



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 15

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Pages 521 – 556

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 5, 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. 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 responsible for the Status of Women.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 30-19(2):
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge International Women's Day. International Women's Day is held annually on March 8th to celebrate women and girls' social, cultural, and political achievements throughout history, across nations, and to raise awareness about the work left to be done. The theme of this year's International Women's Day is Because of You.

As Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and on behalf of all of Cabinet, I can proudly say that we are committed to continuing to work actively, achieving gender equality throughout our society. The theme Because of You celebrates women who work at advancing gender equality in all areas of our society for women and girls. The theme also asks Canadians to honour role models in their own lives.

Here in the Northwest Territories, we have many examples of outstanding role models who have made a difference. The Honourable Nellie Cournoyea is one such role model. She served as Premier from 1991 to 1995. She was not only the first female Premier of the Northwest Territories, she was the first female Indigenous Premier elected and the second female Premier to serve in Canada's history.

Another role model is Ethel Blondin-Andrew, who continues to advocate on behalf of the Sahtu and represented the people of the Northwest Territories as the first Indigenous woman elected to the Parliament of Canada. The late Bertha Allen, who co-founded the NWT Native Women's Association,

was also a very important role model for many, as she fought tirelessly for social change and the advancement of Indigenous women and girls.

Another example of a Northern woman who stands as our role model includes Lyda Fuller, a long-time executive director of the YWCA right here in Yellowknife. Ms. Fuller is a nationally recognized advocate for women and girls. She is a strong voice in the fight against family violence, homelessness, and poverty. Another example is Leela Gilday, who is a well-known recording artist who not only incorporates but celebrates her Indigenous heritage in her music. These are just a few examples of strong women role models who we have here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, these women, along with many others, have worked hard to achieve their goals and to make a difference in their communities and in the North. Some are prominent figures and some work quietly behind the scenes. However they choose to achieve their goals, they are making a difference, and they are creating change. It is only right that we should acknowledge and celebrate the difference that they are making.

In keeping with this year's theme, I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and honour my esteemed female colleagues sitting with us in this House. Each of us, individually, when we decided to put our names forth to become a Member of this Legislative Assembly, sent a message that women can be effective leaders, that we can make a difference, and that we were willing to do the job required to make positive change. Being willing to pursue an elected position is not one decision we make lightly. There are many challenges that women face when seeking a leadership role. Role models inspire us to take on these leadership roles, and I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to those women who inspire each of us in one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, the voters in the Northwest Territories set an example for the rest of Canada when they elected nine women to the Legislative Assembly, which created the first gender-balanced Legislature in Canada's history. We should be proud of this achievement, and we should continue to work every day to achieve gender equity. We must work together to move this forward.

I invite all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in recognizing International Women's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 31-19(2):
PHASE ONE: STRENGTHENING THE
FOUNDATION OF AURORA COLLEGE AND
PLANNING FOR CHANGE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the transformation of Aurora College into a world-class polytechnic university is well under way. As the Legislative Assembly is aware, the transformation will happen in three phases. We are currently in Phase One, which is what I want to talk about today. Phase One is focused on strengthening the foundation of the existing college, ensuring we understand the detailed steps ahead of us, and determining what we, as a territory, want the polytechnic university to be.

The first step in Phase One was the development of a vision for postsecondary education. This vision was developed with direct input from the public, Indigenous governments, and postsecondary institutions operating in the Northwest Territories. The vision is that "every resident of the Northwest Territories has an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential by obtaining a post-secondary education from institutions that are student-centered, accessible, high-quality, relevant, and accountable."

To help realize this vision, five goals were developed:

- prioritize students' success;
- increase access to post-secondary education opportunities;
- remain responsive to labour demands in the Northwest Territories;
- remain responsive to local and regional needs; and
- support the growth of the knowledge economy.

The vision and goals will help guide us as we make decisions, as will the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The transformation is a collaborative effort. The joint executive leadership committee from the Aurora College and Education, Culture and

Employment is responsible for leading the transformation within Aurora College, supported by working groups made up of Aurora College employees.

Much of the work that has already been completed and is currently under way is focused on strengthening the foundations of the college.

A comprehensive policy review is being undertaken, to ensure that the college's policies and processes meet national standards. A highlight of this work is the recently developed and adopted Academic Program Review Framework, which conforms to the standards outlined in the Council of Ministers of Education's Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada. This replaced a previous program review process, which fell short in areas of quality assurance and did not ensure reviews were conducted at arm's length.

To support this type of work, as well as other aspects of the transformation, Phase One has also seen the creation of an Academic Advisory Council. This body, made up of eight highly regarded academic institutions with relevant experience, provides support and guidance on the technical aspects of transformation.

We are also re-envisioning what it means to be learning-centred, by identifying what we already do well and developing additional, innovative solutions to support students. This is being accomplished by setting service standards for all phases of a student's lifecycle, starting at the point that a student wants to consider applying to the college and continuing through the application process, the transition to college life, the time spent as a student, program completion, and transitioning out of the college and into the job market.

To further support the student experience, the college just launched a new student information system. This gives students, for the first time, the ability to apply for programs, select classes, check marks, and access their information online. This is a major milestone for the college and brings it in line with other major academic institutions across the country. On the back end, this system will also provide the college with up-to-date data that will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the college and the student experience.

Mr. Speaker, the student experience can vary greatly, depending on what you are studying and where you are studying it. In recognition of this, we will soon begin work on a regional needs assessment. The goal of this work is to understand how residents currently access adult and post-secondary education, how they would like to access it, and the barriers to access that they face. The

information gathered through the regional needs assessment will be absolutely vital in ensuring that we are designing a polytechnic university that will best serve our residents.

This year, we will also begin our capital planning study. Aurora College has some beautiful facilities, and certain campuses and learning centres could likely accommodate significant growth, but we know there are improvements that we need to make in order to offer the world-class experience students deserve. Before the end of Phase One, we will have a capital plan that will lay out the physical nature of the future polytechnic university. This work will go hand in hand with our work to determine areas of specialization. Each campus has natural advantages due to their locations and the facilities that currently exist. We want to build on those advantages and ensure that, as we move forward, we are strengthening each campus and bolstering our community learning centres.

Mr. Speaker, the transformation is a monumental undertaking. That will soon come into clear view when we release our implementation plan, which outlines the steps and timelines of the transformation over the next six years. To help keep us on track, ground decision-making, and guide the direction of the college as it continues through the transformation process, we will be releasing a three-year strategic plan for Aurora College later this year.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before, we cannot do this alone, and we are not going to try to. Members of the public, Indigenous governments, industry, and Members of this House will all have opportunities to contribute to the transformation. Mr. Speaker, Phase One, Strengthening the Foundation and Planning for Change is planned to be completed by the end of fall 2021, at which point we move into Phase Two, Transformational Change. In Phase Two, we will start making the wide-ranging changes to the structure of the college that will bring us closer to our ultimate goal. I will speak more about Phase Two in the coming weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Deputy Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 32-19(2):
PREMIER LATE TO THE HOUSE

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Caroline Cochrane will be late arriving in the House today, to participate in the Council of the Federation's conference call. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to celebrate International Women's Day, which is this Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago, Members of the 18th Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to make their best efforts to increase the representation of women in this House. We set modest goals of increasing representation first to 20 percent and then to 30 percent by the 2027 election. It's fair to say that none of us expected that we would get almost 50 percent in one election cycle, but we did. In this House today, we have a highly qualified, hard-working, collaborative, and diverse group of women serving their communities and the people of the Northwest Territories.

Women have had equal rights for decades, but parity in political and public life has been a hard goal to achieve all around the world. Research has shown that, when representation of minority members reaches 30 percent, the group is able to influence decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, it's early days in this Assembly and difficult to say how the nine of us are going to influence policy and legislation in our term, but our mandate reveals that we are poised to make a difference. Having a critical mass of women in this House has helped shape our priorities, priorities that clearly differ from the last Assembly. For example, some priorities refer directly to relationships that will empower other orders of government, such as the implementation of UNDRIP and focusing on closing the municipal funding gap. Some priorities come directly from the experience of women as the primary caregivers in their families and communities, such as retaining healthcare professionals, catching up student achievement rates to the rest of Canada, and advancing universal childcare and affordable housing. That is not to say our male colleagues do not support these priorities, but the focus is more inclusive of women's ways of working, needs, and views.

Mr. Speaker, I am often asked how we are going to retain the high level of women's representation. My answer is that women here are going to prove they are capable and effective leaders. We are going to get the work done. Women of all ages and stages are going to be inspired by our example and see their potential.

This parity of women's representation is not an aberration. We are going to make it the norm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COMMERCIAL
FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to speak about, yes, fishing. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment developed the NWT Commercial Fishing Strategy during the life of the last Assembly. Since its development, many people and organizations have come forward and advised that they were not adequately consulted during the creation of the initiative. In fact, some pointed to location of the building, unnecessary size, and functionality of the proposed fish plant as they fear the current viability of the business is not there. Some were quite astounded to see the bids received came in at almost twice the amount the GNWT had in its budget.

The business case as conceived by ITI focused on maximum production, beyond what fishers are capable of producing now or perhaps may ever produce. ITI's plans include inviting seasonal fishers from Alberta to maximize production. I have not seen how it rightly commits to investment in our own NWT residents. We need to create jobs here in the North and, more specifically, for the people of the North. We can accomplish this while systematically increasing production through building skilled NWT fishers in places around the lake.

Mr. Speaker, the First Nations and Metis people, who have had a historical presence in the fishery over the years, were not properly consulted to participate in the development of the strategy. Why did this happen? Because our bureaucracy determined that First Nations and Metis do not have a Section 35 right of the commercial fishery, thus consultation was not required. We are talking about an industry that is slowly dying. We are talking about an industry that barely generates a million dollars a year. We are talking about an industry that places fishers in peril every time they go out on the lake, and we have a bureaucracy citing Section 35 rights? We need to get real here.

We have a revitalization strategy in place. It is a place to start, but it has shortcomings. We as a government talk about partnerships with Indigenous governments, but fail to walk the talk in this area, the commercial fishing industry being one of them. It is important to remember that the commercial

fishing industry is primarily made up of First Nations and Metis people. It is an industry that they are familiar with and, considering the antiquated equipment they work with, they continue to excel at it. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, this is just not about spending money. It is not about building a shiny new plant. It is about getting it right. I know we can build a viable industry. I know we can build a suitable plant. Mostly, I know we can improve life for NWT fishers and their families. It has to be done in collaboration with fishers, First Nations, and Metis people. I know that the Minister of ITI will do the right thing with this file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IRC CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can you feel the excitement? I can feel the excitement from the 32nd annual hockey tournament for the IRC Cup in Inuvik, Mr. Speaker. A little bit louder than that.

---Applause

I feel like I'm in an arena now. It's good. Today, Mr. Speaker, hockey games start. We have 14 teams total. We have four A Division teams, 10 B Division teams, and they are vying for the IRC Cup, which is the Stanley Cup in our region. Everybody wants to take that cup home. I took it home quite a few times. It's a pretty good feeling. I spoke to the mayor of Tuktoyaktuk today. They have kids who are all packed up and been getting ready for the last few days in the community, who are just so excited. It's not only been a long winter and the sun is back, but spring's around the corner. This tournament is getting them ready for the Whitehorse tournament. That is the grand-daddy of them all, the Yukon Indian hockey tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank IRC for putting on this tournament, and Canadian North for the sponsorship. Donny and Wilma Hendrick, thank you so much for all the work that you do to get this tournament happening every year. The games start today at the Roy Sugloo arena. I have so many good memories with Roy growing up, being in residential schools, being in Grollier Hall, playing for the IDC Huskies when I was younger, and playing for my home community of Tuktoyaktuk and representing. So exciting and so many good memories, and this is what it's all about, visiting and

seeing each other. Especially the games, they get pretty intense sometimes.

Just to remind all the players: good sportsmanship to the fans. Good sportsmanship. Cheer each other on. Leave everything on the ice. Don't drink and drive. Have a good week. I look forward to seeing everybody up there tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SECURITY ISSUES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish I was going to Inuvik.

Education, Culture and Employment offers a number of programs to support our residents in several ways. These programs include income support for post-secondary students and seniors and income assistance for low-income families and children, with additional amounts for people with disabilities.

In my time as an MLA, the majority of my constituents' issues have been related to various Income Security matters. Many recipients say that accessing the programs can be difficult, discouraging, and demoralizing. The processes for Income Assistance in particular are very rigid and prescribed in regulations, providing very little flexibility in response to client needs. In the last Assembly, the Minister of ECE conducted an administrative review of Income Security programs that included discussions with non-governmental organizations. My understanding is that the review resulted in several changes, including a process to revise the manual used by GNWT staff. To be clear, I supported that work and commended the Minister at that time.

In the last Assembly, I raised the issue of the need for an automatic review of Income Security rates and, preferably, an increase tied to CPI, Consumer Price Index, annually. Where I have seen correspondence from the department with my constituents on Income Assistance, there has never been any reference to appeal rights. Under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, there are mandatory provisions that applicants are to be advised of their appeal rights in writing. It's not clear why this same standard is not used for our residents who are clients of our Income Security programs.

A major issue that surfaces with me in my work for constituents is the treadmill of debt that traps some recipients. In instances where Income Assistance recipients work, then lose their jobs and are

penalized with reductions in their rent, food, and other allowances, recipients are left between benefit periods with nothing to live on, often falling behind in their rent.

Some jurisdictions have tried a basic income guarantee approach, and I believe we need to look at pilot project with a basic income guarantee in the context of our overall strategy to reduce and eliminate poverty. I will have questions later today for the Minister responsible for Income Security. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE SUCCESSION PLANNING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In June 2009, in the 16th Legislative Assembly, the Government of the Northwest Territories released a document called "20/20: A Brilliant North - NWT Public Service Strategic Plan." This strategic plan was intended to provide a 10-year framework for the development of the public service. One of its key components was the development of a succession-planning framework designed to ensure that employees were given opportunities for skills development and advancement, to support the long-term sustainability of the public service.

The document noted that employers are facing an aging workforce and that "perhaps the greatest impact is at the level of more experienced workers who have progressed to the leadership levels of the organization and take with them experience and skills when they leave."

Given the importance of succession planning, it is surprising to me to see that the most recent version of the Public Service Annual Report, the 2018-2019 annual report, makes no mention of succession planning. This makes me wonder about the current status of succession planning in the GNWT. Is succession planning a human resources trend that has fallen out of favour? Or has it evolved into a different approach with a different name? Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance about:

- What is being done to ensure that employees have opportunities to grow and improve their job skills;
- What is being done to ensure that the corporate knowledge of our most experienced employees is retained by the organization when the employee retires; and

- What plans does the GNWT have for a future human resources strategy to replace 20/20: A Brilliant North.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MR. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Sunday, March 8, 2020, is International Women's Day, and the theme this year is Because of You, which pays tribute to the diverse and inspirational gender equality change-makers we know in our own lives.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the most inspirational woman in my life, my Granny Agnes Semmler. She was a vibrant and inspiring person; one could know this from the moment she began to talk. She was a strong advocate for women and children, as well as for the people for the Delta. She was a founding member of COPE, the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement, a negotiator for the Inuvialuit final agreement, and a strong advocate of Indigenous rights. She served on and helped establish many boards in the community of Inuvik. In 1975, she became the first northern Indigenous woman to be appointed Justice of the Peace. In 1984, she was the first Indigenous female Deputy Commissioner of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, although all these are remarkable, I want to tell you why she inspired me. She raised me and loved me unconditionally and always made time for me. She taught me things that some may think are not that important, but were important to me as a child, like jigging in our kitchen, which gave me pride in my culture when I danced at many events. She instilled to me how important education was and never let me forget, as she would even have my purposely forgotten homework flown out to out camp by one of our local bush pilots during raftering season.

She taught me to hunt and skills to survive on the land. She was the example of person who truly lived her life in both worlds. I can remember watching her jump out of the boat after being on the land for a few weeks, putting the guns and our furs away and all the gear, and then putting on her famous blue suit and heading to court as the JP or one of her many meetings of the boards she belonged to.

She taught me to respect the land, and that the land was important for our future as Indigenous people. Without the land, we have no future. She

taught me to respect everyone, and never forget where you came from. She taught me to stand up to what you believe, even if it takes time. She taught me resilience and to listen, and I listened to her life story from being born in the bush to attending residential school, and the many things she endured and overcome throughout her life. Because of you, I will strive to be the role model that you were to me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON APPRECIATION FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS IN FORT SMITH

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to make a statement to highlight the public and private services that all businesses and government service centres provide to the people of Fort Smith. I would especially like to thank all the service providers at the Fort Smith Health Centre, including management, doctors, nurses, wellness workers, supporting staff, and all the people who keep the buildings clean. All of these workers provided a service that is unique and professional and, while sometimes serving the public can be difficult, they always do it in the best interests of the community. I want to thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all the people who serve in the private sector within our community. They provide service that is client-based, and always serve all members of our community with dignity and professionalism, always keeping in mind the public relation aspect that is so important to the community of Fort Smith. Some of the businesses that I want to highlight in this statement are Northwestern Air Lease, Kaeser's Store, the Northern Store, the hotel industry, the local restaurants, the gas stations, and all the private industry within the town of Fort Smith. They donate a lot to the community in varying capacities, especially community events, and it is very much appreciated. I want to wish everyone a great weekend at the annual Fort Smith ice and snow races taking place this weekend.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge International Women's Day, which is a global celebration and recognition of women's contributions to the world. That will be celebrated on March 8th over the weekend. I hope all my constituents enjoy these festivities taking place in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In honour of this Sunday being International Women's Day, and my constituency assistant Cat McGurk recently receiving her Red Seal in carpentry, I want to speak about women in trades. Canada is facing a spike in trade and technology positions, without the skilled labour to fill those positions. The NWT presently heavily relies on southern labour to supply our various trade needs. Our infrastructure projects, our mines, and our private sector are all put at risk because skilled labour has become such a precious commodity in the North. We need to build up our skilled labour here. I believe one of the solutions to doing that lies with the women of the NWT.

The numbers for women in construction trades in the NWT is less than 3 percent, Mr. Speaker. That's half our population who have never been encouraged to enter the trades. The reality is that most women still don't see the trades as an option for them. Despite changing attitudes, we still avoid teaching young girls physical capacity, and most guidance counsellors neglect to discuss shop classes with female high school students. Our small communities face many unique barriers to entering a fulfilling career in the trades.

I propose we take an active stake in supporting northern women and develop a women in trades program. Other such programs in Canada have been met with terrific success; programs like Women Unlimited, with their 93 percent completion rate. Trades Discovery for Women, Trade Horizons, and Women Building Futures have a 90-percent work placement rate: proof that these programs work, and not only can women do the work they set out to do, employers want to hire them.

Often, when the idea of female-focused pre-apprenticeship programs are brought up, it is deflected by the sentiment that we must encourage all people to consider careers in the trades, not just women. We must consider all people to enter the trades but, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly is a testament that gender-based programs work. When we championed campaign schools for women, it resulted in more women entering this Assembly and, if we champion women in trades, it will result in more tradespeople, something we are in desperate need of.

Just this week, we heard the Minister of ECE say that apprenticeship in the NWT is dropping. We know women in trades programs are effective, the majority of which are based on the east coast, where they boast the highest inclusion rate for women in trades.

Mr. Speaker, we need more tradespeople, period, and there is clear data that establishing a women in trades program does exactly that. I will have questions for the Minister of ECE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MS. CLEVELAND: Before I was born, a baby girl was born in a town west of London, England. Her family moved to Canada, where she eventually achieved a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts in Journalism, and Master of Arts in History. Along the way, she fell in love with the North and served its people as a reporter, active volunteer, and now a two-term MLA. Sometimes we need to hear about how one person traveled from point A to point B to achieve their goal to help us chart our own path to success. Julie Green's Women on the Ballot Workshops were a significant catalyst that led me to this role.

This year's theme of International Women's Day is Because of You, because of the trailblazing women who went before us. Now, the same number of people serving here today is equal to the total number of women who have ever served this Legislative Assembly; Lena Pederson, Lynda Sorenson, Nellie Cournoyea, Eliza Lawrence, Jeannie Marie-Jewel, Rebecca Mike, Manito Thompson, Jane Groenewegen, Sandy Lee, Wendy Bisaro, Julie Green, Caroline Cochrane, and now Lesa Semmler, Frieda Martselos, Paulie Chinna, Katrina Nokleby, Diane Thom, Caroline Wawzonek, and myself.

Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day does not only include women. I am the mother of three young boys, who are growing into men faster than expected and who will one day play a role in equality. Last night, at a women's leadership event hosted by the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, I was asked if I find it challenging to work in a traditionally male-dominant workplace. My answer was "no" because of the work done by the women before me, and because of the quality and character of all MLAs who serve this territory today.

In addition, in my opinion, it is not just about looking back. International Women's Day is about our daughters and our granddaughters. It is about the next generation of leaders. It is about the little girls who can look at this Legislature and see a woman who served as a powerful chief, and who now serves as a passionate Member. It is about a little girl from Aklavik who loves the land she grew up on

and wants to be a future Health Minister. It is about women who work in non-traditional roles knowing that they belong and that they are heard, and we all have a role to play in helping them shape their story.

Because of the vision and commitment of a woman born an ocean away, I found my own path through self-discovery to leadership. As each of you who is listening reflects on your own path of those that helped you accomplish and achieve your success, I ask you: because of who? Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this, the last day of session before International Women's Day, I speak to honour all the women in my life who have fought for equality and have inspired me. It's no secret to those around me that advancing the situation of women and girls is near to my heart and, in fact, it was one of the main drivers for me to enter the realm of politics. In my career as an engineer, and throughout my life, I have often found myself with no voice and no support. I have been the recipient of unwanted touching on the work site, from unsolicited shoulder rubs to the touching of my breasts and my buttocks. I have found myself in exploration camps high on the tundra with drunken men showing up at my room, and I have been passed over for management roles only for them to go to men younger than me with less experience.

During all the hardship I've had as one of the few women in engineering in Canada where only 13 percent are women, I've been able to lean on my support system of amazing women for comfort. Earlier this year, I said goodbye to the main pillar of that support community, my mom. My mom was an amazing woman, who lifted people up, and she was my biggest champion. Born to immigrants who never completed high school, my mom was the first person in her family to attend university, where she studied education and spent over 30 years inspiring young minds as a grade one and two teacher. My mom was a single mom for a lot of my life, struggling to make ends meet while ensuring that me and my siblings never went without.

My mom was an avid reader and a lifelong learner, and she taught me to question life and to be curious. From her, I inherited a love of crossword and jigsaw puzzles, as well as a wicked sense of humour. I learned to be kind and compassionate and to live my life with good intent, and for that, I will always be grateful. Thank you to all of the moms out there, who are holding the hands of their

crying daughters as their hearts are broken when the reality of the plight of women in this world slaps them across the face. If it weren't for mine holding my hand over the years, I wouldn't be standing here in front of you today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, the theme of this year's International Women's Day is Because of You. The theme Because of You reminds me of the strongest and most influential woman I know. Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my mother, Shirley Cochrane.

Because of you, Mom, I stand in this House today. Your tribulations, successes, perseverance, and strength influenced me throughout my life.

Because of you, I learned at an early age that women were often the leaders in their families and communities. With Dad being gone most of the time, you were left alone for months on end to care for eight children, our home, and all the duties that come with both. On top of this, you still found time to join the ladies' auxiliary in recognition of our father's contribution to the Second World War and all the men and women who fought to defend the freedoms we enjoy today. Because of you, I learned that, no matter how much you have on your personal plate, it is still important to give back to your community.

Because of you, Mom, I learned to care for myself and never wait for, or expect, anyone to do things for me. With babies in both arms, children underfoot, and an endless list of things needing completion, you tackled every chore, whether it be cooking, sewing, laundry, cleaning, fixing broken items, or completing renovations needing done. I will always remember you standing on a chair changing a light fixture, and as I watched in awe, you told me, "Never wait for a man to do things for you." Your ability to tackle any challenge taught me not to be afraid to try new ideas. Because of you, Mom, I was brave enough to challenge myself and experience many things in life that others would tend to shy away from.

Because of you, Mom, I learned that one of the most important values in life is to remember to take care of those in need. No matter how many hungry children of your own you had to feed, you never said no to another child wanting food or any person needing a place to lay their head. Because of you, Mom, I also opened my own door to those in need and got to experience the joys of watching many

youth transition from a place of desperation to a place of hope. Because of you, I truly understand that it takes a community to raise a child, that it only takes one person to change another's life, and that we must never leave others behind. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. Because of you, Mom, I learned to never give up hope. I watched you struggle for many years with your addiction and thought you would never quit. Then, miraculously, you quit, never touching another drink for well over 20 years, now. Because of you, Mom, even in my darkest moment as a single parent, I found the strength to go back to school, get a degree, and change my own and my children's lives forever. Because of you, Mom, I learned to never give up on myself or others.

Because of you, Mom, I learned to face my fears and still move forward. I watched your pain in so many ways, and yet saw you face each day fresh. Because of you, Mom, I learned, when I fall or others push me down, to stand up straight, brush off my hurt, and carry on.

Mr. Speaker, the theme for International Women's Day is Because of You. Today, I dedicate my Member's statement to my mother. Because of you, Mom, I was able to see the strength of women and look at each tribulation in my own life as a challenge to overcome. Because of you, Mom, my life has also been full of adventure, learning and successes. Because of you, Mom, and because of the values you instilled, I never gave up, and because of you, I stand here today. Have I told you lately, Mom, how much I love you? I love you, Mom, to the moon and back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In celebration today of National Women's Day and the theme Because of You, I would like to acknowledge and recognize the political achievements of Martha Chinna. Martha was a strong advocate for Indigenous languages. She developed and helped create the Indigenous language for CBC North, which we hear of today. She expressed advocacy at the federal government level, helping the Northwest Territories and the federal government to recognize that languages in the Northwest Territories were not only the Inuit language and the North Slavey language. She got them to realize that Chipewyan, North Slavey,

South Slavey, the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, and Tlicho languages were here, and they were existing in the Northwest Territories.

Martha Chinna attended the University of Calgary, which gives me a fierce understanding and acknowledgement that she was a residential school survivor, but yet was able to attend university right of school. She received her degree in Linguistics and Communications.

Martha Chinna was a strong advocate for language to be interpreted and for us to be speaking about it today. Now, looking at CBC, the majority of their translators are now retiring, who spoke in Indigenous languages. Now, we're going forward as a government in trying to understand and trying to see how we are going to revitalize the language. It's advocates and women in the past who created the Government of the Northwest Territories who stood up in those early days and helped us create what we are managing and what we are working towards today.

My mom had died 17 years ago, April 3rd, and, looking back at her and looking at the remarkable women who have passed on and who are here with us today, one of the ladies I want to acknowledge, too, is Cece McCauley, the first female chief of the Northwest Territories, to be also included with looking at the Berger Inquiry in those days. That was quite significant to the Northwest Territories and created a huge difference in the Northwest Territories of how we were going to economically develop as a territory, recognizing the traditional use of people and the land in our territory.

Today, I would like to acknowledge the people of the Northwest Territories and also the women who were elected. Also, I would like to acknowledge Caroline Cochrane and Julie Green. Thank you for Women on the Ballot and thank you for encouraging the Northwest Territories' women to put their name forward. Today, we have a very interesting government, and it is going to be a very good four years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Merci, monsieur le Président. [Translation] This Sunday is the International Day for Women. [End of translation] The Minister responsible for the Status of Women spoke to the theme selected by the Status of Women Canada for this year, Because of You, recognizing the socio-economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and girls.

There are other themes for International Women's Day. First, the United Nations Women's theme for this year is: I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights. Another, the global campaign theme, is: Each for Equal. This theme highlights that we are all part of a collective whole, and we can each, individually, have an impact on our society and on the goal of achieving equality.

Mr. Speaker, if we are all Each for Equal, we will raise Generation Equality.

My mother was the voice saying, "You can go and achieve the things that I did not have the opportunities to achieve," but without my father's quiet but calm and ever-present support, it would have been much harder. My legal career has been inspired and supported for over a decade by strong feminists. Many of those feminists were men. They encouraged me to start in a career, in a male-dominated area of practice. They encouraged me to take on leadership roles at tables that were still largely filled by men, and they encouraged me to make space for a family life without making me feel that this made me any less of a lawyer.

As the last election drew near, I asked at home, "Maybe this won't be good for our family? Maybe I should be waiting until the kids are older?" My spouse, who happens to be male, would have none of it. "You want to do this, and so we will make it happen."

Mr. Speaker, we each need to support equality. We all need to be feminists. This will help advance the equality of all, and this, to me, is the strength of the Each for Equal campaign. Through that, I commit to raising Generation Equality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. 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. I would like to recognize lovely ladies up in the gallery today. We have Tina Hawker, we have Mary Drake, and Michele Lemieux from the Native Women's Association. We also have Sabet Biscaye. We have Louise Elder and Kristen Berkeley from the Status of Women Council. Thank you, ladies, for being here today, and I apologize if I missed anyone.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize

one of our Pages who is here today from the constituency of Range Lake, Cameron Mason. I want to thank you for all the work you have provided and to all the Pages for the work you've provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to recognize one of my neighbours, Louise Elder, and thank her for her work as executive director of the NWT Status of Women Council. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Acho Dene principal and the chaperon for assisting two of the great Pages who are here today, Lorrissa Berreault and Elizabeth Nelson. They have done a great job. Thank you very much for being here during this day. As well, I am going to get in trouble for this one, but I finally can get to recognize my honey, the one who makes my life quite interesting. I know she is shaking her head at me already, so I know I am going to be sleeping outside today, but it's all good. Also her daughter, Christina McAdam, thank you very much for being here today. Sorry, I forgot one other one, a former constituent of mine, Mary Drake, and a former CA of mine. Thank you very much for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 152-19(2): INCOME ASSISTANCE ISSUES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, who is also responsible for Income Security programs. I spoke in my statement of a number of issues. I see from the Education, Culture and Employment website that there is an updated Income Assistance policy manual dated October 2019. Although the Social Assistance Appeals Regulations require that an officer inform clients in writing of their entitlement appeal, I see no reference to this in the manual or in the correspondence that has been provided to me. Can the Minister tell us whether the department routinely informs clients in writing of their rights when it comes to Income Security programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, the Member referenced the ATIPP legislation that requires a notice of appeal and appeal rights. The Social Assistance Act Income Assistance Appeals Regulations also contain a provision. It's Section 4(1), I believe, so that is mandated that that has to be done. That is done. I have a copy here of the notice of refusal, which clearly indicates that there are appeal rights. The handbook the Member references, I believe there is an updated policy manual. It's February 2020, and I checked that today, and that does make that reference, although the plain-language handbook might not be as clear, but I will look into that.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I can assure him, though, that, from the correspondence I have seen from my constituents, the appeal rights are not mentioned, so I would ask that the Minister investigate some of the actual correspondence Income Assistance recipients receive when they are refused, and so on. I want to move on. I have repeatedly mentioned the need to index our Income Security programs. That includes Income Assistance, Student Financial Assistance, seniors and other benefits, and those should be indexed, Mr. Speaker, to the cost of living. Forced growth is the norm elsewhere, so I do not believe that our most disadvantaged people should be left behind. Can the Minister commit to indexing of Income Security payments through changes to regulations and/or legislation to help the most vulnerable members of our society?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: First, I just want to address the Member's comments. If any Member is aware of incidents where we are not living up to our standards, please let me know. We have a system in place within the actual offices, but I want to work toward a territory-wide tracking system so that we can identify these types of concerns and move to improve them. In terms of indexing, Income Assistance does pay the actual cost of shelter, of utilities, and of heating fuel, so, in that sense, it is indexed. However, at this time, I can't commit to indexing all of the benefits. We look at our mandate, and ECE has a lot in that mandate, and so, over this next year, we are going to be looking at how we can achieve that. There are going to be some tough financial decisions that we have to make, and so I cannot stand up here and say that we are going to make the decisions that the Member is asking for.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It was not quite a "yes," but, look, I am talking about the most disadvantaged people in our society. We need take care of them, as we can and should do. I

mentioned in my earlier statement the problems when Income Assistance recipients find themselves in situations where they lose jobs or they maybe lose their housing. It's a vicious cycle. I would like to know if there is any consideration that is being given to repayment plans, like rental arrears plans, to reduce hardships of drastic benefit reductions?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I have spoken about this at length in the House. Right now, there are repayment plans if you receive an overpayment. However, the Member is correct. If someone starts working, their benefits are cut off because they are over the threshold, and then, if they lose their job, that could create immediate financial hardship or the cut-off could result in them having to pay thousands of dollars in rent and utilities and fuel, if it's in the middle of winter, and they might not be able to afford that, so I have committed to looking into the possibility of phasing benefits out. That is a long-term discussion. It would take a lot of research. It would take legislative changes, but I have committed to this House that I am looking into that kind of stuff.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that, and I do want to commend him for taking on that big job. I think he is the right guy to do it. I supported the previous Minister when she conducted an administrator review of Income Security programs. They resulted in some important changes, but what we really need is a systematic approach to change. An example of that is guaranteed basic income, or at least a pilot project around guaranteed basic income. Has the Minister or his department considered a guaranteed basic income pilot project in the NWT, and when is he prepared to make that happen?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I wish I could have more positive answers here for the Member, but the fact is we are not considering this. The work that it would take to actually look into this and do the research is not doable, given what we have been mandated to do by this Assembly. Successive governments over the past number of decades have gone through cuts. The people to get cut are the policy people. We are pretty thin on policy positions. It is tough to do a lot of the work that we want to do. I am not even sure how we are going to do the things that we are mandated to do and that this Assembly is asking of us. To take on a project of this magnitude, I just can't do it at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 153-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE SUCCESSION
PLANNING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned in my Member's statement that the succession planning document "20/20: A Brighter Future" was released in 2009. I began my career with the GNWT in 2008 with the Department of Public Works and Services. That was about 11 years ago. For 11 years I was in employment, I never ever got moved up into any position. Perhaps if I stayed another 11 years, I would have been an antique. My question to the Minister is: does the GNWT still practice succession planning? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, succession planning is still a priority. Indeed, it is ever only more of a priority. There are quite a large number of GNWT employees who are going to be retiring over the next five to 10 years. In short, I am definitely in agreement, and I am pleased that the Member has raised this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: What actions and initiatives are currently in place to achieve the goals of succession planning, and how do these impact employees in the GNWT's regional offices? If not, why not?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The Department of Finance does work with its regional offices, across all of the territories, in order to use the tools that we have at our hands currently, which includes everything from mentorship to secondments and transfer assignments, but also to be gathering the information to consider, indeed, what kind of succession plans need to happen. It is an ongoing process. Again, as I have said, I am grateful to have that alerted to me. It is one that we are going to have to pay attention to, given some of the demographics we are facing.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Has the department done any analysis or assessment of succession planning best practices, and are these being incorporated into our human resources practices?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There was the workforce development framework released last year under the last Assembly that was the result in part of a jurisdictional scan, looking at best practices. That is still being worked into the process that we have currently. It is hoped that this will continue to evolve into a best practice of corporate-wide resources for all the territory and for all the different regions.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister just answered my last question about developing a new workforce development framework. I wonder if the Minister could provide stats for the succession planning or any movement up to management positions by all employees of the GNWT since 2009? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That specific request is one that is very large in terms of the numbers and the scope. What I would suggest is that I will speak to the Member and make sure that we can identify, perhaps, the core of the issue that we want to look at here. I agree that succession planning is critical, and I agree that we can always do a better job of it. These are human systems, and they can always be improved. What I was referencing in my previous answer was the fact that there has been some work done, but the work isn't finished yet. It is still being developed. There is much more to come. What I will do is, as I say, I will connect with the Member specifically. If I need to bring something back as a result of those discussions to the House with some specific numbers, I will do that. I want to make sure that we get to the core of the issue of what the concern is around succession planning, recognizing that we can, as I say, always continue to do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 154-19(2):
FOOD INSECURITY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my reply to the budget, I spoke about new information from the community survey, which reveals that one in five NWT households has trouble meeting its most basic needs, including access to sufficient food. The rates of moderate to severe food insecurity have increased over the years. My question to the Minister is: why does she think these rates continue to go up despite more direct and indirect spending by government? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unfortunate that the rates have been going up. I do want to talk about that. We had a meeting this week with the National Advisory Council on Poverty. During our meeting, we had some excellent discussions. These are 10 members across

Canada who are dedicated, they are passionate, and they are knowledgeable. They are members from coast to coast to coast. We sat down and had an opportunity to talk about our anti-poverty work plan; it is the Working Together II. In there, we have identified a couple of key areas, especially food secure. The Working Together II has five pillars, and one of them references food security.

Going back to the meeting with the National Advisory Council on Poverty, we did mention some barriers that we are facing in the Northwest Territories, including the on-reserve funding. On-reserve funding through the national poverty strategy does not benefit the Northwest Territories. We also talked about food security and how important it is for us. I say important because it is one of our 22 priorities here. We will be addressing that in our budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. What new initiatives or approaches is the Minister going to undertake to reduce and eliminate hunger in the Northwest Territories?

HON. DIANE THOM: I do want to talk about the action plan, because there are some initiatives in the action plan. I look at this, and it is multi-departmental; Health and Social Services is not just the department that is responsible for poverty. Our meeting today included our Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. We also had our Minister of housing and Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Also, our Premier attended. It is not a one-department approach.

I do want to talk about the action plan because here are some ideas, and the Member is asking for some ideas: increasing income support to elders with people with disabilities. I apologize to them and speak on some of the issues that are within each of the departments. I hope that's okay, but this is an action plan that we all have input and have a responsibility for; a commitment to make childcare more assessable across the Northwest Territories; funding to address homelessness in the smaller communities through Northern Pathways, which is a housing program, and also the supportive housing program. We also provide funding to support the Housing First program, the rapid housing program in Inuvik and Yellowknife. These support people who are either homeless or at risk of being homeless. Action to address food security throughout supports to harvesting and to agriculture. Community gardening is another project that, as a government, we all need to enforce. I am looking at ITI, because our Minister of ITI is also responsible for some of these projects in the Northwest Territories.

MS. GREEN: I recognize that the new anti-poverty action plan is a multi-departmental plan. It is my

understanding that it is in the leadership of the Minister of Health and Social Services. That is why I am asking her these questions today about food security. One of the things the anti-poverty action plan speaks to is creating a new food security coalition. Can the Minister tell us whether that work has started?

HON. DIANE THOM: The Member is correct. That is in our action plan. We are planning to establish a multi-sectorial NWT food security coalition. These are representatives from not only just the government, but also Indigenous governments, community governments, not-for-profit organizations, and this is something that we're establishing. I've looked at the action plan that the Member is talking about, the Working Together II, and, in there, the timeline for creating this coalition is in 2022.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's answer. Minister, I think we've got to get started before 2022. There is so much hunger; 2,271 youth and children under 15. We just can't ask them to wait two more years while we get to work on this. We need to start immediately. The final question I have is about the federal government's role in helping to reduce and eliminate food insecurity which, of course, they do through the Nutrition North program. My question is: what action is the Minister going to take with the federal government to improve the effectiveness of Nutrition North? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: I apologize. I didn't realize that we weren't allowed to put props up, but I was just trying to show the Member that I actually have the action plan on poverty, so I apologize, Mr. Speaker. That was not my intent, other than to let the Member know. I do want to go back to the Nutrition North program. The Nutrition North program is a federal program, and our department, we all meet together, and part of the development of the coalition is to come together and really reach out. We've already said, this government, we can't do things alone, and we can't do things in silos. We need to reach out and engage with the partners, Indigenous groups, and non-Indigenous groups. The more partners and key stakeholders that we have coming together, we will have a stronger approach to go towards the federal government for Nutrition North funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 155-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice. I've had an increase in enquiries within my constituency in regard to options for people who are in domestic violence situations. I would like to know who the lead department within the GNWT is for domestic violence? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be frank about it. There is not one single department responsible for domestic violence, nor is there a Minister responsible for domestic violence. What there is, fortunately, is a recognition by this Cabinet of that gap, and a recognition of the need to fix that gap. What I would offer instead is to commit to the Member that I will take it upon myself to ensure that there is an answer to that question in the life of the Assembly, sooner rather than later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I appreciate the response from the Minister, and I appreciate as well that she stopped herself when she said the length of this Assembly, because I think it's really important, with us having the second-highest rate of domestic violence in Canada, that we need to give this an owner right away, preferably by the end of this sitting. My next question is: will the Department of Justice, or whoever the lead department is for this, commit to putting together an information resource that we can distribute to people to let them know what their options are for the next chapter of their lives that does not include domestic violence?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There is no shortage of resources put together often by the GNWT. The challenge that I acknowledge exists is that there are so many different resources put together by different agencies in different departments of the GNWT. Yes, again, I am prepared to commit that we do a better job of organizing them. I don't know what that package might look like or what the source will be, but I hear the Member's point, and, again, that is not an unreasonable request.

MS. CLEVELAND: Would the Minister be willing to commit to identifying, with her colleagues, a lead department for domestic violence before the end of this sitting?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There is an interdepartmental working group that's not really, I realize, the most accessible place for Members of

the Assembly or members of the public to access Cabinet on a specific issue. I'm just concerned with the idea that it's going to happen within the life of the current sitting. That's only another month away. I'm happy to make that a target, but I'm hesitant to go so far as to make it a commitment. When I make a commitment, as I think I've said before, I take that fairly seriously. I'll make it a target. At the very least, I will report back on what progress is made in terms of achieving the goal within the life of the Assembly.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I definitely appreciate that. Over the course of gathering information from multiple different departments, it took my CA and I about a month to put together all of the information and the resources that the Minister referred to that are available through the government, and that's not very useful or realistic for someone who is suffering from domestic violence. My next and final question for the Minister is: is there a plan for this Assembly to create a domestic violence action plan? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That's not a new request, and I certainly want to begin by acknowledging my own awareness of the depth of the problem and the challenge. I've spoken to it at the Ministers' meetings that I've attended already thus far. I do know that the federal government has a strategy and they're in the midst of developing an action plan, and I expect that it would be prudent for us to at least see what progress there is made at a federal level to ensure that, if there is funding associated with whatever might be happening at that level, we can ensure that the identified departmental lead can then try to access that funding. There are still a few pieces moving at the moment. I need to see how they play out. Some of those will be put into motion, I believe, over the next month with respect to, first, working within our own departments, and second, knowing what the direction of the federal budget might be. Those two things might help us give direction as to how much we can achieve in terms of putting together an action plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 156-19(2):
WOMEN IN TRADES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I gave my Member's statement for women in trades. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment: how many apprentices, in total, do we have in the Northwest Territories, and how many of them are women?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 320 registered apprentices in the Northwest Territories. Of that 320, 15 are women. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Fifteen out of 320, I believe, is a statistic that shows that we're really not tapping into a huge section of our labour pool; that is, women who are willing to enter the trades. Is the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment willing to create a women in trades program?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: As part of the apprenticeship or ATOC strategy, we've already committed to that, and we're working on that. We hope to launch the program later this year, and it's going to be similar to the ones in Alberta and Nova Scotia, and it's going to be focused on getting more women in trades. There are other partners in the territory, as well; Skills Canada NWT has launched a program aimed at girls in middle school to help them start getting interested in the trades, as well. There are a lot of people who we could be talking to about this. Five percent of the registered apprentices are women. We're missing 45 percent of the population who could be in that. It's something that we are really trying to work on.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's commitment to develop this program. In reviewing the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy, ATOC as he referred to it, there were a number of recommendations regarding that. Has the department taken action on the working group's suggestions, and will the Minister commit to implementing those suggestions coming out of the ATOC strategy?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: The Member is correct, there has been a lot of discussion. There are a lot of recommendations, and we're working on it. Not everything has happened, but things are happening, and I can get a more detailed report for the Member and provide updates whenever the Member would like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 157-19(2):
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. I want to ask some questions of the Minister of

Finance, who also has responsibility for human resources. Most Canadian jurisdictions ensure that employees are provided with domestic violence leave, effective January 1, 2020. Our Employment Standards Act provides up to five days of paid family violence leave, another five days of unpaid leave, and maybe even 15 weeks of unpaid leave with proper notice. I supported these changes, but our main collective agreement with UNW only provides for three days of paid domestic violence leave. Is the Minister aware of this difference in domestic violence leave for GNWT employees and other employees, and what action, if any, is she prepared to take to deal with these less-generous provisions for our employees? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The collective agreement does have a difference in it as compared to what is in the employment standards provisions, but it actually does also say that more than three days of leave can be approved by the employer and that the approval cannot be unreasonably denied. Certainly, we could take the step of at least reminding all of the GNWT that, indeed, one would not want to deny leave in circumstances when there is a case of domestic violence leave. If they have been given the three days and are requesting further, I would expect that, in many, many cases, it would be unreasonable to deny it. While it's worded differently, it's not quite as strict as that, and I certainly wouldn't want anyone to be discouraged, if they need leave, from going and speaking to their responsible supervisor to provide that information. As far as then changing the collective agreement, there will always be further bargaining and further negotiations that take place at new rounds of bargaining. If this is an issue that is seen by the employees, then we will see it at that point and deal with it in due course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I think she made a commitment that she would actually send out a reminder. Is the Minister prepared to send out a reminder to GNWT supervisors that this provision in the collective agreement is perhaps more permissive than seems to be interpreted?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I wouldn't want the Minister of Justice to get angry with me if I'm now interpreting the collective agreement. That was not my intention, but certainly, simply to just point out again that more than three days of leave with pay will be approved by the employer, and that approval cannot be unreasonably denied. If it's a simple reminder of what the collective agreement says, and if that's not being applied, firstly, I would ask Members to bring that to my attention if it's not

being applied, and there is no harm in reminding our own staff and our own supervisors what is in the agreement, so I am happy to certainly do that.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I think that was a yes, again, that she will send out a reminder to GNWT supervisors about that. That's great. I am wondering if the Minister could commit to using the domestic leave provisions in the Employment Standards Act as a baseline when it comes to renegotiating the collective agreements. I am sure UNW would support more generous provisions. As I understand it, that's what they had pushed for at the bargaining table but couldn't achieve it. Again, will the Minister use the Employment Standards Act as the baseline moving forward in the negotiations of new collective agreements?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Coming up with a bargaining mandate is a more complicated matter than one I am going to begin to commit to here on the floor, but I am confident that all of my Cabinet colleagues are hearing this exchange. Sometimes that's exactly the benefit of being in this House, so that we can all hear those exchanges and hear the issues that are raised.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Look, this is an issue of fairness. Are we going to treat our employees the same way that all other employees in the Northwest Territories are treated? I think that's a very simple question, here. I am looking for a commitment from the Minister that she is going to work with our unions to make sure that the domestic violence leave provisions are the same for all employees in the Northwest Territories. Is that a commitment she is prepared to make? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I don't disagree that this is an issue of great importance, and I, of course, want to ensure that all of the employees of the GNWT are treated not only fairly, but in the best possible way. I am simply not going to make a commitment about a bargaining mandate. I am not going to make a commitment on the floor, other than to say, as I have before, that I do make a commitment to improving and continuing the relationship that we have with our unions. It's an important and critical relationship and, if this is an issue that comes up in the course of those conversations, I would look forward to having that conversation directly with them at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 158-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue my conversation with the Minister of Justice in regard to domestic violence. I apologize; I hope I am not putting too much pressure on her. My first question is just in regard to the resource that I requested earlier. I am just wondering if, while we are waiting for Cabinet to choose a lead department, the Department of Justice would be prepared to take on creating those resources for victims of domestic violence? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Departments of Justice and Finance will be so excited today. As I have said, I already have committed to ensuring that I will report back to this House as to the best place in which we are going to house the issue of domestic violence and solving domestic violence, and when I make that report, I will report back on where and who will be working to bring the resources together.

There are times where having a specific and defined resource is to the benefit of someone with a specific, defined issue; there may be other times where an individual wants to get all of the resources without having to go and put them all together, as the Member has very well defined and described today the challenges of that. What I will simply say is that I will take it upon myself to be the one who reports back here and explains how we are going to do that, likely by going back first to the interdepartmental working group that already exists. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Not the answer I was looking for, but I will live with it for now and hopefully won't end up putting it together on my own. My second question is in regard to the Canada-wide action plan. I am wondering how long we are prepared to wait for information from Canada to come. Do we have a threshold of when we are going to decide to go out and create our own action plan, or will we be patient and wait for the Canada-wide one? I am wondering if Cabinet has decided as a group that we are going to wait until the end of this year and then move forward with our own plan, just so that we know, on this side of the room, what our expectations for timelines should be.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: While I have spoken here many times about the value that I place on partnerships with the federal government, I will also say very plainly that I do not think we

always need to wait for others to do work that is relevant to our own residents. I can't give a defined date, but I am happy to also point out, as I had missed earlier, that the interdepartmental working group that I have mentioned has actually commissioned research through the Aurora Research Institute about best practices to address domestic violence and intimate partner violence here in the Northwest Territories. What I would like to do and suggest is that I will wait until we have that back, see what that recommends, and at that point, we can move forward and determine whether that will be the foundation for an action plan or not.

MS. CLEVELAND: I am wondering what the expected deadline is on that plan from that institute and if we will be able to see it on this side of the House as soon as Justice receives it.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I have seen that date, but I don't remember if offhand, to be very honest. I will find out. I will get back to the Member. Certainly, to this point, it has been my practice to try to get all of these types of reports and evaluations over to the other Members as quickly as possible. Not quite a commitment, but that has at least been my intent and my working practice thus far. Unless there's something about this report that I am unaware of, being that it was commissioned by an outside entity, that would otherwise be my expectation.

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

QUESTION 159-19(2):
YELLOWKNIFE MOTOR VEHICLES OFFICE
HOURS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I previously asked questions to the Minister of Infrastructure about extending the hours of the department of motor vehicles in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this is a small issue, but it is my intention to go through each of my campaign platform points and try my best, and if I can't have an office buy a couple of hours, then I wonder what I am doing here. The Minister responsible for the Department of Infrastructure last said that one of the barriers to implementing this was cost. I would like to know what the cost would be in adding an additional day to the department of motor vehicles' operating hours.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the entire cost of adding one extra day, versus moving days around, I don't have that number in front of me. However, it would be the staffing for at least one employee there for the

hours. Then, there would be security needed, if that was on a weekend; so that's \$22 per hour for security. There would also be issues with the HVAC systems. Buildings are turned off, generally, over weekends and in the evenings, so that would also be an additional cost to building maintenance that we would have to deal with. I am not sure if we would have to look at things like different types of pay rates for people working outside the regular 9:00 to 5:00 business hours, but I believe those would all be things that would add to the cost. If the Member would like, I could find out what one day of operating costs at the DMV are and supply that to him. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: One of the problems in this House is that it is not my job, and it's not the Minister's job, to get into the operations of departments and be talking about HVAC systems, but consistently, when I ask for something that seems like common sense to me, that the department of motor vehicles should be open outside of government hours, I end up talking about HVAC systems, so I would look forward to the Minister providing that information. Would the Minister be willing to also provide information on whether it would cost us money to have the department of motor vehicles be closed on Monday, but then open Saturday, which would allow us to have some hours which are not government hours?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes, I can provide the costs of what that would be. Again, I would have to get that information off of the department. I don't think it is as easy as just shutting down for Monday and opening up on Saturday, because there are, like I said, other ramifications to deal with having people in the building on a weekend when the rest of the building is not occupied. That includes, at this moment, the response team within the building, which does involve using staff that is in the building already who would, then, not be there on a weekend. Again, I will commit to the Member. We can give him a costing to change those hours, but I do believe it would be with a cost.

MR. JOHNSON: I hope, by end of three years of pestering the Minister about this, I can get a couple of extra hours. At some point, if the democratically elected people of the NWT can't get a couple of hours of time to renew their driver's licence, then I don't believe we are having the right conversations. My question for the Minister of Infrastructure is simple. I don't want to continue having conversations about the operating costs and the operations of a building. Will the Minister direct her department to open the department of motor vehicles in Yellowknife for some portion of time, either evenings or weekends?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: No, I won't make that direction at this time, because, while the Regular

Member does not maybe have to worry about the cost, I do. Therefore, I will look at the costs; if it does make sense, I will do what I can for this to be a win for the Member with his constituents. However, I do need to factor in the costs of the budgets of my department.

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

QUESTION 160-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION POLICIES RELATING TO
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Will the Minister look at working on policies, if a person wants out of a lease who is suffering from family violence, such as verbal abuse? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I will look at those policies and look at how we could work with domestic violence within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: I have had previous conversations with this Minister, and some of the responses that I have gotten back are very -- if you're in that type of relationship, one of the things is a mutual agreement amongst the lessees to end this. This, I feel, is locking the person who is being abused into an unhealthy home life. Is there a way that we can look at these things right now and work with the local housing authorities right away to make sure that these are not barriers that may keep them in family violence? I know that, under one of the stipulations, it was an EPO, emergency protection order, but you're not going to get that, with my confirmation, with verbal abuse, sometimes.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: [Microphone turned off] ...and have this agreement broken and honoured so that we are not in support of domestic violence. Just send me your stuff, and I'll make sure that we are not going to be dealing with this further.

MS. SEMMLER: Another issue that has recently arisen: can the Minister confirm what happens if one of the lessees in a home refuses to file their income tax or pay statements? I know, with the Member for Nunakput, that that is the way right now of how we calculate our rent. This is something that I have heard in my community that, in these family violent relationships, they are using against each other.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In regard to filing and using the T4 slips and filing with CRA, if we do not receive those official documents, we would just be going forward and calculating their rent month by month. Once again, I would encourage the Member to bring this forward. I would like to deal with this immediately.

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

QUESTION 161-19(2):
BUILDING STANDARDS ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I previously had questions for the Minister of Infrastructure regarding a building standards act. One of the problems is that it's not quite clear who this responsibility would lie with. Consistent requests from the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, the Architects Association, and many Members have been directed towards the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. My question to the Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is: will she direct her department to develop a legislative proposal for a building standards act in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Working with a building standards act and trying to implement that in the Northwest Territories, I would have to be working with my colleagues. I know that we do not have one currently. We do use the fire act right now, that is up for review. I will speak with my department to see how we can work with this going forward because I know, looking at the building standards act, it's kind of complex. We deal with the fire regulations, the building codes, and this is all separate, and we don't have it actually located under one functioning act for the Northwest Territories. I will commit to the Member that I will be speaking to my department, and I will follow up with him with the results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I appreciate that commitment to bring this forward to the department to look into it. The main issue with a building standards act is we all know there is a multimillion-dollar deficit in infrastructure costs to the NWT, and GNWT infrastructure is built to very high-quality standards, but, in the communities where there is no enforcement of this, every single person building a building has to decide between quality, and often we are building buildings that are the cheaper option, which means that the cost of living in our communities consistently rises. A building standards act creates an even floor that allows us

to have efficient costs for our residents, so my question to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is: will she bring this issue to the Cabinet table to make sure that there is a clear department, whether it be Infrastructure, whether it be MACA, that is responsible, so that I know who to ask questions to regarding a building standards act?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Absolutely, I will be bringing that forward to the Cabinet for discussion as I know going forward that we do have construction in the smaller communities. We need clarification on that.

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

QUESTION 162-19(2):
RENT SCALE POLICY REVIEW

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, I heard that good news again, about the T4s and the month-by-month, from the housing Minister. I just want to make sure that, across the territory, people know that they are going to be able to go. On what date are we going to start using that system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to clarify with the Member. Is he referring to the date for the assessments to be completed? Please clarify.

MR. JACOBSON: Last week, I had a commitment from this Minister. I am not looking for assessments. I am looking for a start date, like what time we could start being able to start choosing a T4 system or a month-by-month and a start date. Thank you from the people of the Northwest Territories who are going to really like our Minister of housing.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In regard to using the T4 slips and going month to month for the assessment, the client can advise his region and his constituents that they can start doing that today, now.

MR. JACOBSON: I am in shock. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Minister. Note, just in regard to that, I think that people across the territory are going to be able to do a little bit more with what they get and what they have. I thank the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I will take that as a comment, unless the Minister wants to respond. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 163-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FOSTER FAMILY
COALITION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previously, both in the media and in this House, we heard a number of concerns expressed by the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories. I know that the Minister of health has met with them. I was hoping the Minister of health could provide an update to this House on the status of the requests made from the NWT Foster Family Coalition.

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

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I am aware, the last time we met with the Foster Family Coalition was that we would continue to have ongoing dialogue and that we directed staff to continue to have a scheduled meeting, so that is what I know right now.

MR. JOHNSON: Ongoing dialogue is important, but I was looking for a little more from the Minister of Health and Social Services. The NWT Foster Family Coalition publicly made a number of requests. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to responding to each of those requests made by the NWT Foster Family Coalition?

HON. DIANE THOM: I will look into the situation. I am not sure about committing to each of the requests because I do not know what all the requests are, but I will have a look at the situation.

MR. JOHNSON: Just to clarify, I am not asking that the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to fulfilling the requests. I am asking for a commitment that each of them be responded to, and it can be a "yes," a "no," a "we will get back to you." Is the Minister willing to do that?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, this Minister will respond to what the Member is asking.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the appropriate standing committee also be updated regarding the status of the ongoing disputes and issues and the responses to requests that have been raised by the NWT Foster Family Coalition?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, this Minister will provide information to the Standing Committee on Social Development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 164-19(2):
OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS LIABILITY CAP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. While we are on a roll and we are getting all these yeses, I think it's a good time to go back to the liability caps in the Oil and Gas Spills and Debris Liability Regulations that I raised with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment a couple of days ago. I would like to know when the Minister is going to complete that review of the liability caps. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know when that will be complete.

MR. O'REILLY: Does the Minister expect to complete this review before the end of this Assembly? Could she give us some idea? The Minister has a Petroleum Resources Strategy in place that includes spending for a million dollars over three years and, as I understand it, some of that is to review the regulations and framework that we have in place. Can the Minister commit to completing that review before the end of this Assembly? It's a one-page regulation; I don't know what the problem is.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: There is no problem, other than departments are very busy. I do commit to finishing this review before the end of the Assembly.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I would like to know from the Minister whether the department has looked into the issue of whether these liability caps are going to impede our ability to recover any funds or carry out the remediation work that is going to be required at the Cameron Hills field?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I will have to get back to the Member with a written response to that question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Item 8, 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.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 51-19(2):
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY
PROGRAM 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "Waste Reduction and Recovery Program 2018-2019 Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 52-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY
COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR 2019

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the annual report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner of the Legislative Assembly for 2019. Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Thebacha.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 4-19(2):
REQUEST FOR SPECIAL AUDIT BY THE
AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA ON THE
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL RENEWAL
PROJECT

MS. MARTELOS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Legislative Assembly request the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to undertake a special audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, and report thereon to the Legislative Assembly; and further, that this special audit investigate the actual project costs and long-term financial implications of the partnership arrangement, compliance with the Financial Administration Act and the financial policies of the Government of the Northwest Territories, value for money considerations, appropriation authority, reporting, and adherence to standard public procurement practices and processes; and furthermore, that the Auditor General investigate and consider any other factors that, in their opinion, is relevant; and furthermore, that all employees and officials, respecting the broad powers of investigation granted to the Auditor General under the Auditor General Act and confirmed under the Northwest Territories Act, actively cooperate with the Auditor General in providing all appropriate

documents, papers, and information requested by the Office of the Auditor General; and furthermore, that the Government inform the Boreal Health Partnership and all relevant contractors of the nature and purpose of the special audit; and furthermore, that the Office of the Auditor General is requested to complete the special audit as soon as practicable and provide a report to the Legislative Assembly; and furthermore, that the Speaker formally transmit this motion and the content of our proceedings in relation to this motion to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada for their consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notice of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Members, we will call a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom, is ready to enter the Chamber and assent bills? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret Thom): Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. [Translation] Thank you. It's good to see you again, and I am sitting here and I feel very grateful. [Translation ends]

Thank you. It is once again a great honour to be in this Chamber, and to be in the presence of such an amazing team that works diligently for the betterment of the quality of life for all Northerners.

Assent to Bills

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020
- Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020

Mahsi cho, thank you, quyanainni, merci beaucoup, koana.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 16, consideration in Committee of the Whole on bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021; and Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021, with the 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 the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee would like to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), 2020-2021 Main Estimates, Department of Lands. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021. Does the Minister of Lands have any opening remarks?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do. I am here to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Department of Lands. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$780,000 or 3.5 percent over the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. These estimates support our fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending while matching the modest expected revenue growth over the upcoming year.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- Forced growth of just over \$1 million for increases resulting from the UNW collective bargaining agreement;
- New funding of \$63,000 for the land management parts of boreal caribou range planning which is fully offset by federal funding;
- Ongoing funding for the Wek'eezhii land use planning committee and planning office with \$443,000 in 2020-2021;
- \$105,000 in funding that is sunsetting this year for the agriculture strategy implementation initiative and the equity lease initiative; and
- Finally, reallocation of funding within the department to fund two strategic planning, reporting and evaluation positions in the Policy, Legislation and Communications division.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly, beginning with the development of a process guide for the bulk transfer of vacant Commissioner land within municipal boundaries. This is a mandate commitment under the priority to reduce the municipal funding gap.

We will also begin the development of regulations to bring the Public Land Act into force. This work will give us a more coherent and harmonized land administration system, which is important to investors in all sectors of the economy, as well as for public infrastructure development.

We will be continuing to address the transfer of equity leases to fee simple title, within community boundaries, in a way that is transparent, consistent, and considerate of the views of Indigenous governments. That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness into the Chamber. Would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my left is Brenda Hilderman, our director of finance. On my right is my deputy minister, Sylvia Haener, and one of my assistant deputy ministers, Conrad Baetz. At the appropriate time, we will ask for our other deputy minister, Terry Hall, to come in and replace Assistant Deputy Minister Mr. Baetz.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Lands. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review estimates by activity summary, beginning with corporate management, starting on page 300, with information item on page 303. Any questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that the department has a strategic plan in place. I think it was supposed to run from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, which is next year. What are the plans of the Minister or the department to renew or revise or come up with a new strategic plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I apologize. My hearing wasn't working.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The earpiece is not working?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I'll just reset the time and go back to Member for Frame Lake, if you could re-ask your question. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that the department has a strategic plan that finishes in 2020-2021. What are the plans to come up with a new plan in the new year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. We are also working on it, but we are also working through our business plans and that process there. Right now, we realize it is going to be finished, and then we're all working on another one, but our business plans are moving forward first. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is a new strategic plan going to be developed during 2020-2021? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It will depend on what we can contain in the business plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I am having some difficulty understanding whether a strategic plan is going to be developed or not and what the relationship is to the business plan. I thought we had finished with business plans. Maybe next year there is going to be a four-year rolling business plan as part of the budgeting exercise, but I don't see that replacing the need for a strategic plan. Is the department going to prepare a new strategic plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, I will ask my deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are looking at the current strategic plan, knowing that it is coming up to expiry, and knowing that, with a new Legislative Assembly, new mandate, new priorities, we want to make sure that that strategic plan isn't inconsistent with the new priorities of the Assembly, but we are also mindful that, with a four-year business plan, there often is room in a document such as that for a department to outline its strategic priorities, and we don't want to duplicate work, necessarily, given limited resources. Our intention is to work with the Department of Finance as they establish the format for the business plan, to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts between the two documents. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess my advice to the Minister and the department is that I understand there might be some relationship to the work that they are going to do during a four-year business plan, but that's not the same, necessarily, as a strategic plan. That's my two cents' worth.

Madam Chair, can I move over to the Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board found on 302? I would like to ask how many disputes the Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board has ever dealt with. I think it was created in 2014 or 2015. How many disputes have they dealt with? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I apologize. We're still trying to get the earpiece to work.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake. Can you repeat your question, please.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. How many disputes has the Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board adjudicated? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. None at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there any kind of a plan to look at or decide whether we continue to need a Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Right now, we are still continuing to keep this in there. It's part of working with the Gwich'in comprehensive land claim process, the Sahtu Dene and the Metis process, as well. Basically, we have agreements with these land claim agreements, and we need to keep this as part of the agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I disagree with the Minister. There were already dispute resolution processes in arbitration process in each of the land rights agreements. This was sort of pushed onto us by the federal government. It was their creation, and we adopted this as a result of the devolution agreement. I want to urge the Minister and his department to review the need for this body. I don't think there is a need for it, and I personally disagree with the way that surface rights holders are treated. They are only entitled to compensation under the legislation. If a mining company comes in and stakes up my backyard and wants to mine my yard, all I am entitled to is compensation. This is the free entry system from the time when the land was ruled by kings and queens. This has no place in our modern society. I want to ask the Minister about where the money comes from for this board. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. It is a flow-through from the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is this a contribution agreement that just covers the Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board, or is it a part of a broader contribution agreement that covers a whole variety of devolution activities? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is for one specific agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Has the Minister actually had any communications whatsoever with any of the Indigenous governments over the need for this board to continue? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I have not. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Given that we have already started to make some reasonable in-roads into the free entry system under the Mineral Resources Act where Indigenous governments are going to get notice of people wanting to stake claims, there may be requirements around work plans for work to be conducted as part of mineral exploration and given to Indigenous governments. I am just wondering why we continue to have this colonial structure in place, and is the Minister prepared to look at whether we need to continue this Surface Rights Board? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we will look at it moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Do we actually have an agreement in place for the funds to come from the federal government for this expenditure? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do. Right now, we are renegotiating with the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Do we actually have an agreement in place right now to cover these expenses that are going to be incurred in the new year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have received interim funding for one year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. What happens if there is no arrangement reached? Do we have to keep paying for this ourselves, then, out of our own funds? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Financial Management Board has directed us to go back to them if we are not able to renegotiate with the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know the clock is ticking down. I really do want to urge the Minister to look at the need for this. I don't think there is a need for it anymore, and it needs to be rejigged in a way that recognizes legitimate rights of people who have surface interests, whether they are Indigenous or not. I just think that this kind of colonial approach needs to be revisited and probably done away with. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have already made a commitment to the Member that we are going to look at it, and that is exactly what we are going to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am aware of a number of Indigenous leaders who have directed their citizens to not pay their lease fees, whether it be equity or otherwise. Can I have the Minister update me on the department's current approach to lease fees when a person has been directed by their leadership to not pay them?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are rights-based cabins. We are working with Indigenous governments to identify the rights-based cabins. If people are out there saying, "Don't pay it," I would strongly encourage their leadership and the residents of the Northwest Territories to pay their lease fees moving forward. Again, if they feel that they have rights-based cabins, please identify that with us, and we are willing to work with them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my concerns is that all are a number of rights-based cabins. There are even people's houses within municipal boundaries who are being directed by their leadership to not pay the fees. I question why this is being dealt with in the Department of Lands. My question is: if we are going to have true nation-to-nation relationships and Indigenous governments are taking a position to not pay lease fees, is this not something that would be better suited and dealt with by Executive and Indigenous Affairs?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a legal agreement. It is a document signed by people, so it is a legal document. If it is a rights-based cabin, we are asking people to identify that. If it is part of the process that they are working on with EIA, that is something that their leadership needs to work on with them. With Lands, we have a legal agreement with our residents of the Northwest Territories, and we need to follow this agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. If someone comes forward and identifies that it is a rights-based cabin, do we then not charge them lease fees?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Right now, it is something that we are working through. We have actually made a commitment that we are putting it to the side right now. We are working through it. We want people to identify rights-based cabins. Then we put it aside, and then we will work on that later on, because we have other issues that we are trying to deal with. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It appears that was a no. I guess my question is: if someone comes forward and identifies a rights-based cabin, we are going to put it aside, but we are going to continue to charge them? I know a number of people have been receiving letters in the territory. Would the Minister be willing to, once something is identified as a rights-based cabin, remove the lease fees related to it?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I think I am going to get my assistant deputy minister to elaborate further on this because I guess I am not getting the message clearly out there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Baetz.

MR. BAETZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one of the challenges that we are facing at the moment is something as simple as clearly defining what a rights-based cabin is. I think depending on where you are in the territories, whether you are in the southern part or whether you are in the far northern part, different people have different ideas of what a rights-based cabin or what a rights-based camp is. We are currently working with other government departments to try to begin a process where we can help define. I think there is also some important work that is coming up in terms of working with other Indigenous organization to help us define what a rights-based cabin is so that we have a logical and methodical approach going forward.

Some cabin owners are entered into a lease with the GNWT. That, I think, is what the Minister was referring to with respect to a legal contract that people have entered into with the GNWT, that we are trying to ensure that we can hold people to or hold people to account for the commitment that has been made with respect to the lease that they have entered into. Thank you, Madam Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Baetz. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Also, people have to understand that there is a difference between land lease fees and taxation issues. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do understand that there is a difference between land lease fees and taxation. I guess my concern here is we have the Department of Lands acknowledging that there are rights-based cabins and then continuing to charge those people fees. I really don't think that this is the purview of the Department of Lands. I think this is a matter of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. One of the problems is we have seen land administration continue to be a colonial tool where we enforce these policies without looking at the larger picture, that Indigenous nations are saying, "No, these are rights-based, and we do not have to fall under the control of the Department of Lands." I would like to move on. We will continue this conversation. My question is: is the Minister of Lands willing to review the lease-only policy within municipal boundaries?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Real simple: yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that "yes." I guess my next question is: when can we expect to see the public lands act in force? I am very happy that we are finally getting one type of land, public land, in the Northwest Territories, but when can we see those regulations developed and the public land act in force?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Regulations enforcement, well, first of all we have got to get the regulations done. Then we can enforce the public lands act. We have made a commitment to committee that it's going to take us up to three years to do it because we need to do it right. We have a number of challenges out there of the way lands were managed in the past, and so we have made a commitment to have it done in three years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North, no more questions? Any other questions on the corporate management? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to, I guess, lands and unsettled areas, like the South Slave for instance and the Deh Cho, ITI developed an agricultural policy or a strategy. I am just wondering. I hear concerns, I guess, from people who want to do agriculture and they don't have access to lands, except for little plots, possibly. Is your department looking at maybe how to resolve that and allow some lands to be made available for agricultural use? Whether it's only one year at a time, people are looking for something to expand that market. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Would that question be more appropriate for the operations section? I am just trying to make sure it falls in the right place. Yes, that will be for the next section. I can put you on for that section. Do you have any for corporate management?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Yes, thank you. Just on the \$303,000 and the board: what is the board make-up? Who are the board members, or where do the board members come from, and how long have they be on there? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Oh, God, I am going to say these names wrong here, so I am going to turn to the deputy minister here on this. Thank you.

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

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have Mr. Baetz giving me a hard time for ripping the page out of his book. The current board is composed of a chair, who is Louie Azzolini, and then there are six other members, Elizabeth Wright, Edwin Amos, Mike Vaydik, oh, right, that is vacant right now -- I am reading a dated thing because we do have vacancies that we are currently working on filling -- Mike Vaydik, Danny Bayha, Ian McCrae, and Vern Christensen, whose spot is also vacant at this point, so we have a couple of vacancies that we are currently working to fill.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are these directors primarily living in the Northwest Territories or are some from southern Canada? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, except for the one who was removed. It is vacated. He was actually living down south, but that position is vacated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. How long have these directors been in place? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I can give you the dates, or would you risk to have the information given to you in writing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. He can give it to my in writing. Just one more item: the \$303,000, is that money, those funds, fully spent each year, or are there some that are not used? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is really detailed information. I apologize. We just have to get that information here. There was a carryover of \$44,000 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess after listening to the Member for Frame Lake's comments and the number of people who have come in front of the board, which sounds like nil, I have a question about having that board in place, as well. The only thing that would, I guess, stop me from saying "get rid of it" is that it's job creation and that is what we are looking for here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. I will take that as a comment. Are there any further questions on this section? If not, please turn to page 301. Lands, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$3,612,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Operations, beginning on page 304, with information items on page 306. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: No questions, no. Yes, just back to the agricultural opportunities, I guess my concern is that we have an agricultural strategy in place but we have no land available to actually do anything, especially in the South Slave and the Deh Cho area. I am wondering if there is anything that this department can do to make lands available for agricultural use. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a process, and you apply for it through commercial lease of lot. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The other one of the concerns that people had was that, like, I am not quite sure what the cost of the commercial lease would be, but would it equate to

what it would be for an agricultural lease in Alberta, say? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I don't know the comparison, if it's compared to Alberta, but we do have a process that puts a value to the land for the lease. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: If the Minister could make that information available to me in writing. One of the concerns is that the cost of the lease is disproportionate to what it is in with agricultural leases in Alberta, and the portions of land that they're looking for is smaller as well here in the territories. I'd just ask the Minister if he would take a look at the comparison and come up with a number that is realistic for the use of the land. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Quite simply: yes, we're looking into it. One of the concerns that we had, but again, it's through the appraisal process. Yes, we're looking into it. It's part of one of the processes that, when I came on, we discussed this, and we are looking at that as part of our regulations. We'll report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer, and that's all the questions I have. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I think the plan is for the department to amalgamate the Commissioner's lands with the territorial lands. Presently, I believe the Commissioner's lands are administered by the municipalities. The territorial lands would be by the GNWT. I could be wrong on that, but you can correct me. When you do the amalgamation there, I am wondering what the picture is looking like for the municipalities, whether they're going to control all these lands, or is it the territorial government that's going to control all these lands? I'll just start with that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, the NWT lands and the

Commissioner's lands are managed by the Government of the Northwest Territories, so all we're doing is we're trying to have consistency by amalgamating NWT land and Commissioner's land. We've had some huge differences and some challenges out there, so we're trying to move it forward. We will also be working with the municipal governments where possible. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: It sounds like the GNWT will be administering and approving all lands applications. Is that what you're saying? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Yes, the Government of the Northwest Territories does manage the Commissioner's and NWT lands, or the amalgamation of it, and we work in consultation with the municipal governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: I don't know. Maybe it's happening already, but do the municipalities get a share of any fees that are charged on the lands? Mahsi?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, not with the leases. They get the taxes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho. Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to begin with the equity leases. Can the Minister of Lands tell me how many equity leases there are outstanding and the total amount owed on them?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. It's 218 equity leases right now. As for the total amount owing, we will have to get that information, because that's pretty detailed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would appreciate having that figure, because I see we're spending millions of dollars every year in equity

lease administration, and I'm questioning whether there is actually even that much money owing under the equity leases. Will the Minister commit that, by the end of this Assembly, we will have dealt with the remaining equity leases?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I would love to say yes, but some of the leases actually extend beyond this Assembly. What we're trying to do is work with the clients and trying to be as proactive as we can to get this equity lease issue dealt with. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess this goes back to that issue. I question if there is outstanding money on people's equity leases, and they're not making payments, and we agree that we will eventually give them the land in fee simple. Why are we spending millions of dollars administering this when we could simply just hand over the land? Is the Department of Lands willing to look into cases where there may be outstanding fees? Is the Department of Lands willing to conduct an analysis of whether we're actually spending more money administering equity leases than we are actually owed at the end of the day?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. First and foremost, when we're looking at equity leases, it's about compliance, making sure the property is there. Also, in regard to the money, if we do waive their fees, we're going to have other people asking for their fees to be waived. What we're trying to do is work with the clients, the leaseholders, to do what's right, moving forward. The biggest challenge right now, from what we're seeing, is the compliance issue. We need to be compliant with the lease agreement so that we can turn it over. We would love for people to be able to turn over the land based on the work that we're trying to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I don't understand. Ultimately, if we're going to hand over the land in fee simple, which will have inherently different conditions, it's a different basket of rights than an equity lease. Why does the person have to be compliant before we just give them the land in fee simple?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I'm going to start, and then I'm going to turn to my assistant deputy minister. First and foremost, each equity lease has some different flavour to it, so that needs to be addressed. Again, it could be that we turn it over for \$1, or we sell it for a value, what the appraised value is. As for compliance, if we turn over a piece of property that's not compliant and we have problems in the future, the GNWT is liable. I understand why the Member is looking at it, but we want to make sure we do it right, and that's the most important part of it, making sure that people are compliant, and working with them moving forward. At this point in time, with your permission, I'd ask the assistant deputy minister to add to it.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister of Lands. Mr. Baetz.

MR. BAETZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one of the important things with respect to the compliance question is that it doesn't make a whole bunch of sense for the Government of the NWT to transfer over a parcel of land that, as soon as we sign on the dotted line, an individual might not be compliant with a community bylaw. A lot of the compliance things that we are talking about aren't just with respect to the lease itself, although the lease itself does reflect what some of the bylaws are with respect to setback from property lines and so forth. There are also challenges with respect to whether or not they're compliant, or whether a leaseholder is compliant with some of the financial admin requirements, whether or not they are paid up on their taxes, whether or not they are behind in other types of payments that need to happen.

It is important for us to be as fair and equitable across the board with everybody, and if we were to forgive and just move forward to fee simple title for those who haven't gone through the whole equity lease program, or who are non-compliant in some other way, shape, or form, it makes it difficult to try to demonstrate that we are being fair and equitable across all equity leaseholders across the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. If we transfer the land in fee simple, and then it's not complying with a community bylaw, those bylaws still apply, and it's the responsibility of the community to deal with that. This issue of, you know, "If it's there's not financial compliance," but we're actually spending millions of dollars a year trying to get people in compliance, many of whom are Indigenous rights holders. There is a lot of

complexity here that I believe the Department of Lands needs to take a better look at.

I would like to move on, though. In my riding of Yellowknife North, we have already started converting a number of leases to fee simples, beginning with Cassidy Point. Is the Minister of Lands willing to continue converting the leases up the Ingraham Trail to fee simple?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're talking recreational leases and that. That's something different than equity leases. Equity leases have been agreements made by the government and the constituent or the client to turn that over. The Member is asking us to look outside the boundary, to look at his riding that he represents and other ridings that have this issue. Right now, we're not able to do that. Right now, we have to focus on trying to get the tasks that we need to get done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that answer. It was a priority of the 18th Assembly to begin this work and complete a Yellowknife periphery area recreation management plan. Can the Minister update me on what the status of that is?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. At this point in time, I would ask the assistant deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Baetz.

MR. BAETZ: The Yellowknife periphery area plan was a piece of work that was started a number of years ago. The department has gone through a number of different components to it with respect to the recreational leasing management framework that was created, and that was nearly complete. One of the things that we needed to do, as well, as we were working through the periphery area, or the YPA, was to ensure that we engaged and that we had on board all of the Indigenous organizations that we needed to have. Not to say that we don't have everybody on board, but we are continuing to work with Indigenous organizations to ensure that everybody is on the same page and everybody understands exactly what direction we are going and how we are going about it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I am going to rephrase that. What happened is we started the work on the Yellowknife management plan, and then the Department of Lands failed to do adequate consultation, got some resistance from Indigenous governments, and now the plan is not complete. I struggle with why the Department of Lands, which is responsible for the land in the Northwest Territories, cannot do proper consultation. My question is: when will we see the Yellowknife periphery area recreation management plan complete?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not going to say that we didn't or we did. We are working on our consultation. We are working with Aboriginal groups. We haven't stopped working on this plan. To get it completed, we don't know what the completion date is as we move forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to go to the equity lease line here. It's declining from last year. My understanding was that there was an issue with regard to the terms of some of these equity leases, and there was an appearance of lack of fairness around this and that the department was trying to bring some consistency with this and get all of the equity leases moved over into fee simple title.

It's not really a question of revenue here; it's a question about cleaning up this mess that we inherited from previous land administration. Whether it was GNWT and/or the feds, it was a bad practice. Maybe we want to get into that eventually, but it needs to be a fair and consistent approach. I would like to know: how many leases have we actually converted into fee simple title so far, as that's cost us a million dollars? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: First of all, when we spent the million dollars, it's about the whole process. It's not just that, well, we did one or 12 or 14; it's about the whole process. If the Member wants a complete breakdown, we can give him the complete breakdown in writing, or does he want the number here today? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, look, I probably mischaracterized this. I know that there had to be a bunch of policy work, people reviewing the terms of all of these leases; you had to go out and do inspections. I get all of that. A lot of front-end work had to be done. I understand that. I just want to know, now, how many have actually been converted to fee simple title, and are we on schedule to get this finished and fixed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One has been completed in the settled region, and seven more are in progress. I know that, in the riding that I represent, when I was talking to the superintendent there, we're very close again. It's about the compliance issue; that's the biggest challenge, is to get people compliant, and we'd be able to move forward on those. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. We have eight done, 218 to go. How many more years of funding does the department require or was originally budgeted to get this equity lease issue completed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, we have positions in each of the regions trying to address this. Right now, the funding is going to be sunsetted, I believe, next year. At that point in time, we will have to come back to FMB to make our submissions, and to committee, on it. Right now, we are not going to get it all done in the next year, but as we further progress moving forward, I can't give him an exact date, but the idea is to have it done within this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am a bit worried about that. Can we get a commitment out of the Minister -- I saw some of these, I think, in the last Assembly -- to get quarterly updates from the Minister on the progress that's being made in this program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's one of the best words I've heard here today. I want to move on to diamond resource management. That's on page 305. We actually had a high of \$643,000 back in 2018-2019, and now, this year, it's proposed for \$596,000. I think that this is the, basically, staffing of, I may not get the titles right, but lands inspectors to go up and inspect the diamond mines. These are huge operations; I've been there myself to all of them, except for Gahcho Kue. They're very complex areas, and I am sure the ADM has been up there himself and seen these areas, some of them are starting to close. Parts of them are starting to close. There are closure plans that are being changed, I know, for Ekati Mine. Snap Lake is in closure. We don't want to inherit any liability associated with these. We have seen that during the life of this government with Cameron Hills. What kind of assurance can I get from the Minister and his department that we actually have the right level of resources here to make sure that these properties are closed properly and we don't inherit liability? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I understand. Cameron Hills, we look at that. We are learning from that. Right now, we have securities in place. Our inspectors are identified strictly for those mines. We are doing a really good job of addressing it. We are working with the diamond mine, making sure we don't have this situation as Cameron Hills. Cameron Hills was something that we inherited previously. We are working on these mines with our regulatory process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. We inherited management of the diamond mines, as well. The Minister knows that. I am not making any comparison between what the diamond mines do, because they are large corporate entities that have lots of resources still attached to them. I know how hard our inspectors work. This has nothing to do with the inspectors. They do a fantastic job. I just want to make sure that we have the right level of resources to get the job done. How do we determine what our needs are? Is there any kind of needs assessment, any examination of this gap? I know you folks have some kind of a risk management matrix or framework that was floated around in the last Assembly. I guess I just want to

have a little bit more assurance that there is some systematic review of what the resource needs are to make sure that we are doing the best possible job to protect the taxpayers and the environment. What kind of rational process does the department go through to look at how they calculate what the \$596,000 is based on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask the assistant deputy minister to convince Mr. O'Reilly that we are doing the best we can to address this challenge. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. BAETZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one of the important things to keep in mind is that, as diamond mines grow from infancy all the way through to their full production all the way through to their full closure, the mine themselves as well as the government, which is our Department of Lands, work very closely with the Environment and Natural Resources to ensure that the appropriate closure reclamation plans are in place. That is one of the really key elements that I think is critical to ensuring that the diamond mines, as they wind down, wind down in an orderly fashion and don't just pull up stakes and be gone and left somebody holding the bag or even being able to draw down security. Somebody still has to manage that kind of a final closure reclamation.

The plans that the diamond mines are under the close scrutiny of the GNWT as well as, probably, our partners, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards, are very thorough, very detailed. There are legal requirements for the companies to make sure that they adhere to them. As a diamond mine closes down, part of these plan are: how are they going to continue to monitor into the future. Our inspectors continue to make sure that they are out there on as regular a basis as they were when the mine was in production or when the mine was being built to make sure that any of the requirements of the closure reclamation or any requirements of a water licence or any requirements of a land-use permit are fully adhered to and fully complied with. That is, in a nutshell, how we determine whether or not the mines are winding down in an appropriate fashion and are seeing the appropriate amount of oversight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Baetz. Are there any further questions for this section? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 305. Lands, operations, operation expenditure

summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$12,113,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Moving on to planning and coordination, beginning on page 307 with information items on 310 to 312. Questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Completion of land-use plans in collaboration with all Aboriginal governments was a mandate of the last Assembly, which, once again, was not fulfilled by this department. What level of confidence does the Minister have that we will have complete land-use plans in the life of this Assembly?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, can I get Acting Assistant Deputy Minister Terry Hall to come sit at the table and switch with Assistant Mr. Baetz?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witness out and Mr. Hall in. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I am going to give it a short answer, then I am going to turn it to Mr. Hall. It is a very complicated process. Again, there are a lot of moving parts. We would like to have these plans done by this Assembly. However, as moving parts come, we may not get it completed and our workload right now. At this point in time, I would ask Mr. Hall to further provide more information.

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

MR. HALL: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister stated, land-use plans, we would very much like to have them completed as soon as possible. As the Minister stated, we are not the only party to the land-use planning process. It is a partnership between us, the Government of Canada, and, most importantly, Indigenous governments. In that type of process, we don't get to dictate the specific timelines, but we are working to complete plans across the NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize the Department of Lands has a lot of work to do and there is a lot of complication in land administration. My question is: I would really like to see a land-use plans for all Indigenous

governments during the life of this Assembly. Does the department have the sufficient resources to do that right now?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with the Member. We want it done in this Assembly. Right now, our funds allow us the ability to get as much work done as we can. Dealing with this, if everything lines up, yes, we do have enough funds right now to address the workload that we have presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to speak now to securities and project assessment. Can the Minister of Lands tell me how much the Department of Lands holds in total securities?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I apologize for the delay. The government has, right now, \$649,114,421.47. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just clarify that \$649,000,000, those are the securities held by the Department of Lands, and that doesn't also include those under water licences, ENR?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: That there is what the GNWT has together, like ENR and Lands. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps if I could get the Minister to provide me a breakdown of what is held versus Lands and ENR? I will have questions on this when we get to speak to the Minister of ENR about the overlapping role of securities administration in those departments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. For Lands, what we hold right now is \$89,573,416.47 for the

Department of Lands. ENR's total is \$559,541,005. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Will the Minister of Lands commit to reviewing the Project Assessment Policy and to clarify the department's role in project assessments in relation to the work that ENR does as well?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a relatively new policy, so we can come back to committee. I am not going to make a commitment, but I will make a commitment that we will come back to committee to have further conversations on this. Like I said, it's a relatively new policy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my reason for requesting it is because securities administration in the GNWT, as we have seen with Cameron Hills, as we've seen with other departments, it seems to be all over the place in this kind of patchwork process. Will the Minister of Lands pursue a consolidated system to responsibly manage all of our securities, identify securities by project, and guarantee timely postings -- this is multiple questions. Madam Chair, will the Department of Lands conduct a review of all the securities in the GNWT and look to set out one coherent policy for the GNWT?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are presently working with OROGO and ENR and Lands on this. We have already started the process to streamline or try to make sure we do it properly. We are also, I think, maybe, can say that the project assessment function, we're also working on that as well presently. I think that was your previous question, so I was able to clarify that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any other questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to thank my colleague from Yellowknife North for stealing a number of my questions, but I will try to do a mop-up operation here. For land use planning, can someone tell me how much we're spending on

land use planning in the Wek'eezhii Management Area for 2020-2021? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. In 2019-2020, we spent \$647,000, and Infrastructure spent \$79,000 for a total of \$726,000. For the fiscal year coming up, we budgeted \$497,000, and Infrastructure has budgeted \$79,000, for a total of \$576,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I believe in land use planning. It's what got me up here in 1985; I was the land use planning coordinator for the Dene Nation. Why are we spending our money to do land use planning in the Wek'eezhii Management Area? Clearly, this is a federal land rights agreement implementation issue. The feds should be paying for this. Why are we paying for this and not the feds? This is not the first time I've raised this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to start, and then I am going to turn it to the assistant deputy minister. This is a collaborative approach between the federal government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Tlicho government. It's a collaborative approach to it. For further detail, I am going to ask Mr. Hall to provide further detail, with your permission.

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

MR. HALL: Thank you, Madam Chair. The planning process in Wek'eezhii, we have undertaken with the Tlicho government and the Government of Canada, all full partners in that process. We agree that Canada is the party responsible to fund land use planning in the NWT, as they have done for the Gwich'in and Sahtu plans. What we are doing through our funding for Wek'eezhii planning is getting the groundwork in place in order for a planning process to take place. We are still looking at Canada to fund that planning process. Our contribution is to prepare for that planning process. This commitment sort of stems from the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, where the GNWT stated that it wishes to promote and support effective land use planning throughout the NWT. This is our part to get the ball rolling for Wek'eezhii planning, but yes, we are looking to Canada to fund the planning process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, there's a dispute resolution process in the Tlicho agreement. I don't know why we don't trigger that, start the formal process, and take it to arbitration if we have to. This is clearly a federal responsibility, and the feds should be paying for this. It should not be coming out of our money. I leave that for the Minister. I left it for the last Minister; nothing was done. I don't want to be here three years from now without our government having actually stood up for our rights under the agreement. Work with the Tlicho government. Submit a joint dispute resolution submission. Get this thing sorted out.

Madam Chair, I want to move on to securities. We had this issue brought to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment that there seems to be a problem with our government accepting land and water security that has come from the land and water boards as a consolidated amount. From what I understand, they refuse to accept security that had been estimated for the Misery Deep project. Has this been sorted out, or are we still insisting that the land and water securities be held separately? This may not be a big deal for that particular project, but as other big projects come along, or renewals of licences come along, this has got to be sorted out. Otherwise, we're not accepting securities that the companies themselves want to put up. Has this been resolved, Madam Chair?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, I would have to say no, it hasn't been resolved. We're looking into it and, again, we're trying to get it right, but right now I can say that it has not been resolved, to our knowledge. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I thought I was going to get excited with the last set of questions. You know, I don't know what the problem is, here. The feds were able to accept these kinds of security estimates, and they took the securities, they held them, and now our government doesn't want to do that? This is putting our taxpayers at risk. We raised with the previous Minister of Lands in the context of the Public Land Act. We tried to build in provisions to try to deal with this, allowing for that Minister to make agreements with other Ministers; the Minister's twin, ENR. The Minister wouldn't go for it. This has got to get sorted out, or our taxpayers are going to be at risk for

hundreds of millions of dollars of environmental liabilities. When does the Minister anticipate sorting this out? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to lie, here, and say tomorrow or the next day. What I will do is I will make a commitment to come back to committee and give an update where we are and how we're moving forward. So I can give you that commitment. I can't give you an exact date, but working with the two departments to present that information to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I really look forward to that briefing and the information coming forward. I guess I've sat here really patiently for four years, now. In the last mandate, there was a commitment to develop a comprehensive approach framework to prevent public liabilities coming to this government and, guess what, it has already happened. I predicted it, and it has happened. Our government has not developed any policy in this area. The only legislative thing that I'm aware of is rolling back the requirement for mandatory financial security. We tried to get that into the Public Land Act. The Minister refused. I don't know where we're going with this stuff as a government. We cannot demonstrate to even our own citizens or taxpayers that we can responsibly manage resources, so how are you going to convince the federal government to give us more delegated authority under the NVRMA, or give us control over the NVRMA? I want a plan, and I want it now, and our taxpayers deserve a plan. When is the Minister going to start to sort this out and protect the taxpayers and the environment of the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with the Member. We agree that polluters should be paying, and at this point in time, for more details, I'm going to ask the deputy minister through your permission. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister said, we believe the polluter should pay. When government makes presentations to regulatory bodies, we do so presenting figures representing full clean-up costs, and those are the

positions we put forward. At times, boards will vary the security provisions or not accept our submission. I believe that the work that the Executive and Indigenous Affairs is undertaking in order to work toward greater control with the NVRMA would allow us to have greater control and issue policy direction to a regulatory body in this area, and that is certainly something that I think would benefit the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Are there any further questions on this section? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Getting back to the land use planning and the GNWT's intent to create a revised Public Land Act, from what I'm reading here, it says they are going to conduct regional land use planning and coordinate the GNWT input into land use planning processes. It also further states that they will work with external planning partners, including Indigenous governments. I'm wondering if these planning partners that are Indigenous are the ones that signed on to devolution, because there is no mention of consulting with the claimant groups, the Dehcho First Nations or the Akaitcho Treaty 8 people, yet you're going to go ahead and make a Public Land Act and not incorporate or perhaps do your meaningful consultation with these groups, because I believe that Executive and Indigenous Affairs is also looking at that part. They're the ones in charge of negotiations, and you're wanting to do this within three years, to have the Public Land Act. Maybe it's a message that you're hoping to settle all the claims within the three years. Maybe this summer, and then write your new document for two years. You know, it's probably sounding encouraging in that regard, but I'm wondering what your views are, if you've got any type of answers to what I've just been saying. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We work with all Indigenous governments, whether they signed off on devolution or not, but it's also part of the fundamental process moving forward; we need to get these plans forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: So does that mean you are going to be consulting with the Dehcho First Nations? Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do consult but, at this point in time, I'll actually have one of the people who are part of the process, Mr. Hall, actually explain so everybody understands our role with all Indigenous governments, and particularly with DFN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Through your permission, of course.

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

MR. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, there is a separation between the Public Land Act and land use planning. Land use planning occurs through a separate process, and, in each of the areas where we are conducting land use planning, Indigenous governments in those areas are highly consulted and are part of the planning process. As an example of the Gwich'in and Sahtu plans, they are also an approving party to the plan. Through the Dehcho process right now, there is planning work going on and the Dehcho First Nations are part of that process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Hall. Are there questions on planning and coordination? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 308, Lands, planning and coordination, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$7,639,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 297. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 5-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 30-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2020-2021 – LANDS - DEFERRAL
OF FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE
ESTIMATES FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Lands at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee, we have agreed to defer the estimates for the Department of Lands at this time. Member for Frame Lake.

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

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: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

Report of Committee of the Whole

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and would like to report progress with one motion carried. 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. Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 10, 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 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021
 - Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 10, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. Have a good weekend, everyone.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:35 p.m.