the safety of each of the communities.

In the communities, they are entitled to be working and going towards accessing additional federal funding. Some of the communities in the Northwest Territories have accessed the federal funding and have been able to pursue projects in regard to climate change and in regard to transportation, as well, with the help and the support of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake. Okay, final supplementary. Make it short, Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has a new mandate purpose, to provide communities with opportunities in their additional revenue to offset the cost of delivering their core programs. How realistic is the GNWT to do that, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** As the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I would not like to see the offset of forecasting of programs. I want to find solutions in the community and with the federal government in how we can work to not have any financial breaks for the communities. Also, going forward, I would really like to express and really emphasize to the Member that we are working as a department and wanting to find solutions on how we can work with that gap, but also I really want the Member to be mindful that safety is number one. I'm looking at water and sewer to make sure that, in our communities, we do not have those issues going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 70-19(2):  
THAIDENE NENE STATUS

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, responsible for protected areas, including Thaidene Nene. The Protected Areas Act was brought into force on June 20, 2019, over seven months ago, and there is still no public registry as required under this legislation. Can the Minister explain why there is no public registry and when one will finally be established? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The protected area registry has been available on the ENR website since June 20, 2019, as the Member said. It includes all the material currently required under the Protected Areas Act. As the management boards are established for the new Indigenous and territorial protected areas, additional information will be posted on the registry.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that, and I would suggest that he actually look at the so-called public registry. The act itself requires about 18 different kinds of information to be posted. The establishment agreements for Thaidene Nene are not found there. A better model is to look at the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board or the review board's public registries. I am happy to talk to the Minister or the staff about this, but that is not a public registry, and I do not think it even meets the basic minimum requirements of the legislation. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I want to go on to my question.

While for Thaidene Nene there are the regulations set out to establish the boundaries, there is no regulation that sets out an establishment agreement or management in any way. Can the Minister tell us if there is an establishment agreement and when it will be set out in regulation?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I am more than willing to meet with the Member and look at this, because we are trying to do what is best for all of the residents of the Northwest Territories. On his question: the Thaidene Nene territorial protected area was established in 2019 through regulations under the Protected Areas Act. There was not enough time during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly to complete all of the regulations. Work is under way on drafting complete regulations and is expected to be completed by 2021, as agreed in the establishment agreements.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I am not sure what agreements were signed in August of last year to establish this, but, presumably, one of them should be at least posted to our public registry. I want to move on.

Part of Thaidene Nene is an area to be set aside and established as a wildlife conservation area under the Wildlife Act. Can the Minister tell us whether the wildlife conservation area will include a permanent surface and subsurface land withdrawal, and when will the area be established by regulation?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The surface and subsurface rights for Thaidene Nene wildlife conservation area were withdrawn on April 1, 2019. Thaidene Nene wildlife conservation area lands withdrawal is not intended to be permanent and could be removed when there is an approved land use plan, when the land claims are settled. The GNWT aims to establish the Thaidene Nene wildlife conservation area under the Wildlife Act in regulations by February 2021.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President, and I want to thank the Minister for that. I think there might be a little bit of a misunderstanding, here. My understanding is that the wildlife conservation area is going to be permanently protected and that the surface/subsurface is not going to be open for exploration, so I will be very curious to follow this along, because I don't think that's what the Minister said. However, earlier today, I said that the only public commitment of GNWT funding toward Thaidene Nene seems to be an annual appropriation of \$290,000. The federal government has even committed to fund some of our costs. Can the Minister tell us: what specific capital and operations funding has our government committed toward Thaidene Nene moving forward in the future?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** To the previous question, I'll be willing to sit down with the Minister and the department to look at the thing, there. To answer his question, Environment and Climate Change Canada natural funding has provided \$5.8 million over three years for the Thaidene Nene territorial protected areas. In addition, Parks Canada is providing \$1 million in funding over the same three-year period. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committing \$8.12 million of in-kind funding to the three protected areas identified under the nature fund. This in-kind funding is made up of operation, maintenance, and salaries. The GNWT is exploring operations to ensure stable funding beyond 2023 for the territorial protected areas, including an endowment fund and other natural base funding sources.

When I said "the thing," I apologize; "the protected areas," so I would be more than willing to sit down with the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 71-19(2):  
ORAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are going to be for the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to the Oral Health Action Plan that I mentioned in my Member's statement. In the action plan, I see a lot of it is generated around changing community health nurse standards, community health nurse guidelines, pre-natal, post-natal. What I want to ask the Minister is: knowing we have shortage, and I know we have some really excellent community health nurses, but a lot of times, with the shortage, we don't have community health nurses; we have a lot of emergency room nurses going into the health centres. So, with all these changes that are in here, how do we expect these nurses to make sure that they are providing this oral healthcare, when that is not their background? Thank you.

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member brings up a good point. I mean, it's very important, and I just want the Members to know that the dental services are not an insured service and are provided privately by dentists. Non-Insured Health Benefits, or NIHB, provides funding to bring dental services to smaller communities where there are no dental clinics. The Member is talking about the NWT Oral Health Action Plan and some of the results as a part of the action plan, and I can look into what the Member is asking. I don't know at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

**MS. SEMMLER:** I understand who provides care, and I understand that dental service is not an insured service, but, like I said in my Member's statement, it affects so many insured services. We do provide health promotion and, according to the action plan, a lot of that is health promotion, and our front-line nurses do provide a lot of that. In the action plan, there is "new oral health positions using a phased-in approach," in the first year, 2018-2019; second year, 2019-2020; and a third year, 2020-2021. Where are those positions? Have those positions been created, and where are they so far?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I don't know the exact details. However, I do know that we added one registered dental hygienist in Norman Wells, and we are currently investing \$974,000 in upgrading dental equipment across the territory. Otherwise, I don't know exactly where these positions are.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Referring back again to the action plan, it also says that it's going to establish a chief

oral health officer role. Like in all the reports, we know that this is such a crisis in all Inuit, First Nations, Metis, in the territories. It's a crisis. Mr. Speaker, you're coming from a small town; you know the services are lacking. Is there a job description, and are we currently recruiting for a chief oral health officer role?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Again, I don't know at this time, but it's something I will look into and get back to the Member.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** One of the things that I would really like to know is: how does the Minister see the health centres providing oral healthcare as the nurses -- because it is. It's in here. Although they're not dentists, they are supposed to do the primary stuff, but on top of everything else that they do. I just want to know: how does she expect them to get everything that they have to do in their day on top of all of this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Very difficult questions. Again, I am not sure at this time. However, we are rolling out and expanding our prevention services and updating dental equipment in the dental rooms, both in the schools and in the health centres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 72-19(2):  
FUEL TANK FARMS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just needed to make a correction to my Member's statement that my questions will be directed to the Minister of ENR. I just want to use my community as a brief example, here. We are right on the banks of the Mackenzie River, and we have many gas bars and tank farms along the river system in close proximity to the river. Of course, we have regulations for protection of the water, since water is life. My question to the Minister is: are there any regulations for fuel tank farms? Mahsi.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Short answer: yes, there are regulations. Over a certain size, the tank has to be registered with Environment and Climate Change Canada and, if it's under that, there are regulations with the Department of ENR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Thank you for that answer. Are there any requirements and any regulations for yearly inspections on fuel tank farms?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** There are regulations. Again, it's up to the owners to make sure that they follow it. If it is part of our infrastructure, we follow regulations that are out there with the Government of Canada and with ENR. There are regulations, and they are available through our wildlife officers, our officers in the community, which you can access.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** It's odd that we are not regulating private businesses with their tank farms, because he has just stated that they only regulate the government-owned ones. If we're not regulating the private tank farms that are in close proximity to the river, to the waterways, I don't know, why are we even here? We're the government. We have to set these regulations, even for private operators. I am wondering if the Minister can advise when we may see updated regulations to all tank farms, whether they're private or government-owned?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I guess I should make it clear. Whether it's government or private industry, we do have regulations, and we need to follow them. My understanding is that the federal storage tank regulations were developed in 2012, and we follow those moving forward. We do have regulations. We do inspect them, but, if people have concerns, they need to reach out to our inspectors so that we can check on these things.

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

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that answer, there. Still, I don't see any commitments or any actions as to inspections of any of the tank farms. I don't hear that in these answers; it's just, "Whenever somebody says something." We should have regulations in place that provide these services by the GNWT on a regular yearly basis, and it should be spelled out in any regulations before they do any further installations. I would like to ask the Minister: when can we see actual inspections of all tank farms in the very, very near future? Mahsi.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I am not going to make a commitment to say that we're going to do inspections, because that is part of the job that we do. Right now, what we have done is we check if there are leaks, if it's installed properly; we follow the federal regulations. Our staff is out there. Again, the important thing is, I heard the Member say in his Member's statement that there are potential sites out there that are a problem. We just need to be told of that so that we can work on those things, so that we can identify them. Again, it's about working together. Even if it's on private land, if there is a potential spill or a situation, please reach out to us so that we can do the inspection. People can phone. There's a 1-800 number. There's a spill line.

Reach out to us -- it's anonymous -- and we can work on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 73-19(2):  
INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I spoke about integrated case management. My question is for the Minister of Justice. I understand that there is a program evaluation of the integrated case management pilot project. When will that be completed, Mr. Speaker?

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been already an initial program review that was conducted in 2017. I believe that should already be available. More recently, there has been a second report that has been done. It is a social return on investment analysis. This has been completed. I think the final touches are being put on the report right now. I am hopeful to have it to the integrated case management partner departments by the end of this month, and out to the public and to the House thereafter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I look forward to receiving that report. One of my concerns is that, during the 2017 evaluation, the integrated case management unit raised the issue that they have had many person-centered successes, but they have not had successes with the other half of the program, which is to change larger system services. In this report that the Minister of Justice has referred to, will there be recommendations for changes to legislation and policy in all of the departments that the integrated case management works with?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** In the more recent report, the one that we are just waiting for now, we have specifically asked the research contractors to provide recommendations that would help remove the barriers to improve person-centered services for everyone; not only those accessing the programs specifically, but for everyone accessing these services more generally. With respect to taking those recommendations and considering whether that will translate to policy or legislative change, I expect that to be a process that will take more time and will involve all of Cabinet, and for certain will involve all the Ministers involved with ICM.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I look forward to seeing those recommendations. Hopefully, we can get some of the knowledge that the integrated case

management has gained to actually gain traction in the larger systemic changes. My understanding of this project is that it dates back to about 2014 and it ran to the 2020 program evaluation as a pilot project. Then we ran it again as a pilot project, which is just coming to an end. Can the Minister provide what the future of the integrated case management pilot project is? Is it going to become a program? Where are we with that?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The program is ongoing right now. The program as it is, as it is constituted right now, runs to the end of this fiscal year. I am sure the Member is aware we are about to go into a process of considering budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. Integrated case management will be considered as part of that process, along with everything else.

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

QUESTION 74-19(2):  
MATRIX-STYLE ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRUCTURES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions about matrix organizations are for the Honourable Premier. My first question is: has Cabinet made a deliberate decision to move toward a matrix-style organization structure for the GNWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cabinet hasn't made a conscious decision that says we are going to have a matrix-style of organization structure as such. We have discussed the issues of the integrated service delivery. One of the guiding principles that we actually tabled in the House here on December 10, 2019, says that we will evaluate, develop, and deliver programs and services using an integrated, client-focused, and solution-focused approach. People should not have to go to six different agencies, different departments, to actually get services. It is not okay. Sometimes the stories that people have to share are horrible, and it is not okay to have to keep bringing them up all the time. We recognize that.

I don't want to take credit for what we have done. I know that, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, this was a priority, as well. I can't say about the 17<sup>th</sup>. I wasn't part of that one. In the 18<sup>th</sup>, I know that we had a number of different departments that had working groups that worked across departments. We had deputy ministers' groups that took different issues. Our own committee of Cabinet had different committees that looked at all different Ministers with an integrated approach. That is being carried

forward into this government. Again, we don't have anything that is structured, that is written down, that is organizational at this point. We are challenging our departments, and we are just forming. All Ministers will be taking part in overseeing what is going on in departments. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Would the Premier be able to speak to any planning under way right now for any other types of initiatives in the style of the integrated case management program?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As I stated earlier, at this time, we are just kind of new into the area. We do recognize the importance of working together. Again, I will use an example that was used here tonight on how departments do already work together. We had a Minister stand up and say that Municipal and Community Affairs and ENR are working together on waste management. That does show how departments are, and we recognize they are, interconnected, that you can't do things in silos. We are trying to work better toward making sure that all the aspects are covered.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I appreciate that response. Has the GNWT undertaken any type of global research or analysis to determine how other programs or services could be delivered in the collaborative style of the integrated case management, or are initiatives of this nature left to individual departments to propose and to plan and to then go out and try to set up those initiatives together?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Again, another example of how we work together, and working together on the other side. The previous questions were about integrated case management. It kind of falls in, appropriately, to this question again. When we were doing the integrated case management, there was a lot of research done on it. The previous government, again, started this. They looked at models such as the New Brunswick framework on the delivery of integrated services for children and youth, as well as models in New Zealand. There are important lessons to be learned from other jurisdictions. Best practice says you don't always keep reinventing the wheel. You look at the wheel that is there and make sure it doesn't need any repairs. That is being done.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier be willing to commit to doing a study of the GNWT to see what programs we can bring together to allow us to better serve our clients across the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As I just stated in the last question, we have done quite a bit of



research cross-jurisdictionally for our integrated service delivery. We can do research for the sake of research; we can do studies for the sake of studies and plans for the sake of plans. However, we have done this research. We have the program running. It is just been evaluated now. I would suggest, honourably, that we hold back for a minute from doing more research and see what the evaluations come up with first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 75-19(2):  
IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES TOURISM

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Aurora tourism is a major component of the NWT tourism industry, and Chinese tourists accounted for about 20 percent of all the tourists who came to the NWT last year. Last month, the Chinese government suspended group tours because of the risk of spreading the corona virus. My question is: does the Minister have any information on the impact of the coronavirus shutdown on tourism? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do know that there will be impacts as a result of the coronavirus. However, at this time, we don't have those numbers in front of us, and we don't feel like we will really have the full picture until likely around the fall of this year, when we can look at the numbers for the season and see where we are at. I would like to remind that, while we do have a lot of Chinese visitors and they do play an important role in our tourism sector, we do have people coming from other locations around the world. While this will impact our tourism sectors and we will feel the impact, we still feel we will have a robust, vibrant tourism season. Thank you.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Without data, I am not sure how the Minister can assure us that tourism will be vibrant and that there will be impacts. My specific question on this is: what kind of data is collected on where aurora tourism dollars are spent, say, by community and on what kinds of products?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Fair enough. I may be a little bit optimistic in using the word "vibrant," and I acknowledge that. I would like to hope that we will continue to see a good season. However, I do acknowledge what the Member is saying in that

there is no way I could predict that at this time. Again, I also cannot fully answer what metrics will be collected. Obviously, we will be looking at things like direct impacts to airfare, cancellations on airlines; we will be looking at asking the hotels, et cetera, to provide numbers for their types of cancellations, and such; so I assume that there will be a fairly robust data collection. I am committed to sharing that with the Member when I get that information going forward.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. I would like the Minister to go beyond assuming that there will be robust data collection and order robust data collection. Further, how can the government improve the timeliness of the reporting? Fall is a long, long time from now to assist tourism marketing and planning efforts.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Let me just clarify my point, then. While I said that I did not feel like we would have a great or a full understanding of the entire impacts until the fall, I am sure that we will be apprising the public and the Members -- we will be; I will commit to that -- prior to the fall. As we start to collect the data and we can analyze it and look, we will commit to updating the Members as we progress through that data analysis, and I will commit to it being a robust data collection. As an engineer, I love data, so I will commit to that to the Member.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's commitment on that. The point about early and diverse data collection is to assist tourism marketing and planning efforts, which are obviously essential to shoring up our industry. My final question is: what efforts will the Minister make to re-establish Chinese markets, to assure Chinese visitors they are welcome, and to assist small businesses that may be impacted by the cancellations caused by the coronavirus outbreak? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Environment and -- sorry, Industry, Tourism and Investment. Sorry.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have enough on my plate without ENR, so, yes, thank you.

---Laughter

It is my understanding that Northwest Territories Tourism, they are a destination marketing organization, they are actually at this point continuing to market to China, as not the entire country of China has been impacted by this. So it is our plan to continue with marketing toward China

and Chinese tourists. As well, we will work with the Chinese tourism counterparts to ensure that we can communicate with them that we want them to come to the Northwest Territories, that we are still committed to them as a marketplace for our tourism products, and that we will work closely with them and help to facilitate the exchange of information between the two countries. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 4-19(2): ACTION PLAN ON CORE HOUSING NEED

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. In September 2017, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation released a three-year action plan with the title "Towards Level Ground: Addressing Persistent Core Need in the Northwest Territories." This plan responded to a 2016 motion supported by Regular Members that called for a comprehensive and fully costed plan to reduce housing problems identified in the 2014 Community Survey. Can the Minister please provide a report on the actions taken during the first two years of the action plan (2017-2018 and 2018-2019), including how many households the Housing Corporation assisted and:

1. a breakdown of the type of assistance by action and/or initiative as detailed on page 11 of the action plan;
2. a breakdown of money spent on each of these actions and/or initiatives by fiscal year;
3. a projection of assistance by action or initiative as detailed on page 11 of the action plan along with a breakdown of money spent in each one for the current fiscal year; and,
4. a projection of how federal money under the National Housing Strategy will assist in meeting these measures in the current fiscal year.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 29-19(2):  
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING  
\$250,000 (APRIL 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019)

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document "Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1 to December 31, 2019)." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notice of motion. Item 16, motions. Mr. Johnson.

### Motions

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the motion that I gave notice of previously to allow us to take next week off, to allow Members to return to their constituencies.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on February 13, 2020, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, February 25, 2020;

AND FURTHER, that, any time prior to February 25, 2020, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. 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, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. I would like to move that the chair 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee 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:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The motion is in order. Do we have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 25, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Acknowledgements

9. Oral Questions
  10. Written Questions
  11. Returns to Written Questions
  12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
  13. Petitions
  14. Tabling of Documents
  15. Notices of Motion
  16. Motions
  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, Madam Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 25, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.
- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

