



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 26

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Pages 957 - 1010

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge
(Deh Cho)

Ms. Caitlin Cleveland
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Paulie Chinna
(Sahtu)
Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for Homelessness

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

Ms. Julie Green
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

Mr. Rylund Johnson
(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Frieda Martselos
(Thebacha)

Hon. Katrina Nokleby
(Great Slave)
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister of Infrastructure
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson
(Hay River South)

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

Hon. Diane Thom
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities

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

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

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerks
Mr. Glen Rutland
Ms. Kim Wickens

Committee Clerks
Mr. Michael Ball
Ms. Cynthia James
Ms. Jennifer Franki-Smith

Law Clerks
Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Alyssa Holland

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	957
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	957
47-19(2) – 2020 Wildfire Season (Thompson)	957
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	958
Flooding in the Inuvik Region (Semmler)	958
Territorial Fire Centre (Martselos)	958
On-the-Land Treatment Programs (Lafferty).....	959
Marine Transportation Services (Simpson).....	959
Emerging Wisely Plan and Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Capacity (O'Reilly).....	959
Support for Indigenous Languages (Johnson)	960
Difficulties with Home Schooling (Jacobson)	960
Improving Government Procurement to Support Northern Businesses (Cleveland)	961
Home Internet Connectivity (Norn)	961
ORAL QUESTIONS	962
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	972
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	972
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1009
THIRD READING OF BILLS	1010
Bill 6 – An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act	1010
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1010

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, June 2, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:34 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 47-19(2):
2020 WILDFIRE SEASON

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. The wildfire season this year is off to a slow start thanks to cooler temperatures in May, right across the territory. It has only been in the last week or so that things are finally starting to warm up. Hot weather is predicted through June and July, with temperatures well above normal. These are prime conditions for wildfires.

As of this week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has responded to one wildfire in the Northwest Territories. This fire is suspected to be human-caused and is under investigation. Mr. Speaker, it is critical that residents use extreme caution with campfires while out on the land. This is especially important early in the season, when the land is often dry. People planning to do spring brush or grass burning must get a burn permit and make sure they have water and tools on hand to put it out.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 presents some unique challenges this fire season. Staff at Environment and Natural Resources have been preparing for months, learning from other parts of the country whose fire season begins weeks or months before ours, and have established best practices to keep our fire crews and communities safe.

Large fires require a large response, Mr. Speaker, many people working closely together, eating and sleeping in close quarters. Physical distancing is not possible on your way to a fire, whether you are travelling by aircraft or by vehicle. Setting up pumps and pulling hoses around a fire needs teamwork and people working alongside one another.

That is why we have put in place new health and safety measures for our wildfire operations this year. Fitness testing and training and camp protocols have been modified to limit group sizes; new briefing formats keep face-to-face interactions to a minimum; and surfaces are more frequently cleaned and sanitized. We are also monitoring the health of our fire crews and staff on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, wildfires also produce a lot of smoke, which can be hard on residents with existing health conditions. In a worst-case scenario, wildfires can require community evacuations. Physical distancing would be extremely challenging while evacuating large numbers of people, and add additional stress on the communities, residents, and emergency responders.

This is why we have adjusted our wildfire response strategies this year to take into account the additional challenges of COVID-19. To limit the risks to our fire crews and communities, we will aim to catch fires earlier. We will also be more aggressive in how we fight fires to keep them as small as possible. As I mentioned, large fires require a large response, and we want to keep the number of crews on a fire to a minimum and try to avoid bringing in crews from outside the NWT. Under certain conditions, we may also need to put in place fire bans to reduce human-caused fires and consider restricting burning when the fire danger is moderate or higher.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize fire as an important and necessary part of the forest ecosystem. Historically, Environment and Natural Resources responds to less than half of the wildfires on the landscape in any given season. Each fire that is actioned increases the risk of fire in future years. This is because forest fuels build up to a point where controlling new fires becomes more challenging and can result in greater human, financial, and ecological impacts. While more fires will be actioned in 2020, not every fire will be fought.

Environment and Natural Resources has reviewed the additional COVID-related measures for the 2020 season with the Chief Public Health Officer and the Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Health and Social Services, which are in

support of the plan. Environment and Natural Resources will continue to work collaboratively throughout the season to ensure a coordinated effort.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important, perhaps now more than ever, that each one of us does our part to prevent wildfire. This year, Environment and Natural Resources launched a new contest to encourage residents to FireSmart their properties while maintaining physical distance from others. I encourage Northwest Territories residents to take part. Clearing brush, raking leaves, even cutting your lawn, can help keep your home safe.

Finally, I would just like to remind everyone to be careful on the land. Do not let your campfire become a wildfire. By reducing the number of fires in the Northwest Territories this summer, we can all help keep our fire crews and our communities stay safe and healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FLOODING IN THE INUVIK REGION

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April and May are a time in my region and my community that everybody is out on the land, going out ratting, spring hunting. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of our residents have taken it upon themselves and have been encouraged to take their families out on the land. Many in my community have been out and headed out onto the Mackenzie Delta to seek refuge and safety to help stop the spread early on in the COVID-19. There has been some financial support to get more families out for supplies. People have built some new cabins along the Delta, and some have been there since even before my time.

Over the last couple of days, I have been hearing and seeing residents in my community watching the water levels, worrying about their cabins. Water levels in the Beaufort-Delta are the highest levels recorded in the past 17 years that Environment Canada has on record; it was up to 16.5 metres. Last time, in 2006, it was 16.35 metres. Many residents in my community have been forced to leave their cabins. Some had water rising in the middle of the night and had to plan to get out the next day by helicopter as a result of the water rising.

Mr. Speaker, in some cases, people have had to leave a lot of their personal belongings and have suffered great loss to their cabins, their personal

property. Today I will have questions for the Minister of MACA on the resources available to our communities who are suffering as a result of the high water levels in the Beaufort-Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TERRITORIAL FIRE CENTRE

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the issue of capital spending in the NWT, specifically for Fort Smith. I would like to see a new territorial fire centre for the NWT to replace the existing fire centre in Fort Smith. As we all know, the NWT fire centre has the important role of being the first responders to any territorial forest fires. Not only does the fire centre operate across the NWT, but the fire centre also has signed agreements to assist with large forest fires across Canada, as well as internationally.

Geographically, the South Slave region is the northern-most part of the Boreal forest, making this area the most vulnerable to large wildfires. While all NWT communities can be affected by forest fires, most of communities within this area are also surrounded by miles of Boreal forest, which has the potential to create problems within the communities, especially when it involves emergency evacuations.

The NWT fire centre must be state-of-the-art and contain the highest degree of technology and equipment, including fibre optics. The fire centre needs to have modern technologies to assist any communities who require assistance with wildfires. The new facility will also require a large warehouse to contain all the essential equipment that is needed to export personnel responding to wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that our NWT fire centre be on par with national fire centres across the country. The territorial fire centre not only serves all of the NWT but has agreements about assisting national and international fire centres when needed. In return, the NWT fire centre also relies on national and international firefighters to assist here at home when wildfires turn out of control, threatening our communities and resources.

The fire centre has the essential role of containing and maintaining the locations of wildfires, firefighters, and national and international exports. Mr. Speaker, for those very significant reasons, we must ensure that we continue to provide both Northerners and southerners with the most up-to-date technologies and equipment in regard to fire centres. I will have questions for the Minister of

Environment and Natural Resources at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ON-THE-LAND TREATMENT PROGRAMS

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Microphone turned off].

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, there has been success in the regions. I would like to say they have had on-the-land addictions programming in the past. One such program was held in Gameti at Faber Lake in the '90s. An elder ran the program for inmates, with a focus on both counselling and teaching survival skills.

Mr. Speaker, another project that was very successful was in the Sahtu region in the early 2000s. It was also operated by an elderly couple, with a focus on traditional skills and lifestyle. They did a lot of helping and healing. We know, in that sense, that they would be able to help and to motivate our people by teaching our ways of life. [Translation ends]

[Microphone turned off] ...operated by our respected elders, our teachers, our counsellors, and our mentors. Our elders are considered traditional doctors, specialists, and professionals out on the land. They are able to provide advice, life experiences, and continuous support. They have been successful in the past, Mr. Speaker, and can fill the gap that this government has been unable to fill, specifically aftercare programming. I will have questions for the Minister of Health at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker. Masi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the previous sitting, I discussed Marine Transportation Services, or MTS, as it is referred to. It is time to review the management and operations of MTS. It has been three years since the asset purchase, and we have stuck our head in the sand and let it operate as is. MTS was purchased to ensure uninterrupted freight services to the communities along the Mackenzie River and the coast. It quickly morphed into something more that includes providing services such as vessel repair and private charters.

Mr. Speaker, it is time this government identify what we are trying to achieve with MTS. I would like to see an up-to-date business plan confirming business structure options for MTS and planned areas of service it offers to third parties. I need to know how the current relationship this government has with ORSI will impact the future of MTS.

ORSI appears to have unfettered discretion in how it operates MTS based on a contract that I have not seen. How many extensions have been made to the contract, and have there been any concessions made by either side? I would like the contract to be made available, if not to myself, then to the Standing Committee on Economic Development. We have to understand where we are headed. As it affects Hay River and the communities it serves, it is of importance to me, other MLAs, and the residents of the NWT.

In a subsequent Member's statement, I stated that ORSI is currently supplying MTS with marine management and other personnel. Constituents continue to raise concerns with hiring practices, contracting practices, purchasing practices, and to date, it appears minimal improvement has been made to address those concerns. Furthermore, we may now see negotiations between the union and ORSI take place in the very near future. What impact will those negotiations have on this government and delivery of goods and services to the communities?

My overall concern continues to be oversight, or lack of it, that this government has with respect to the management relationship between MTS and ORSI. These concerns have been unaddressed for too long, and we need answers now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMERGING WISELY PLAN AND WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION COMMISSION CAPACITY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our GNWT staff and the Chief Public Health Officer for all their work and sacrifices during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our residents have also endured a lot and deserve our thanks for their patience and calm during these unprecedented times. On May 12, Emerging Wisely was released by the Chief Public Health Officer. It is the phased approach to easing of restrictions for the NWT. I have some personal experience with risk assessment, having developed a plan for the small NGO I worked with before becoming an MLA. I

support the rigorous, systematic, and comprehensive approach taken with our plan and certainly appreciate the amount of time that went into its development. I also support the conservative and staged approach that it takes. It is very complex and has the level of detail that I would expect to see. Thank you again to all of those who put what I imagine to have been countless hours into this detailed and well-thought-out plan.

Plain language materials and information in all the official languages will be critical to the public understanding and accepting the plan. I am still waiting for the communication plan, Mr. Speaker. The graphics and material on the Department of Health website are helpful. We also need these or similar materials in all our official languages. My greatest concern is the reliance on Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission for reviews and/or inspections to develop risk assessments and mitigation measures. I want to make sure that the Commission has adequate capacity to do the amount of work that is headed its way. We don't want a lack of capacity to cause delays in businesses, facilities, NGOs, programs, and services from opening. I will have questions later today for the Minister Responsible for the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all have a collective responsibility to do more to make sure our Indigenous languages thrive. This is not an easy task. Young speakers under 25 are much more likely to gain fluency than those aged 25 to 45, due to a result of intergenerational shame from residential schools and other complicated factors. We have lost a few generations of speakers. I believe there is much more we need to do. There needs to be more oversight in the programs we are delivering. I believe many of the single-class programs we are offering right now are simply failing. We need immersion programs for our Indigenous languages, Mr. Speaker, particularly continuous and reliable land-based immersion programs, which will lead to language transference. No one ever learned French from a single class. In fact, no one really learned any subject from a single class. You have to have immersion as an option.

Now is the time for this work because this is our last generation of people whose first language is an Indigenous language. I am not convinced that we are winning this battle. We have no time to delay this work. If we deliberate and fail now, that is it.

There go five millennia of knowledge, or 13 or 65 millennium. Succession plans need to be in place for Indigenous peoples to be the territorial authorities over their languages. Mr. Speaker, we have many amazing language holders who have been teaching for over 20 years, but, if they are not producing more language speakers than we are losing, then this is a losing battle.

The first step along this battle is to make sure we have the proper data in place. I am not talking about the census data, and I am not talking about the work that is been started in schools. We need to be tracking every single year for every single language, whether we are producing more speakers than we are losing. Absent us doing that, Mr. Speaker, we will all see Indigenous languages go extinct in our lifetime. Then perhaps these interpreter booths around us and the translation work we do will just be a reminder of our collective failure. I will not be part of seeing any Indigenous languages go extinct, and the first step along this is making sure we are clearly and honestly measuring how much of a problem this is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DIFFICULTIES WITH HOME SCHOOLING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT's decision to close schools for the remainder of the school year during the COVID-19 pandemic, I am in full support of. I am very happy they made that decision. I am concerned about the impact of our students' success, though. Almost overnight, students were sent home. The expectation that the parents will take the role of the teacher has left many parents, also working full-time jobs, feeling overwhelmed. I am not worried so much about the households where parents were able to shepherd their kids through the crisis at that time to keep them learning and doing their weekly schoolwork. I am worried about the families who were already having troubles before COVID-19.

Unfortunately, too many households in the Northwest Territories are affected with problems of poverty, addiction, violence. For many students, the school offers respite from the difficulties at home. Now these kids are expected to learn at home. Even the households that parents can cope with the schooling have no Internet access or computers or planning skills for the students to succeed. Of course, there have been some successes, too. I want to acknowledge especially and thank the Beaufort-Delta District Education Council and my DEAs in Nunakput for making sure that food

vouchers were given and making sure kids were fed and ready to learn.

With the release of Emerging Wisely, it looked like the GNWT was ready to immediately resume the school year. Mr. Speaker, I am relieved that that is not the case. Schools need to prepare their classes to resume in the fall, but they are past early days in this crisis. It's now time to start planning on how to resume our classes in the fall and to make sure our academic year is not a write-off. I want to see our kids moving to the next grade when the school year resumes, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPROVING GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT TO SUPPORT NORTHERN BUSINESSES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the GNWT is going to move the NWT economy toward recovery, it must commit to a fundamental change in how it relates to and supports northern business. Last August, the 18th Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment tabled a report identifying what is keeping northern businesses out of government procurement through four themes and two recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, the report first identified a need for consistency, clarity, and transparency in the procurement process. Northern businesses need to understand what the government wants and know where to access that information. The second theme identifies the need to attract northern businesses more effectively. Committee found that multiple local businesses felt disadvantaged competing for government contracts because the invitations to tender reflected a limited understanding of the unique situation of northern businesses and that there is a disconnect between the intent of the policy and reality on the ground. The committee suggested that the GNWT include northern hire requirements and contracts, ensure businesses know about opportunities under \$25,000, divide large projects into smaller ones, and adopt solutions to increase competitiveness of northern businesses, for example, requiring southern firms to have joint venture agreements with northern businesses.

The third theme is related to communications. The GNWT needs to better understand NWT business capacities. I have spoken with northern businesses passed over for work after being told they did not have the capacity to execute the contract, only to be hired in turn by the southern business chosen by

the GNWT. The GNWT needs a fundamental change in its dealings with northern businesses. Government must stop acting as the gatekeeper and start being the facilitator of our future. The fourth theme is support-related. We need to ensure the government is supporting the growth and success of northern business through mechanisms that support prompt payment and continued professional development for those who work within GNWT procurement, to make sure they fully understand procurement policies, how to apply them, and the importance of working to solve the northern procurement debate.

Mr. Speaker, the report recommended that the GNWT establish a procurement advisory panel and a comprehensive review of all procurement policies, with a view to modernizing the procurement process to the benefit of all northern businesses. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Infrastructure on how we can improve the GNWT's procurement process and support our local businesses as we work together to rebuild the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOME INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to talk about the cost of the speed of home Internet and home Internet rates in the NWT, and how we're all connected during this pandemic. One thing I've noticed during this crisis, and I've mentioned this before, is that many of our territory's long-standing issues, such as lack of housing, lack of access to healthcare, and also lack of access to high-speed Internet, have all been amplified issues for people across the NWT.

Internet need in particular has been more pronounced than usual, especially because everyone has been required to stay home for a couple of months on end. There are some positives. I was really happy to see, from our government, there was a mover from this side of the House to assist some of our students, so I was really happy to see that. Last night, when we were sitting in Committee of the Whole, and it really made me think about this today, we talked about meeting via teleconference for session or committee meetings, that I couldn't do that if I was sitting in a place like Lutselk'e. We need to work on this and ensure that we do see that all our small communities are connected and up to par from what we see in other parts of the world. For that work, to get to that point, we're going to need some will from industry and our government to see that happen.

I want to bring to people's attention in this House, Mr. Speaker, that there was a capital plan that will see a fibre optic link go from Taltson through Simpson Islands up north. Through that plan, Lutselk'e was bypassed, so that's an issue. Right now, I'll state that, arguably, Lutselk'e has the worst cell phone and Internet connectivity in the North. If you are working for, say, a business or the band in Lutselk'e, you'd have so much trouble downloading a document. If you're trying to communicate with one of us, even myself, it's really, really, hard, so we need to work on that.

With that, I will talk a little bit about some Internet packages that we have around the world. I'll ask the House here, Mr. Speaker, for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief. The average Internet connection speed around the world, one of the fastest in the world is Taiwan, so that's pretty fast. The Canadian average is 30 megabytes per second. Comparatively, just to give a glimpse of what it's like in the North, in Alberta, their fibre 300-plus package is 300 megabytes per second, and that's unlimited. One of the kind of mid-range packages for Northwestel, their 50 package, is 50 megabytes per second, and that's not unlimited, so you're only allowed 200 gigabytes. So, if we get more unlimited packages in the North, that would be really good to see, and bring us up to par for the rest of the country and the rest of the world. Marsi cho. I'll have some questions for the Minister of Finance later.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 273-19(2): STUDENT SUCCESS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, today. What are the steps the government is taking to ensure that there is no child left behind in the up and coming school year, during this pandemic response? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a big question. There are 10 different education bodies and 49 different schools in 33 different communities, so a lot of different steps have been taken. As the Member noted, school was closed in mid-March, and the decision to close it for the remainder of the school year was made, I believe, on about March 26th. The reason for that is because the authorities and myself felt that, if you waited every two weeks to see if we would reopen, we wouldn't be putting the effort into delivering distance learning, and so the decision was made to close the schools for the remainder of the school year and put our efforts into preparing ways to educate students when they're at home or when they're out on the land.

Depending on where you were in the territory, there have been different methods taken. There was an assessment done in every community on how well different types of education would work, how many students had access to the Internet, how many students had access to computers. If those were low numbers, then that school would primarily be using a paper-based distance education. There have been lots of those done. There were no layoffs in the schools. All of the support assistants remained working, all of the teachers remained working, they continued to provide food programs. Many, many things have happened, and I could stand up here all day and talk about it, but the point is that an amazing effort was put in to ensure there was a continuity of education.

Now, has that worked as well as having in-person classes? Absolutely not. There is no way it could. Parents don't have time to teach when they are working full-time from home. Students need to be in school, there are no two ways about it. While much has been done, I will say that it's no replacement for in-person classes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: I really want to highlight again from my Member's statement that our local DEAs in the Beaufort-Delta did an awesome job, and still are doing an awesome job, on a paper base, giving weekly homework for the students. I'm just wondering: is there any possibility with the local DEAs to assist the students who are home and not conducive to learning in regard to computers and stuff like that?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'm not sure if the Member is speaking about students who don't have access to computers. In those cases, students have relationships with their teachers and, right down to the level of teacher and student, there was outreach. Teacher have done their best to connect with every student and ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn. In a number of locations in the Deh Cho, and I believe up in the Beaufort-Delta, as well, there were initiatives to

distribute computers, Chromebooks. There were other jurisdictions where they were lending out their equipment. In communities where students might not have Internet, the schools would extend their Wi-Fi out into the parking lot so people could come and use the Wi-Fi, so every effort has been made in that sense during this school year. As much as could be done has been done.

I'll mention that I was on a call this morning with 17 education ministers from around the world, and we were all facing similar issues. In the United Kingdom, in Singapore, in Germany, all of these places have the same issues, and so we have done as well, I would say, as most other jurisdictions. We're also competing for supplies, as well. While we wanted laptops and Chromebooks, so did everyone else. So there were a lot of pressures on us, on the education system, but everyone really gave it their all and have been working full-out since the closures.

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, good job on the teachers phoning every second or third day to the students in my household. What is our government offering for counselling for supports for students who require immediate help?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Just like all the teachers and support assistants are still working, so are all the counsellors. Every school counsellor in the territory is still working, and they have continued their relationships with students. So, students who they were meeting with on a regular basis, as soon as the schools closed, they reached out to those students and continued those relationships. ECE and the education authorities did our best to let all students know that those counsellors were still available to speak with any student, so it's just not the ones who already have relationships. They're still available, and they're still available to speak with counsellors.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What's the TA's and the school's plan to start getting ready for the opening of the school year to prepare their classes and schools for opening in September? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: As soon as the Chief Public Health Officer released Emerging Wisely as well as the background document related to schools in which she made the recommendation to reopen schools, the department and the education bodies and the NWT Teachers' Association have been meeting on a daily basis, working to plan for next school year. Now that we know the requirements, we can start the plan. What ECE has done is, they've created a framework so that we have some

continuity across the territory, we have a common framework to go by. Schools are now creating plans to open schools and abide by the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer. We're looking at doing some bigger schools and some smaller schools, medium sized schools, just a range, and then submitting those to the Chief Public Health Officer, getting feedback, and then that will help us plan for the rest of the school. This work is well underway. There's a bit of a reprieve. Right when the schools closed, everyone was working full out. Things sort of calmed down a bit, and they're going full out again, and people are putting in a lot of time to make sure that students will be safe when they return to school in September. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 274-19(2):
SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY
FLOODING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I'm talking about the floods in my region. Can the Minister of MACA provide me with any resources available for residents in the NWT dealing with floods? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are actually a couple of disaster relief programs that people in all regions can apply for in the Northwest Territories. One is through Municipal and Community Affairs. It's a Disaster Assistance Policy. It more works with things, infrastructure, roads, et cetera, deals with private properties, but it's about primary properties with that one. The other one that we deal with is the harvester disaster compensation program, and that's through ENR, Environment and Natural Resources, and it provides support to NWT harvesters when they suffer loss or damage to their assets, to help them with their harvesting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: I'm glad that our Madam Premier is the Minister of MACA as well because then I can ask her if she can commit to ensuring these resources are advertised and readily available to the people living in the Beaufort Delta right now dealing with the floods that are currently happening.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Absolutely. The GNWT is known for not being the best communicator, but this Assembly is trying to do better, so I will make sure that Municipal and Community Affairs reaches out to the community

governments, to the communities, let them know what services are available. I do know that the Minister of ENR has also got regional representatives in the area that can provide information to harvesters, as well.

MS. SEMMLER: With this flood this year being the highest, in 2006 I remember we lost a lot of cabins. I think back to when I was a child, I remember waking up in the middle of the night and having to be moved from my bed, out the window, into a boat, because our cabin was flooding. This does happen, but it doesn't happen as often as we have seen it lately, and the water seems to be rising. With climate change causing the changes in the Arctic and the Delta so drastically, more than anywhere else in the country, is the government looking at ways to assist our region to help the harvesters to be able to prevent their cabins and the damages to their properties in the future, if there is money that we can look at as a government to help move them, raise them, all those types of things?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: If they do fall within the Disaster Assistance Policy, if they qualify for that, then there would be funds provided for that. I'm not too sure about the harvester disaster compensation program. I'm assuming that they would if there are assets that would be reimbursed. I know that one of the northern communities, Tuktoyaktuk, was actually looking at prevention. Those are a little bit harder to get. The federal government tends to just give money for the disasters when they happen. It is something that we need to keep bringing awareness of to the federal government. Climate change is affecting the North more than any other communities in Canada, and so it's important that we continue to raise that to the federal government, to look for proactive money versus just reactive money.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to add to that, just looking if there's a commitment, we as a government tend to deal after the fact in a lot of circumstances, and we're more so not always focusing on preventative, if we can as a government work to prevent some of our climate change problems. Can I get a commitment that this is something that we will try to do in the life of this government? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can't make a commitment that we will address climate change in this government. This is a longstanding issue. However, it would be inappropriate for any government, any Legislative Assembly, to not try to address climate change as we go forward, from now until the end of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 275-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ADDICTIONS
TREATMENT FACILITIES

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. As I alluded to in my Member's statement about the on-the-land treatment program, so I do have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the first question I have is: how many treatment facilities has the GNWT operated and subsequently shut down over the past 25 years? Masi.

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

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a contract right now with four treatment facilities in the South to provide addiction treatments to Northwest Territories residents. They include the Poundmaker's Lodge, which is located in St. Alberta, Alberta; there is the Fresh Start Recovery Centre, which is located in Calgary, Alberta; the Aventa Treatment Centre for Women, which is also in Calgary, Alberta; and the Edgewood Treatment Centre, which is in Nanaimo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: If the Minister can provide the detailed breakdown over the past 25 years, that would be great. The second question I have is: how much does the Minister's department spend annually to send Northerners out of the territory for residential addiction treatment programming? Mr. Speaker, the Minister has referred to four treatment program down south, treatment centres. How much do we spend on an annual basis?

HON. DIANE THOM: On an annual basis for facility-based treatment, addiction treatment in 2016-2017, we spent \$2.2 million and change; 2017-2018, \$2.7 million and change; and 2018-2019, we spent \$3 million and change. Within those, we have a number of clients who have completed their treatments. It averages about 170 clients a year.

MR. LAFFERTY: I'd like to thank the Minister for providing that information. As you've heard, it is climbing up every year, almost \$500,000 every year, that money. Obviously, it is a worthwhile initiative, but at the same time it should be happening in our region, as well. I would like to touch on the next two questions pertaining to that. The third question I have is: what plans does the Minister have to finally establish a truly successful residential treatment centre here in the territory, involving on-the-land treatment approaches and an

integrated system or community-based follow-up and support program?

HON. DIANE THOM: On an annual basis, we spend about \$2 million to support Indigenous governments to be able to deliver on-the-land-based aftercare programs and community-based mental health and addictions programs. Let me just give you an example of some of the successes we have with the on-the-land programs. We have the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's Project Jewel, which is an on-the-land camp; plus, it is addictions and aftercare. There is also the Tlicho Government, who has a men's camp. Salt River First Nations in the past had a mobile addiction treatment program in partnership with Poundmaker's. Those are just several examples of some successful programs that have happened in the Northwest Territories as a result of providing on-the-land funding to Indigenous groups.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. It's great to invest \$2 million, but that's for the whole territory. As you can imagine, there are 33 communities and various regions we have to deal with. When you do a calculation, just on the \$200,000 per group, that's not enough. We're spending \$2 or \$3 million sending money elsewhere, out of the territory. It should be invested in the Northwest Territories. My final question, Mr. Speaker, is: in the past, we had Nechi training through Poundmaker's in the Tlicho region back in the early 1990s, and we've had upwards of 26 qualified counsellors graduate out of this program. It has been very successful training with the experts from Poundmaker's, the Nechi training, utilizing their expertise. I'm just wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is willing to approach the re-establishing of this kind of on-the-land treatment program in our region similar to what we've done with the Nechi training back in the 1990s in the Tlicho region, which produced a lot of qualified counsellors. Is she receptive to that? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE THOM: Just to clarify, the Department of Health and Social Services provided \$17,463,000, and this includes on-the-land programming, facility-based addiction treatment programs, community-based counselling programs, youth addictions programs, withdrawal management models, addictions aftercare, actions in support of addressing homelessness and addictions, and prevention and promotion activities. So, I mean, we all sat here last week as I was going through my department's budget and I just wanted to clarify that we do provide more than just \$2 million to any type of program. We actually spend a lot of money on it and, you know, if there are programs or initiatives out there that are successful,

absolutely, that is something our department will look at. We are currently in the process of doing an RFP for out-of-territory services, so this is something the department can have a look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 276-19(2):
TERRITORIAL FIRE CENTRE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of ENR explain the last time that the NWT Fire Centre has received any major updates to its operations facility? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For that detail, I'll have to get back to the Member, because that involves a lot of work with the department to get that information. I'll make that commitment to reach out to the department and get that information for her. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Can the Minister explain when the last time an evaluation was conducted to determine whether the Government of the Northwest Territories is providing our firefighters with the best resources available for addressing wildfires?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Every year, our department works with our firefighters to get there, but I think maybe the Member is talking about the facility itself. With the facility itself, there was a planning study done and a design in place, and a new facility has been identified, where the land is going to be, so there are drawings and there is a plan in place right now.

MS. MARTSELOS: Can the Department of ENR confirm whether the NWT does, in fact, have the latest technologies and equipment that is needed in addressing the wildfire safety of all of our communities and resources?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We do have the equipment that we need right now. Can we get the most modern technology? That would be great, but right now the existing material that we have and the equipment that we have, and our staff is amazing, they're recognized internationally and nationally and they do get asked to be out there. So, right now, we do have the equipment we need right now. Could we have more? Yes. It would be great if we had the most modern, but, right now, we have the existing equipment that we need for them to do their job.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I know that ENR staff are amazing. Does the Department of ENR consider it a priority to update and upgrade the current Territorial Fire Centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The Member will be very happy to hear that, yes, we agree it is important. What we're doing is we're looking to find the funding, because we have a whole bunch of priorities in this government of the Northwest Territories and there are a lot of competing needs within our infrastructure needs, but we are working outside the government, as well, to see if we can find that funding to help get this facility upgraded to its needed state that the Member has been advocating for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 277-19(2):
SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our NWT Aboriginal Framework states that the alarming reality is that all of our Aboriginal languages are in decline, and, furthermore, our Action Plan 2018-2022 commits to updating the language indicators collected in the NWT Bureau of Statistics community survey. I have looked at multiple sources, and the only language indicators and clear data I could find is census data, so my question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: what data do we have that tracks Indigenous languages? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member referenced the data described by the Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with Education, Culture and Employment. That is compiled every five years and it's by community, and it shows the number of speakers in each community. The 2019 survey results will be out in the summer of 2020, and those results have some more fine-tuned data, including interest in language. So we can find out how many people are learning the language or want to learn the language, and we can move forward that way. There are also efforts to collect language data from education authorities.

The Member earlier painted a pretty bleak picture of what's going on with Indigenous languages in the territory, and I have to say that I hope the committee takes up my offer of a briefing on what's

being done with this, because in large part, and thanks to the Member for Monfwi who is sitting next to him, there has been a big shift in what we do in the territory in terms of language. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has really focussed efforts and is doing its best to turn the tide, because things are in decline, but there are efforts to move things forward. So it's a brighter picture than the Member painted, but it's still a serious concern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I really look forward to seeing those results this summer. I believe the issue here is that, every five years, we get the data compiled, and there's no doubt that the languages are in decline. Absent them not being in decline, I don't know how we can paint anything but a bleak picture, Mr. Speaker. I believe we need much more comprehensive data year after year. Can I be informed how many new fluent speakers we are producing each year versus losing? Can I get a data statistic that shows me the net number of speakers we have in this territory?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: The Bureau of Statistics has information about the number of speakers. We don't have the information about which speakers have passed versus who has just recently acquired a language, but as I mentioned, work is under way to get better data, and hopefully, the Member will be pleased with what the future holds in terms of that.

MR. JOHNSON: My concern here is that, every time a language speaker passes, if they are not passing on that language, then we are losing this battle. I know there is work being done. I know ECE is trying, but I think absent having the number of speakers we are losing and the number of speakers we are gaining in the yearly data, then I don't believe we actually have a fair picture of what is occurring. Will the Minister commit to getting data that shows the amount of speakers we are losing and the amount of new fluent speakers we are creating each year?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In the data that we have, you can break it down by age. You see the number of people in each age group who speak a language. Clearly, the percentage of speakers in the older group, 75 plus, for example, is much, much higher than in the younger groups. We have that data in a sense. I think that what the Member is looking for might be a little too administratively burdensome to find, but we have a general sense.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it is too burdensome for us to be able to track every time we lose a language speaker, and I don't think it's too burdensome to track every time we

gain a language speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess I will ask this question one more way. Can the Minister commit to tracking how many fluent language speakers we have presently, and every time we lose one, that that is tracked somewhere and presented in the data? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'm not a statistician, but I'd think there would be a lot of effort expended to do that that would be better spent teaching languages. The Member wants to know every time someone becomes fluent. Well, hopefully, we're not going to be able to track that because it's going to be so many people. You go around to different communities, and they're doing different things. In certain places, they have early childhood where it's immersion. I don't think we're giving those children tests on a regular basis to determine, "Are you fluent, or are you not fluent?" It's not a simple black-and-white thing. There might be people who don't want to share their language or share that information with the government. You know what I mean? I don't want to knock on people's doors and say, "Do you speak an Indigenous language?" It's not so cut-and-dry, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line, however, though, is that we have a division in Education, Culture and Employment that is committed to revitalizing and strengthening Indigenous languages, and there are a number of initiatives across the government where millions of dollars have been spent on this every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 278-19(2):
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. I would like to ask the Minister if she can provide an up-to-date business plan for MTS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A business plan update and a paper with recommendations for public sector business structure of MTS was delivered to the department by a consultant in 2019. A consultant has recently been engaged, a second consultant, to propose an alternative private sector business model. The department will review and consider these recommendations to inform a business structure recommendation paper to be completed this summer. After that time, we will be prepared to present recommendations to the committee. I commit to the Member that I can have further

discussions with them on his points of view in that model. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm if she can make the contract between MTS and ORSI available, if not to myself, then to the appropriate standing committee, so that we can determine what we are dealing with?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Contracting regulations prohibit me from sharing the ORSI contract in whole. It was established through a competitive RFP process and contains proprietary pricing information that, if released, would be unfair to the contractor. However, I do commit to the Member that I will look through the contract and see what parts I could provide to the Member that do not have any proprietary information.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: My understanding is that one of the unions will be negotiating with ORSI possibly mid-summer. I am just wondering if there will be any impact or possible impact with these negotiations on the government's ability to ensure timely delivery of goods and services to communities.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: The union and ORSI have recently reached agreement on terms and conditions of their memorandums of understanding for 2020. PSAC is the only union that hasn't completed the 2020 agreement with ORSI. Given the track record that ORSI has had with the three maritime unions, we don't foresee any issues with PSAC. GNWT is not part of the union negotiation process. However, the delivery of goods and services will be well under way by the time PSAC negotiations start. PSAC members work the yard. Vessel crews are under two different unions: that's the Seafarers International Union and the Canadian Merchant Service Guild. Currently, we don't foresee any issues with PSAC, like I said. In that respect, there should be no affect on the ability to deliver goods and services this summer.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the issues I brought up, I guess, about procurement and the hiring, can the Minister confirm if her department is going to do a review of MTS to address those concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: In the pre-COVID era, I had directed my department that I wanted a review of MTS, and I will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 279-19(2):
HOME INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Just going back to my Member's statement about Internet speeds and Internet connectivity, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. My question is: have there been any recent efforts from her department to help improve Internet speeds in our small communities? Marsi cho.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Internet speeds in small communities right now are subject to a target that was set by the federal government of improving to a national rate of 50 and 10 or 50 megabytes per second. We certainly aren't there yet, but that is a federal commitment, and it is the role of the GNWT in this regard to act as an advocate and a supporter; an advocate with our federal partners and a supporter of our local service providers to ensure that they are taking steps to achieve that goal.

With respect to the federal government, Mr. Speaker, there are some important funding initiatives under way that we will be looking to ensure we get our share of, the CRTC Broadband Fund and the Universal Broadband Fund that are meant to advance those goals. As I say, it certainly will be our intention to take every effort to see that all of the communities in the Northwest Territories are moving towards achieving those goals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NORN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. I guess, for the other part of my Member's statement, I mentioned the fibre optic link. I was just wondering why Lutselk'e was bypassed as part of this plan.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That particular project, I acknowledge, simply was not looking to divert itself toward Lutselk'e. It was a project that ran up the Mackenzie Valley, and that was the design and intent of the project, to run up the Mackenzie Valley. To my knowledge, to be very honest, there is no understanding that I have right now that Lutselk'e is easily added to that. That remains a challenge. It is one of our satellite communities, and I anticipate that the next likely scenario that will see significant improvement is with low-Earth-orbit satellite systems that are hopefully coming online in the next couple of years. Again, in that regard, the GNWT is an advocate to ensure that we have access to those systems and that service providers are able to make best use of them once available.

MR. NORN: Thank you for that response. Again, just trying to get some better understanding for the other side: let's say if we have a committee meeting there right now, we couldn't do it. That is a problem. I need to bring more public awareness to this. We couldn't do any meetings right now as a House, just because it wouldn't be doable because of the lack of infrastructure there for this. I guess I will need some commitment. My next question is: what commitments can the Minister make to further improve Internet speeds in our smaller communities such as Lutselk'e?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: All of the eight satellite communities, eight communities that are on satellite services, they are sadly stuck at 5 megabytes per second, as I understand, which is a slow speed. It is far below the standard that the federal government is seeking to bring all of Canada up to. There is going to be some significant work there to do. Again, though, we aren't a service-providing business; we are a government. That does change our ability and limit our ability to act as a service provider. That said, the Government of the Northwest Territories is very keenly focused on the national target and very keenly focused on ensuring that our role, again, as a supporter to the Northwestel or other service providers and as an advocate at the federal government level, that we are fulfilling those roles as best we can to make sure that we are getting all of our communities up to the federal standard as quickly as possible.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for those responses. I did have another question, but I would just try to navigate my way through this. Just from hearing your responses, I think it's important that we need to know what is being done now to fix this problem. I want to hear what the Minister has to say to fix this problem now. Marsi cho.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: We are all struggling right now in the North. Even Yellowknife speeds are slower than what would be ideal. It makes it difficult in the time of COVID to be doing our work, to be in school, to be self-isolating when necessary. I am certainly alive to the challenges. As far as what is happening now, Mr. Speaker, I know that Northwestel, as a private industry partner, has been active and does have applications in to the CRTC. It's perhaps not really my role to speak to what they have on the go, but I would certainly offer to work with them to perhaps provide a briefing to committee of what information is available.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I think it's come up in this House already, the need for a plan that does again

acknowledge the role of the government. Sometimes, it's a somewhat limited role of the government, but still, the role that we do have, there should be a plan in place. I certainly want to assure that that work is underway so that I can come back and be in a better position to give some concrete examples of what we can do, acknowledging at the same time what we can't do. To that extent, I hear the Member's frustration, and I will commit to moving forward to get that part of my work done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 280-19(2):
IMPROVING GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT TO
SUPPORT NORTHERN BUSINESSES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Infrastructure. My first question would be to ask the Minister if she'd read the report from the standing committee of the 18th Assembly, but we have discussed it. I know she has read it. What I would love to know is what her position is on the recommendations contained in the report. Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was looking to have that easy "Yes. I have read the report." I have read the report and the recommendations. Thank you. Ultimately, the report and everything in it seems to be a very good summary of the conversations that we have been having as a 19th Assembly here over the last eight months. There was a lot of good information in there that I am keen to see started. We do need to sit down as a group and determine what we want to get out of our procurement review. However, I had directed the department to do so ahead of COVID. Obviously, we are continuing on with that work. Part of that will play into our business advisory council, as well. Yes, I am fully in support of revamping our procurement process based along the lines of the recommendations of the 18th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Given that we just simply don't have time to wait for the review of the Business Incentive Policy before we refocus our procurement on northern benefit, how does the Minister intend to ensure that government contracts will come with a benefit retention to Northerners?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I don't think we need to wait, necessarily, on the review to start making some of the changes. I do believe I have shared a letter where we made some small tweaks to the BIP

policy or the procurement policies to that we could favour more northern businesses. As it was part of our mandate and priorities set by all of us, we are going to continue along with revamping the BIP program to make sure that it actually does what it intends and the loopholes are closed within the program.

We are also going to be doing a lot of communications around our Buy North or Shop NWT going forward and encouraging people to use our northern businesses and consider that when they are making their own personal and commercial purchases. I also want to say that I shared recently an email, or it will be going out today to my departmental staff in both departments, to encourage them to go forward, realizing that they are the on-the-ground, front-line people who will be supporting our northern businesses and that the work that they are doing is very important and encouraging them to always have the lens of northern business, Indigenous business when they are looking at procurement and review.

MS. CLEVELAND: That makes me very happy to hear because our public servants are definitely in the driver's seat when it comes to making sure that northern procurement stays in the North and benefits northern workers. Would the Minister be willing to commit to quality-based procurement rather than lowest-bid rule while the department works to modernize its procurement policies to ensure that benefit retention to northern businesses and northern workers exists?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Quality-based selection is very close to my heart. It is something that, as a consulting engineer, we discuss often in our association. I speak to engineering projects; we do not feel that engineering is done well when it's done cheaply. You get what you pay for. I do commit to bringing in more of a quality-based selection mindset to the procurement process. Obviously, we have a duty to protect the public purse. We need to make sure we are getting value for our dollars. However, that discussion around the indirect benefits of keeping money in the North, i.e. not having people go onto income assistance, is a conversation I have been having with the department since the day I took this seat and will continue to have. We will just keep pushing this forward and making those changes.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. No. I am very thankful for the Minister for being able to have this conversation, but in order for us to be able to put our money where our mouth is, literally, and be able to show the people of the Northwest Territories that change is happening,

although some of these changes do take time, will the Minister be willing to commit to providing this House with annual reports on all tender activities? Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: There is an annual GNWT contacts report that can be found on the Department of Finance website, and it does list all the GNWT contracts. However, it is a very large and not very easy document to handle. I see the Finance Minister shaking her head in agreement. I do envision that our review process will involve an additional analysis beyond just that reporting of contracts and development of sort of a metrics or system in which we can track and see if we are doing better.

It's great to say, "Oh, we've got northern business," but, if you don't have any comparison or really understand what the number means, it's a bit of a useless fact. I do commit to figuring out a way to better communicate to the public, to the Members, to the business community how the business contracting is going out, in a plain-language type summary that people can understand, that is not an accounting, legalise or such type document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 281-19(2):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION CAPACITY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister responsible for Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission. I'll ask these questions: as the reliance of WSCC risk assessment for reopening businesses and workplaces is key to the success implementation of the Emerging Wisely plan and economic recovery of the NWT, can the Minister tell us what the current staff levels are within WSCC to review risk assessments and inspections? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The WSCC has 16 people in the Northwest Territories who are working on responding to COVID-19, either through direct contact with stakeholders or in the research and development of resources. This does not include our communications group. To ensure that stakeholders have timely information and assistance, our group in Nunavut has three people who are also being utilized as backup whenever needed to answer any enquiries. Additional help is being pulled, or can be pulled, from other areas in

the organization, but where people have occupational health and safety knowledge to assist. WSCC does not review risk assessments. However, if the employer needs help to complete or has questions, they can contact our OHNS inspectors and they provide guidance. Inspectors will request a copy of the completed risk assessment if they are responding to concerns, and, as per the CPHO orders, completed risk assessments must be made available at the worksite and they must be updated if situations or conditions at the worksite change.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It sounds like there is a lot of inspection work that is going to be required. It is clear that with the Emerging Wisely plan that there will be an increased workload for WSCC in terms of general enquiries, maybe not reviews of risk assessments but assistance in workplace inspections. Can the Minister explain whether WSCC has conducted any analysis of how the current workload is expected to increase under the Emerging Wisely plan?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: The WSCC has completed a relaunch inspection plan, which I can make available to the Member. All enquiries that WSCC has been responding to with respect to COVID and their regular business have been answered within the standard service timeframe. At this point, WSCC has not come to me and said that they have any staffing issues. However, it is a situation that I'm alive to. If we do determine that they are being overwhelmed with COVID response or back-to-work plans and advice, we would then look to get them the supports that they need.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I would very much be interested in seeing the inspection plan. I'm not sure it's what I asked for, which is an analysis of the increased workload, but I'll move on. Can the Minister tell me what new resources, including staff, contractors, and/or funding, have been allocated to this increased WSCC workload to help implement Emerging Wisely?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: As mentioned, WSCC has not needed to add new resources. However, all resources within the prevention division are being utilized for site inspections, telephone engagements, et cetera. We have also partnered with the Northern Safety Association, which is also providing education and advice to its member employers. As mentioned, if the WSCC does feel that they need to have more resources allocated, we would look at that time. WSCC is always in a guidance-providing position with all employers, so, despite COVID being busier and slightly needing some reallocation of resources, this is the business that WSCC does always and continues to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I guess I'm still not quite convinced, here. It would also be helpful to know whether service standards have been established for responses to enquiries under the Emerging Wisely Plan for a risk assessment assistance, site inspections, and any other anticipated work. If there are significant delays from the service standards, that should logically trigger the need for additional resources and those triggers should be identified ahead of time. Can the Minister tell us whether service standards have been developed for the WSCC's role in implementing Emerging Wisely, how those would be used, and whether those service standards are available publicly?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: WSCC has not developed new service standards as our standards are always to have safe workplaces. COVID is just a new additional risk that is factored into the health and safety planning. It does not create an entirely new type of health and safety or risk assessment. Therefore, the service standards that we are adhering to always can be found on our website under the "About WSCC" tab. I won't read you the link here. Please note that we do commit to responding to voicemail and email messages within 24 hours. We are monitoring our ability to respond on a daily basis and to date have continued to meet the standard. I have encouraged them to be proactive, and we do have discussions, and they know my door is open if they feel that they are not able to meet this. Seeing as we've had no delays, I think we're good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 282-19(2):
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
DOUBLE-HULL BARGES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, in the Committee of the Whole, I asked a question whether or not the double-hulled barges we are going to take delivery of will be soon going to the Mackenzie River. The answer I received was yes. These barges are 3500 series versus our current 1500 series. They are heavier than our double-hulled Deh Cho barges. They have a freeboard of 13 feet versus the 6 feet that our 1500 series have. There will be problems offloading deck crates, so communities' fuel capacities will be cut in half, probably, because of drafts on the Mackenzie River and because these barges are really ocean-going class, not suitable for shallow water. Will the Minister commit to having her department review

the answer received yesterday and provide me with an updated answer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it's been a very busy day, I have not yet had a chance to follow up on my commitment in the Committee of the Whole yesterday, but I do commit to having the department provide me with a better briefing and understanding of the double-hulled barges and their abilities to work on the Mackenzie. I commit to coming back to the Member with the results of that discussion.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: If it is found that these barges are not suitable for the Mackenzie River, can you check with your department about if we have another use for them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be very concerned if those barges do not operate on the Mackenzie, but, as that was prior to my time in this role, I don't have that knowledge on hand right now. Of course, I commit that, if we purchased barges that cannot be used for what is their originally intended purpose, we would be looking for other places in which we could utilize those barges, perhaps in the ocean. I'm not familiar with their specifications of whether or not they are all just freshwater or if they can go to marine, as well. I'm assuming there would be multiple uses for the barges, and I commit to that.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I know the Minister will like this question. Can the Minister provide me with the engineering process that was used to decide on the double-hulled 3500 series barges?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: If that process does exist, I will provide you with it. If that process hasn't been used in the past, I commit to you that it's going to be used in the future under my ministerialship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister also commit to have her department review the processes used when purchasing any such assets for MTS? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: One of the first discussions I had with my department was to ask for a review of MTS, so I will commit to that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 10, written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 13, petitions. Item

14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 122-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
106-19(2): HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN DEH
CHO COMMUNITIES

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 106-19(2), Healthcare Services in Deh Cho Communities." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 123-19(2):
LETTER TO PREMIER COCHRANE REGARDING
REMOTE LODGE PERMITTING

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to table a letter from the NWT Tourism to the Premier's Office supporting Frontier Lodge and the LKDFN. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main estimates 2020-2021, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Thank you.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, Department of ITI.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020, and we are doing the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment have any opening remarks?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair, I do.

I am here today to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Overall, the department's estimates propose a decrease of \$317,000 or 0.5 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 coming year.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- forced growth of \$2.2 million, which includes \$1.7 million in funding for UNW collective bargaining increases; \$250,000 in support of the management of socio-economic agreements, to ensure maximization of benefits to the NWT and Indigenous residents and businesses; and \$176,000 for a seasonal position and a contribution increase to Tuktoyaktuk to assist in the growing demand of tourism from the opening of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway;
- other adjustments include \$240,000 to support the implementation of the Northwest Territories petroleum resources strategy to attract oil and gas development and a position to support the implementation of the strategy for revitalizing the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery; and last,
- we see a sunset of about \$1.5 million which primarily consists of an initiative to complete a high-resolution airborne geophysical survey and surficial mapping program in the Slave Geological Province.

To support our ambition of building a strong, diverse economy across the Northwest Territories, ITI's proposed budget allocates approximately 60 percent or \$34.3 million of spending to economic development and business services, tourism, and parks. This will be dedicated to programs designed to develop small businesses in all communities and across a variety of sectors. This government takes diversification seriously, and we will continue to be allies to entrepreneurs and the business community.

At the same time, this government recognizes the importance of the resource sectors to our continued prosperity. To that end, these estimates allocate nearly \$16.1 million to deliver programs and services to benefit mining, mineral exploration, and the oil and gas sector, as well as Indigenous governments participation in the sector.

These estimates offer the resources necessary to support Industry, Tourism and Investment program delivery, and begin implementing our government's mandate in support of the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Will the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. On our left, looking at the back of the room, we have Assistant Deputy Minister Tracy St-Denis, ADM of economic development; and on our right, we have Ms. Pamela Strand, my deputy minister for ITI. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we have agreed to forgo the general comments and move into detail. I will proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document. We will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with corporate management, starting on page 198, with information items up to 200. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Do we have questions from the Members on corporate management? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I would like to start on the general, and if the Minister could provide an update in regards to the new Mineral Resources Act, and when we can expect that to come into force and a timeline given COVID, whether any of the timelines in the mandate have changed in regards to the regulations under that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, on this one, I will ask Ms. Strand to answer. Thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the Mineral Resources Act, yes, certainly, we have been delayed a few months with COVID, but the dates are still achievable to complete that in the 2021-2022 year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Another concern of mine is in regard to online map staking. I think this is a huge step, and I know that we are in the process of developing the software, but I am wondering if it's possible to speed that timeline up or if the Minister could provide an update of when we expect that to be in existence. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that it is actually quite a complex system to get going. I have had numerous conversations with some of our surveyors and the legalities behind going to the online staking. It does seem pretty archaic in this day and age that we are forcing people to go out where there are no roads to actually literally pound stakes in the ground. I will maybe pass this over to Ms. Strand to just, perhaps, provide a timeline, if she has one. Thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister has spoken, there is a significant timeline needed to evolve to that map staking platform. That being said, we recognize the importance of it to industry and, also, real time knowledge of who is on the land where, from an Indigenous government perspective. We know that other jurisdictions have taken up to ten years. That is not what we want in our case. We believe that we have very good knowledge from our fellow provincial and territorial governments.

We do have a MARS project, which is a general administration and registry system. We were successful in securing \$4.2 million in financing for that to design the platform for that mineral administration, which includes the map staking. We delayed those funds because of COVID, and the bottom line is that we need to be hiring for that

project. We will start with a minimum amount of hiring.

I might have to go out on a limb here, but I think we are going to need two to four years, and I am not exactly sure where we would be. We would be prepared to be coming back once we have a solid game plan in place. There are some significant decisions that we have to make. For example, for existing mineral tenure clients, we have to decide whether there is a forced conversion, that's just one example, or a voluntary conversion. Then, when we apply a grid over the mineral tenure system, how do we put people's claims into that grid block?

There is a lot of consultation that we need to do with industry within the next year. We are hoping that we can start that even with an online platform in the coming months. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Strand. Are there further questions under corporate management? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I would like to follow up on my colleague's questions from the Member for Yellowknife North on the Mineral Resources Act regulations. In the last Assembly, the standing committee suggested and asked for a plan, how these regulations are going to be developed and rolled out overtime. We have asked for the same. Does such a plan exist? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not sure if the state of the plan is at a stage where we would be sharing it. However, I do commit to coming back to the Member and providing him with a briefing on where the plan is at. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I have heard from our witnesses that one part of it might take two to four years to implement, and that is not unusual. When Ontario rewrote its mining legislation, it took 10 years to fully implement. I don't think we're going to be that much different, but I do really want to see a full plan. Are there any additional resources in this budget for the development of regulations and the consultation that should take place around it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe the two-to-four-year timeline was towards the online staking that the Member was asking about, not about the plan. I think I will just ask Ms. Strand to answer this question. Thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Yes, thank you, and the Minister is correct. That was for the online map staking platform. With respect to the regulations, I think COVID has set us back from starting that engagement. Right now, we are looking at a government-wide approach with respect to how we are going to engage with our stakeholders so that we include Indigenous governments, industry, any concerned citizens or groups. We want that to be a united approach by GNWT, because we have a number of legislation priorities across all departments. That really has to be decided before we will really have a fulsome plan in place. As the Minister said, we can come back probably, hopefully, if we get through COVID here and back to regular business, we will be starting that planning right away. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I fully understood that the two to four years was for map staking. I still want to see the plan and want to know what kind of resources the department needs to carry this out. My simple question was, and I will repeat it again: are there any additional resources in this budget for the development of regulations for the Mineral Resources Act and the consultation that should take place? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, there are no additional resources in the budget. We just have the staff time and the MARS. I forget its acronym at this moment, but the MARS, and we can provide what the acronym is in a second here. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I am trying to figure out, then, if there is no money in this budget, how the work is going to get done. We had a small glimpse of how much work is going to be required for those of us who live through the development of the bill itself and the review of it. How is this work going to get done if there are no additional resources in this budget? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have an entire department that deals with the mineral resources industry and sector. They would be doing this as part of their work. We will have some contract funds coming towards this at a later date, and we will update at that time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think I heard one of our witnesses say that there is going to be some kind of a government-wide approach on regulations. I know that I have raised this on the floor of the house with the Minister of Justice. Is there any sense of when this government-wide approach on development of regulations is going to be developed, and when the Regular MLAs, at least, and the public are going to have a chance to look at that and maybe provide comments and feedback? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that the comment was about trying to do engagement with Indigenous groups and governments during times like this, which would then be impacting our regulations, so that does need to be a whole-of-government decision led by EIA on how we are going to go forward with our engagement in this time. We can commit to taking this question away and coming back to the Member with more information. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I just feel like we have been spinning our wheels here for about six months, at least. These were major themes that were raised during the development of the report by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment as it reviewed the legislation. There has never been a public response to that report from Cabinet or the Minister, perhaps.

The major themes that came out of that were lack of consultation or lack of engagement around regulations and a commitment in the future to do things in terms of co-drafting. I think there were some successes with co-drafting in the last Assembly and a lot of desire to continue to make that work moving forward. There is no plan for that yet. There is no government-wide approach. There are no additional resources for the development of regulations for the department, no timeline, no plan

for a rollout of regulations. I am not sure this is providing the kind of certainty that industry has asked for. We have letters from NGOs wanting to participate in this process, and I know COVID has set back some of these plans, but, without having any certainty, I'm just not sure where we're going with all of this. So I'll give the Minister another chance, I guess, to try to convince me that we're actually on track and doing something, here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a new government. I can't answer for what the last government was doing. We do want to do things differently. I would say that characterizing spinning wheels for six months when three of those have been COVID, you know, there should be some understanding that this will be delayed and take some time. As I mentioned earlier, there are going to be impacts on trying to do engagement and moving forward. We've had a hiring freeze on since COVID; that does impact the department, as well, in moving forward with new initiatives. This is something that this Assembly has committed to doing better, engagement and consultation and ensuring that all voices are heard when we are developing legislation, so we are going to continue to move forward with that. My apologies that it has not been fast enough for the Member; however, all the signs indicate that our mineral exploration season is not going to be fantastic this year coming up, so I would argue that perhaps we do have a little bit of time here in which we can take the time to ensure that we're doing this correctly. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The standing committee, though, reported on the Mineral Resources Act in August of last year, so it has actually been substantially longer than six months. I understand, new Minister, new Cabinet, new approach, but we have to get a plan together so that the public has some confidence in where we're going and that we as Regular MLAs actually know where we're going. I'm just not sure that having no additional resources in here, no timelines, no plan, is really where we need to be. I'll just leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, do you have any last comments?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There will be a reply to the standing committee coming this session. Right now, Industry's concerns are more around surviving than ensuring that our new regulations have been

developed. We do have some contract dollars, as mentioned earlier, that we will be putting toward this; however, as we have many things on the go at this time, this one has had to sit back slightly as we deal with other COVID-impacted areas in our department. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions under corporate management? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like to get an idea of where we are with respect to oil and gas activities or planning. I understand we have a number of people on staff who deal with that, so I'm just kind of wondering what they're doing and if we're actually doing any work in that area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a department or a unit in the Beaufort-Delta that deals a lot with the oil and gas sector. We are continuing to explore options for a northern Arctic route to export our oil and gas, or LNG, sorry, to Asian markets. All of this work is ongoing within the MPR, or the mineral and petroleum resource sector of ITI. It is ongoing. We've had discussions with interested companies, international global companies that are looking to invest in the Northwest Territories, on whether we will be suitable for their needs. If we do get that Arctic route going, we will be closer than many other sources of LNG to Asia, so it is a very viable prospect for our future. That work is very strong and ongoing at this time. If the Member would like, I could provide him with a briefing on our oil and gas operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I know we have a whole section with budget lines under the mineral and petroleum resources, so if you have questions on numbers, and stuff; but, I mean, if it's general, then we can go on. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Yes. I'm not sure if this is general or not, but I think so. Bringing LNG into the territories to service communities. Are we doing anything in that area, as well? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think this is one that I will ask Ms. Strand to answer. Thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, thank you to the Member for those questions. As you know, we rolled out a petroleum resources strategy a year and a half ago in partnership with two other GNWT strategies, and part of that strategy included assistance for studies for local sources of gas. We know there are opportunities in the Deh Cho, in the Sahtu, and in the Beaufort-Delta. The one that is closest is probably one that we refer to as M18 along the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway that the Inuvialuit are studying right now, so we do have some funding that goes toward that objective. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I can wait until we get further down. That's all for now.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Are there further questions under ITI corporate management? If not, we will turn to page 199. Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$9,140,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now go to economic diversification and business support, beginning on page 201, with information items up to page 205. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was hoping the Minister could provide me with any attempts to hire BDIC a CEO and whether we're using a headhunting firm to obtain that position. Considering we have about half a million dollars of taxpayer money, I think it's one of the most important positions in the public service. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The BDIC job opening has closed. We have received a good number of applications. We are encouraged by the applications we have received. We did not use a headhunter. When I first came into this role, that was one of the first conversations I had, was the new CEO. At the time, with my history of what I've seen in the North, to me, what I found we get from headhunters is often someone from a southern centre who may be very good on paper and qualified in the work that they're going to

do, and no disparaging them, but they don't understand the North, so, when the corporate headhunter conversation was had with me, I very quickly shut that down. So I personally take responsibility that we did not use a corporate headhunter. I felt that we needed to have somebody who lived in the North and understood the North. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that gets to the heart of what the BDIC is. I think, in the past, we've seen a number of boards that have kind of not used it as a development corporation. It has a number of subsidiaries under it that simply lose money year after year, and perhaps the corporation's purpose is to be a make-work project, but I view it as something that should be really a world-class development and investment corporation. I think there's a significant element of venture capital missing, finding other private equity firms. I guess, can the Minister update me on plans to work with this new CEO and the new board to get BDIC on track? Maybe we can move some of the losing ventures out of it and restructure them in a way such that they're not really weighing the organization down, because I don't think we're seeing the return on investments that I would expect to see from BDIC. So if the Minister could speak to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that pretty much everybody sitting on this side campaigned on a bit of a change mandate, so that does completely incorporate, as well, the BDIC. I can't speak to why the BDIC has been run how it's been run. I have heard the same and similar complaints that the Member has raised, or concerns or issues the Member has raised. When having that conversation with Ms. St-Denis, who is currently the acting CEO of the BDIC, we both recognized that there could be changes that should be made and really a re-evaluation of the purpose of what the BDIC is doing and how it's spending its money. However, we felt that it would not be fair for me as a Minister and her as an acting CEO to come in right now and make changes when we were looking for a new CEO. We want to see what that person's thoughts are. If we are hiring them, we want someone with great ideas who is going to move the BDIC forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would appreciate it if the Minister could work with the new

CEO and really give the BDIC a mandate for change. There is a large surplus in there. I recognize part of that is legislated and they have to have it, but, at the end of the day, I really think that in letting the BDIC be a little more arms-length has a lot of exciting venture capital possibilities. There are all sorts of private equity firms looking to invest and looking to find interesting projects.

Moving on, I would like to speak to the \$450,000 for our commercial fisheries. Could the Minister provide me a breakdown of that figure by region? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't believe I have the breakdown by region on hand. I'm just looking over at my witnesses to see if they have it on hand. I see Ms. St-Denis is nodding her head, so I'll pass it over to her. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The commercial fish program is a support program that helps with freight subsidies for those fishers who are actually providing fish through for export. As well, there are some additional supports provided to the NWT Fishermen's Federation for processing of cheques. As well, we're going to be using some of the money for some safety programs. It's not necessarily broken down by region. It's more by function.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I have had commercial fishers in Yellowknife North try to apply to this in the past and not get it. I know it has been quite successful to my members in the South Slave. I think it's also somewhat lacking in some of our ocean fisheries. I guess I would just leave a comment for the Minister that perhaps a bit of a review needs to be conducted. Fishing happens on both sides of the lake, and it certainly happens in the Arctic Ocean, and I think there is a huge potential to really grow the NWT fishing industry if we look at the territory from the whole. There are a lot of things I'm very excited about in this one page, so I'm going to try to get through them, Madam Chair.

Moving into the film industry rebate, I see in last year's main estimates it was \$200,000. It is now \$100,000. I believe we should actually look at increasing this and reforming it to be a bit more of a film production incentive program, something similar to the exploration incentive program. Can

the Minister explain to me why we have decreased the funding for the film industry? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We did have a decrease of \$100,000, which was a sunset from the CanNor support for the film industry projects in 2019-2020. We had an increase of \$100,000, so it balanced out that CanNor then gave us much more money for another project in 2019. We had a variance of about, I think, \$19,000 in that one, and it was an outstanding payment from 2017-2018 that was captured in the following year. I do agree with the Member's statement that I would like to see supports for the film industry and will continue to have that conversation with my department. I think it's one of our exciting sectors of diversification in the North. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Increasing that support is largely linked to the work that is occurring on the NWT Arts Strategy, which I recognize is a joint venture by ITI and ECE. Perhaps the Minister could update me if any progress has been made on increasing support for film and specifically a model that is more of a film producers' incentive program. The way the film industry works is it's very similar to the mining industry. One in a thousand projects go forward, but, when they do, they are very significant. We have the possibility of pulling multimillion-dollar movie productions to the North, but that requires producers taking some risk. I think the small rebates here really are not that up-front investment that they need to grow the film industry. If the Minister could provide an update on any work that's being done out of the Arts Strategy or elsewhere in ITI to develop a film producers incentive program or something similar that expands just this \$100,000 we currently have? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Ms. St-Denis to answer that. That's in her department. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're currently in the process of doing our final stages of our film strategy, and with that, of course, we're having a variety of conversations with various stakeholders on what they would like to see on the next round of that strategy. We have heard similar

comments, so we look forward to bringing back that updated strategy and whatever supports might be required, so, thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to seeing that Arts Strategy and continuing these conversations. On to the Northern Food Development Program, can the Minister inform me if this has been fully subscribed to over the previous year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that the food program one is one that is application based, so, therefore, sometimes we have the amount of money, we think we're going to spend it all, and then somebody doesn't meet their obligations or retracts their application or such. That's why you would see different numbers there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Northern Food Development Program is application based. A number of the South Slave where we have fertile land have been unable to access this. I know it's not fully subscribed to, so I think it's a bit of a problem with the program as opposed to a lack of desire to develop more food and food security. Could the Minister update me if whether there will be a review of this program to make sure that, when we have this \$550,000 here, it's actually going to get out the door? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Food security is obviously a mandate priority of our Assembly. Yes, we are currently actually reviewing all of our programs around food security. We are creating, I don't know what we want to call it at this point, but maybe a secretariat, maybe not the right word, but a group within the department whose focus will be solely on food security, then to liaise with the other departments, with health and others, that would have roles to play in that. We're recognizing that food security is no longer just a little section tacked onto the side and that it does need its own focus and it needs somebody looking at it from an overarching umbrella, from building greenhouses all the way to food inspection, to home gardening, to commercial gardening projects and such. We do see that this is much needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I will move on to the Member for Kam Lake now.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. I am with my colleague from Yellowknife North: this is a very exciting page. Your comments about how ITI considers themselves allies to northern entrepreneurs and business community was not lost on me. Without further ado, the Great Northern Arts Festival was unfortunately, like many of our festivals, cancelled this year. I'm wondering, with the line item of \$25,000 that was associated with that, what is ITI's plan for that money now? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time - actually, it's funny, we've just had this conversation - we don't want to say no funding for that program because we want to give the opportunity to the organizers to see if they can somehow adapt their program and still manage to put it on. If someone is going to be creative and come up with a COVID solution. We've been encouraging. We don't want to be like, "Oh, sorry, we already took your money and spent it somewhere else." We still plan to flow that money to that group so that they can do with it and see how they can adapt. Of course, we will encourage social distancing and such when they do so and provide them guidance and any help they need in order to adapt. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes me very happy to hear because I feel like, if there is anybody who can figure out how adapt, it would be an artist.

My next question is in regard to Northern Food Development Program, like my colleague discussed, that food security is a priority of this Assembly. Food security has also been identified as something that is going to be top of mind throughout our COVID recovery. One of the things that we have seen in many communities throughout the North, Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik especially, is there are people who have really mastered creating businesses around food security. One of my questions is: has ITI looked at maybe working with some of these people who have really had success in some communities to help create business plans that can be transferred to other communities and used within other communities? Because, while we know that people might be really great at their craft, not everybody has the capacity or skill set to be a business owner. Is there any way

that we can put together, kind of, cooperatives amongst business owners to help support one another might be a really big positive in the Northwest Territories to be able to grow business, especially within our small communities? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think this was actually a conversation we also had as part of our priorities, was sort of almost a mentorship-type program and pairing up maybe people who are new to the business world with those who have great experience. I am open to that, and I do encourage my department to put those relationships in place. Maybe, at this time, it would be a little bit more informal than it would be a formalized program, but I am definitely open to having a conversation about formalizing the program.

I did just want to point out that the northern food fund is for commercial growers, and we have been working with them to do that. For example, the Inuvik greenhouse was a community-ran greenhouse with a coordinator, and we helped with that. We are also assisting in a new territorial agriculture association. I think that would actually be a great avenue or venue for this mentoring and networking type of situation to evolve. We will definitely ensure that is part of that discussion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My next question is in regard to the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, the SEED Program, which we did just discuss a couple of days ago here in the House, so I will make sure that I don't overstep on those questions. This, to me, is one of the most exciting programs that ITI has, especially right now where we have a lot of businesses needing support in the Northwest Territories.

One of the concerns that I have heard from my constituents in regard to the SEED Program is that there isn't a northern, kind of, commitment clause within there. People really could come and take advantage of the public purse and really set themselves up really well for opening a business down south. Is ITI open to revisiting some of the clauses within the SEED Program to make sure that, if people are benefitting from this program, they are committed to the North and they are committed to staying here and operating their businesses here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I am open to having a conversation. Right now, I do know that we do have the northern residency requirement for some of these programs. All of the focus within the guidelines are for northern retention or use in the North. I do recognize, though, that you can tell people all you want that this is the way that you should do it, and if there are no teeth or penalties in there, then people will take advantage. I do commit to the Member to reviewing the program policies for myself and seeing where we can incorporate, I don't want to call it penalties, but accountability into these programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am definitely interested to see that, and I am definitely interested to work with the Minister on that, because I think, if we're going to put this kind of money out into the business community of the Northwest Territories, then it would be great for it to stick around and the people of the Northwest Territories to see the benefit of it.

Another concern that I have had coming out of the business community, especially right now within COVID, is that people are filling out a lot of applications right now for business supports. Some of them are to the federal government, some of them are to CanNor, some of them are to BDIC, and then some of them are to our department. Some of the frustration is that some people just don't know where they belong. If they get a denial from here or from there, it can be very frustrating to people just to be unsure where they can fit. Can I get a commitment from the Minister to have more of a triage type of a system, almost like a support navigator, where people will work with business owners that contact ITI in order to help them figure out where they fit? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my understanding that the SEED application isn't quite so bad as, perhaps, some of the federal requirements are, but having not applied for SEED funding myself, I will go and ensure that that is the case. We do have the regional offices to act as pathfinders. We offer that always through ITI. We have been encouraging people to reach out to the regional office if they are having trouble with any sorts of applications. I believe that we have also been offering that help even on federal programs or navigating programs that are not our

own. I do recognize that the offices and staff are quite busy right now. If people are finding that they're falling through the cracks or they are not getting a response, I had offered out prior, and I offer it out again, that I am more than willing to advocate for people if they are more than willing to reach out to me. I see my DM is kind of smiling at that.

Another part is that we are also reviewing any of the denied applications, both, I believe, with the BDIC and SEED, so that we can ensure that it hasn't been a matter of some T not being crossed or some I not being dotted that people are losing the funding. That is not our intent. We do encourage, if anybody has been denied or needs further help, that they do reach out to either myself and my staff or through the department.

Also, I will say that the federal government does have a pathfinder line as well. Again, I won't profess to know how well the federal government's navigational supports are, but I would encourage people to do that. Like I said, the staff are there to help. If people are finding that they are not getting help from the staff, please encourage them to come to me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to just shift streams a little bit here over to page 202. I think that the Northwest Territories' Nominee Program falls under that. Can you explain how we make money off the nomination program and how we spend money off the nomination program, please?

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think this is one that I am going to pass over to -- I don't see anybody raising their hands -- Ms. St-Denis. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do accept application fees when applications are received, and then we have staff who are actually part of our staffing complement who work on those applications. At this point in time, we do have some applications that are in their final stages. As far as intake right now, we are on a bit of a pause, because phase 2 requires a face-to-face meeting. In the current COVID situation, we do have a pause on phase 2.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. St-Denis. Member.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. I am just curious; if somebody decides that they want to move to the Northwest Territories and start a business, is there any kind of rule that stipulates what kind of business they can come here to start? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would imagine that we are looking at some things such as competitiveness and such, but I think I will ask Ms. St-Denis to answer this question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of the nominee program is about being an entrepreneur and having that entrepreneurial spirit. We have definitely seen an increase in applications in the South Slave, specifically Hay River, where we have seen a variety of service companies being started. There may have been a few that are both in the restaurant business, but they would be different types of restaurants or different types of service companies. I think, as a government, we want to try to be open-minded about what those businesses and those businesspeople are interested in coming to provide to the territory. We are, of course, always open to talk about opportunities outside of Yellowknife, and I think that we have been very successful in the South Slave. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will move on now to the Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to start off with the BDIC and the development component of the BDIC. To my knowledge, since the amalgamation of the lending side and the development side, the development side has really done nothing. In the past, they have joint ventured with, say, the Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas, Dene Fur Clouds, and Acho Dene, I think, Crafts, as well.

I guess, unlike my colleague from Yellowknife North, I know that these partnerships have a positive impact on the residents, even though they operate at a loss. I think that it is important that we realize that, in the smaller communities where there is nothing, we have to have something. It allows people to earn some extra money. It allows people, also, to practise, I guess, a way of life in creating the arts, for instance. I would like to see that development side to look at expanding and doing something, whether it's with respect to the fishery. It could be with artisans. Tannery is another thing that we've talked about. I know that many artisans can't find moose hide, for instance, and it's tough.

There's things that we could do with it, and I think we have to realize that, in the North, we're either paying out the money to ECE or we're allowing people to make a bit of a living with it, and I think this development side of the corporation is something that we need to expand on. I'd just like to hear some comments on how you feel about that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my understanding that, when a new Minister comes in, that that Minister has those conversations with the different groups or organizations within their departments and tells them how they want to see things go. Without speaking for the prior Minister, I think there was a focus on banking. That is what I have heard, more the lending side of things. However, I would believe that, with our new government and our conversation about how dollars are a lot more complex than just what you see going across that ledger and instead, in fact, have all those benefits of which you spoke about; we pay for it here or we pay for it in Minister Simpson's department. With that being said, my goal is to develop more than to be just a lender. I would like to see the BDIC used to create sustainable business. I don't want them to stay dependent on us, and I do want them to be successful, but, yes, I do agree that we need to be investing in areas where perhaps a bank is going to look at that and say, "That's not something we would do," but we know the North is different, and we know we operate differently, so, yes, I would say that I'm very committed to seeing the developing side go forward. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I'm pleased to hear that. I guess I just want to turn to fisheries, commercial fisheries. With respect to the freight costs, what's the criteria for fishers to access this fund, and how is it divvied up? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I'm looking through my thousand pages here. Actually, I think I will just pass this one over to Ms. St-Denis because I'm sure she has that knowledge on hand, and I won't waste your time looking through my papers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Those freight costs are based on sales through the fish plant, through to FFMC and the various zones.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I just want to revisit the fish plant, the proposed fish plant. Have we revisited how we're going to approach that? Are we looking at receiving stations in, say, for instance, Yellowknife? The Member for Yellowknife North had indicated there are fishers here doing quite a bit of fishing, so we may need a receiving station here. With respect to all this, I just want to make sure that we do the right thing. It would be nice to have a big shiny plant in Hay River, but, if it's not the right thing to do, then I would like to have what we need in Hay River and then something that's either in Yellowknife or Fort Resolution if that's the best route to go. I'm just wondering what the department has done in terms of reviewing that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we actually do have intakes in Yellowknife and Fort Resolution, and they will support the plant in Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to marketing, what plans does the department have to assist the fishers in marketing their fish outside of FFMC? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not intimately dialed into the marketing plans for the fishers, but we are continuing to partner with the FFMC to do so, and we have a large capital cost that we're going to roll over, the \$500,000, so I think that would be more in the capital budget where we would be discussing the plant itself. However, I'm committed to promoting NWT fish and promoting it locally as well as interprovincially, interterritorially. Yes, we will work hard with them to promote our fishers. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was mentioned about safety, as well. What plans does the department have to ensure that, when the

fishers go out, there's some safety component to it? Because we know what happened in the past, especially last year. It was a tragedy of what happened. In looking at that, I read an article, probably that was done 15 years before, by Alex Morin, and he said exactly the same words as to what actually happened out there. He said, ""This is going to happen," and it happened. I just want to make sure that those fishers who are out fishing are kept safe. What are we doing about it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do work with the marine training centre on training as well as providing funding for safety programs and safety equipment around the fishers. I would agree, with my other hat on, WSCC, that I very much want to see the fishers stay safe. I do commit to the Member that, putting that hat on, I am going to have a conversation with WSCC soon about what we do to ensure that the fishing is a much safer industry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like just to turn to agriculture. I had a chat with a few of the farmers in Hay River, and a number of issues come up. It is associated with cost, the cost of land leases, the cost of taxes for the land, the cost of power, the cost of fuel. It just makes it unfeasible to actually farm. Is the department looking at how to address that, and do they have any plans? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the mandate items for us to look at is reducing red tape, so I think that would be an area where we could actually be helping our agriculture sector, if we could help them sort of navigate some of the processes. I know we've advocated for some things around meat licensing and such on their behalf. We have about \$1 million in funding. We have a Canadian agricultural partnership that we do work with. Agriculture and commercial producers, we provide funding for some of their equipment. We have programs that support their shipping, and we do feel that there was a good reduction in the red tape in conjunction with Health and Social Services around getting some of our commercial products out to the public. A great success story is the growers around Hay River. I recently purchased lettuce grown in Hay River in the co-op, so that was really nice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess one issue that has come up in Hay River, as well, you have private sector, people trying to grow and run a business; and then, the other hand, and we have say, non-profits doing the same thing. How is the department going to address that issue? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is part of what we're doing under food security review, as well, too, with the agricultural association that's being created. I would imagine these are all conversations we will be having with them, that we would then be looking at their inputs on how do we navigate that line because I would not want to, any which way, shape or form, discourage anybody from growing food, or if they can share that food with others, whether that be small scale selling at a farmers' market versus the success story we were just discussing. We need to first figure out what is the situation. How many growers do we have that are sort of small scale producing and selling to friends versus a larger production? Once we have a good assessment of what we are doing, I think we'll be able to figure out how we go forward. I think there's room for everybody. I'm not looking to have preference of the commercial growers over the small scale growing. I would like to see everybody be able to take part in this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to say a few words about the Film Industry Rebate Program on 203. I just listened to some of the comments from the Member for Yellowknife North, and they are good comments. When I looked at this, I circled this line item, and I covered all the numbers, looked at it, and thought, "I wonder what type of supports. How do we attract filmmakers? It's a good way to bring people to the North." I am like, "Okay. This might be a good opportunity here." We are always looking for opportunities to stimulate our economy to bring people, attract people, and bring people to the North. Outside of COVID, yes, I think there are plenty of opportunities there. We have lots of beautiful scenery in the North, a lot of beautiful areas to make films. I take my hand up, and I am like, "Oh. Okay."

I don't want to say this is a wasted opportunity, but I am going to say that there is future opportunity here to think about that seriously. I thought about Alberta, what they have done. I know that a lot of

big, Hollywood productions go into Toronto, Vancouver, and they went to Alberta to film a lot of westerns. One of my favourites is Open Range, and they filmed that on the Stoney Reserve. There is a good partnership there with the First Nations. They work with the First Nations, and they made a wonderful film there. I couldn't help but think that is a direction we could go. I am not sure what government's role would be in that, but I would love to see that at some point.

I did have some questions, though, about the SEED, going down to that lower line item. Looking at it, I hope I don't step on any toes here, but my question for the Minister is: when was this policy last reviewed? Thanks.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Technically, it was just reviewed because we somewhat updated our guidelines for COVID. I do think that maybe what the Member is looking more for is an overarching, not just COVID-related review. I don't have the date of the last review, but I do commit that, as a new Minister, I do want to look at these types of programs and see where we can be doing better. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the Minister for the response. I think it's always important we always continually have that feedback with all our policies because things are always changing, always evolving. It's always keeping things up to date always. That is good to know. My next question is: when are we going to expect to see this overarching review of this policy? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do just have an update. It was last done in April of 2019. At that time, two years ago, they added a \$75,000 increase for strategic initiatives. I just wanted to let the Member know that. I commit to doing this soon. SEED has become one of the largest conversations I have been having in the last while. I think that it is a great tool for us to use to build small business in the North. We have had lots and lots of conversation about how business is needed in the North. I commit to review the SEED program in whole. Let me get through COVID. I will perhaps say by the end of the year and looking at more of a strategic, long-term one for it, not this sort of smaller, incremental reactions that we have to do

at the time to just move ourselves forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the response. Just one more little, technical question from a line item on page 202, fees and payments. Actuals a couple years back on fees and payments were \$277,000. Now, they are only \$60,000. Why is that number a lot less than it was before? Marsi cho.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: One second, I just have so many pages here. Fees and payments, we had an increase of \$6,000 that we had to move over to compensation and benefits. They were moved to reinstate a budget that was used to cover a lack of incremental collective bargaining salary increases. There was the delay with the negotiations, and we had to go and back-pay people. That had to get moved around in different areas in the funding. The bargaining salary increases included things like registration fees, professional memberships, miscellaneous fees, licences and permits, non-employee courses and training. We had an increase of \$6,000 again. Sorry, that was the funds, again. We had a variance, a drop of \$223,000. Ninety-eight thousand was the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program sales commission, and \$128,000 was for a small businesses training and workshop. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have been here eight months now. I don't know when we are going to stop using the excuse of being a new Minister or a new whatever because I voted for a lot of the people on the other side. I voted for them because I knew they had capabilities. Using the excuse all the time that they are a new Minister and not being able to answer the questions is no longer an excuse. Are we going to be doing this until Christmas or next year or whenever? I just want to make sure that we are all clear on that.

With that, I am excited about this page, also, 203. Business Development and Investment Corporation is an excellent entity. We have to ensure that the

development side is also taken care of. I know you are going for a new CEO recruitment. I hope the person does have some knowledge of the North, but I also hope the person has amazing and new ideas, is absolutely neutral and objective, neutral and objective in understand people's needs, not one that goes in and thinks they can be a dictator in that job and not be able to be approachable by anybody in the -- because we are a small population in the Northwest Territories. If we are going to further our economic activities, both for small business, medium, and large, that person has got to be able to speak to all three on the same level. Those are very specific qualities that this person should have. I encourage you to ensure that, Madam Minister. On the line of \$2,012,000, I was wondering if I could have the allocations by region for the funds. That is my first question.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry. Just flipping through the regions by funds. I will pass this over to Ms. St-Denis. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. There is a bit more detail further in the mains about BDIC, but it's really about the operating budget for the entity. Our regional offices take the loan applications for BDIC at the regional level in order to then forward that to BDIC for processing.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. St-Denis. Member.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I would like to have the definite allocations by region. I also want to specify that we have had in the past in different regions. We used to have a neutral board before, an arm's-length board that looked after the disbursement of loans. I think when you have an arm's-length board that it's more of an input from businesspeople. I think that it's something to look at. I am not saying you have to do it, but I would like to see the options that we make sure that neutral, objective decisions are made for people, ordinary people, medium business, and large business. It's very important. If we are going to succeed in the economy, those are the kind of decisions that have to be made. I am sure you are quite aware of that. A lot of times, things are put forward, and it's only by one person's views. That is not the way to go. We are serving the people of the Northwest Territories to further the economy. We have to think more broadly. That has always been my objective in business. No matter where I've been, whether it was serving on the National Capital Commission or

working with Aboriginal groups across Canada, it was always an objective view. It's extremely important that people are objective. You're going to be hiring a really important person, here, and I think that objectivity is very, very important.

The other thing I want to talk about is the aftercare for new business. I'm sure that there are some new businesses that are not going to survive. I would like to see a more personal and individual approach to some of these businesses for their aftercare. We want everybody to survive. It's very difficult in these times. You know, in a lot of places, the service industry is suffering; the hotels, the restaurants, the small clothing stores. Just people who we know, all of us. Like, even in Yellowknife, here. I've been to a lot of places before this happened and got to meet a lot of the businesspeople, and we have to be able to support these people. Individual aftercare is extremely important, on an individual basis. You know, you have staff. I'm not saying you have to go there. I'm saying that you have staff who should be approaching and listening to some of their concerns and making sure that we try to save every single business that we could, because we don't have a large business community in the North, especially small businesses. There are a lot of concerns. It's not only the big ones we have to save; we also have to save the small ones. That's just a point that I wanted to make with you.

The other thing I wanted to mention was I wanted to ask about the "support to entrepreneurs and economic development," that line, if I could just have maybe an idea of what that includes, a little bit more detail?

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MARTSELOS: [Microphone turned off].

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Oh, sorry, you have to wait for the microphone. Are you going to ask that question, Member?

MS. MARTSELOS: Could I ask the question now? Okay. I'm just wondering, Madam Chair, the SEED money, the allocation by region of the funds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm actually going to respond to your first question about the BDIC by allocation. I do have that answer for you right now, by region. In the North Slave, we spent \$1.07 million. In the South Slave, we spent \$2.07 million. In the Sahtu, we

spent about \$20,000. In the Deh Cho, we spent \$212,000. In the Beaufort-Delta, we spent \$1.3 million. So that's the BDIC, and I'm just going to try to find in my many schedules the SEED one. My apologies, committee. All right.

With SEED, by region, I've got a few different breakdowns, here. Northwest Territories-wide, we've spent \$366,000, or 9 percent of the share. So that would be one that doesn't fit sort of a specific region. In the Beaufort-Delta, we have spent \$630,930, which is about 16 percent of the share. In the Deh Cho, we have spent \$696,796, or 18 percent of the share. In the North Slave, we have spent \$809,000, or 20 percent of the share. In the Sahtu, we have spent \$733,000, or 19 percent of the share. In the South Slave, we have spent \$719,000, or 18 percent of the share. I should just say that the Northwest Territories-wide ones are more the strategic types of initiatives that are larger. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we will take a short recess and we'll get back to the remainder of the Members' questions. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Moving on to the Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the Northern Food Development Program that they're talking about. We haven't really had that up in my riding, in the Beaufort-Delta. This year, you know, due to COVID-19, no tourism, nothing going on. Traditional foods, we used to have a lot of sharing between communities with the Inuvialuit and the up-river communities. For instance, Ulukhaktok has Arctic char and muskox; Sachs Harbour has muskox; Tuktoyaktuk has whitefish and beluga whales; Paulatuk has char and caribou. We have to look at things with a different approach. I'm just wondering if our EDOs, are they looking into something like working with traditional food swaps in between the communities for the COVID-19 days ahead in regard to that? That's my question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It appears that, under that fund, we spent \$79,000 in the Beaufort-Delta. I'm not familiar with whether or not an actual sort of food-sharing or swapping program has been developed in that region, but I'm definitely interested in exploring something like that. Anytime we can have people eating as much country food as possible and, as well, keeping them on the land and traditionally

harvesting, I think it's a great thing. This probably does have, I don't want to throw other Ministers under the bus, some overlap with ENR -- he's perking up back there -- a bit of a conversation with ENR about how we could do harvesting and sharing food amongst different communities. I think that's a great idea, so I commit to taking that back and looking at that for the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just that being said, with our EDOs in our communities, I think we should be passing that information on. I'll be doing that in regard to, like, a co-op between the communities, and see what they want to share, if possible. People used to come in, like tourists, and they would buy your whitefish and dried fish, and stuff like that, so just giving them an opportunity to sell their products or trade into communities, I think that's really good, to start like a little co-operative between communities.

One other question I do have, my last question, is: is there a possibility to start up having community freezers again in the communities? We had it before. It's been taken away, but then you have people, you get those little chest freezers the size of this and, you know, you can't live off that for the whole year for your family, if you have a big family, especially if you feed a lot of people. So a community freezer, a walk-in freezer for a community like they have in Paulatuk to assist those communities so they can get access. Good hunting time, they'll fill it up, and then it will last you from August to after Christmas, until April. Just a thought on that in regard to community freezers, if it's possible to do that with this COVID-19 that's happening, before COVID-20 comes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm really hoping we don't see COVID-20. I want to see the end of COVID-19, that's for sure.

Community freezers have been another, not to do it to him again, but an ENR program in the past. However, your point is really noted that this would be a huge component of the food security discussion that we are having. Clearly, it would not, then, just be myself with the Health and Social Services, but we'll also be looping in ENR, as well. I do think that this is a conversation I can relay back not only to my economic development officers, for your other points, but also we'll have this conversation as part of the food security conversation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I will move on to Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This page, too, is one of my favourites. I'm looking at the 2018-2019 BDIC annual report and I see that they have an accumulated surplus of \$33.445 million as of March 31, 2019. Can I get an explanation as to why there is such a large surplus for BDIC? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The BDIC has a mandate or a legally mandated item to carry so much money in the fund. I don't have the details on that, so I think I am going to pass that over to Ms. St-Denis, but it isn't \$30 million just to spend. I'll let her clarify that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the \$33 million surplus that the Member is referring to is, in fact, not actually cash on hand. It's actually the accumulated surplus from the value of assets less the value of the liabilities. I know that this question had come up in the House previously, so we'll be applying officially through our commitment made in the House, I believe, last Thursday. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I appreciate the fact that some of the assets might be in tangible assets of some sort. What is this sort of cash surplus that is available to BDIC that gets carried over? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that, later in the book, we are going to be having a discussion about BDIC, and our DFA will be joining us, as well. If possible, it would be appropriate if I could just maybe refer to those pages at that point.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any questions related to BDIC, maybe we will hold off until we are under the information items. There is a section that is directly related to that. Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I have one question: what's a DFA? Director of finance and administration or something? Okay, a good guess, I guess, on my part.

I have some questions, though, about the five-year review that was done. Do I wait until we look at that page? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Do we have the information to answer that? Minister.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. All that was stated is that there was a five-year plan done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. I guess I will go down this rabbit hole, then. There was a five-year review done in, I think it was 2019. I am just wondering whether the department or the Minister has actually ever responded to that, and what is the status of progress on implementing the changes that were recommended? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are going to be doing a strategic plan review with the new CEO when they come on board and looking at the recommendations of the original plan. I can commit to getting back to the Member with more information on that. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I would like to see the government response to the recommendations. I don't think that I have ever seen that. I know that we did get a copy of the five-year review in the last Assembly.

I want to support some of the comments made by my honourable friend from Hay River about some of the kinds of businesses that BDIC actually owns. I have been and visited the Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas shop. I have been to Fort Providence and seen the fur shop there. I have been to Fort Liard and seen the retail store associated with the craft business there. Those are great employment generators in those communities. Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas is known around the world for its work. I think it has been a great investment. It has been great for the community.

I want to support what my friend from Hay River said. Those are the kinds of investments and opportunities that I would like to see BDIC do a lot more of in supporting communities. Gameti is doing some really great things around food security, and I don't know whether they have been able to tap into ITI funding. Hopefully, they have, but investments in those kinds of local businesses and enterprises are really great. That is what I want to see BDIC doing

more of. If something doesn't exist in a community, maybe it's something that they can help create and start themselves.

In any event, I really look forward to what the Minister is going to provide in terms of the response to the five-year review. I want to encourage that BDIC get more active in supporting small businesses in communities and developing them where there are opportunities. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Gameti program was actually funded under CAP, the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The subsidiaries in the communities are very important to the communities. I carry around a Fort McPherson bag that I was kindly presented by the Speaker. Every day, I am reminded, as I carry my computer around, of our great BDIC stories.

Again, I am not looking at things just from, "Is this turning a profit?" I recognize that there is a lot more value than just profits, and I am committed to our subsidiary companies and creating more opportunities for people in the communities through the BDIC. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Great to hear that. I guess, too, I also would like to know more about this Northern Food Development Program and how that is going to contribute towards building food security here in the Northwest Territories. I think that we were very lucky in the pandemic that we were able to maintain supply chains with the South, but I also know that, if we cut off Yellowknife in the middle of winter, we would probably last about three or four weeks before we would have to be looking at mass evacuations.

We have an agricultural policy that was developed in the last Assembly, but a lot of it was really focused on commercial production, small-scale or even large-scale; the focus wasn't really on food security. I am wondering what the department's plans are to try to develop a plan around food security. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Northern Food Development Program does aim to remove barriers, create employment, and facilitate the development of a northern food production sector by providing supports to commercial producers of northern fish, meat, or

other food products, so that they are safe to be sold to consumers.

We have identified food security as one of our priorities of the 19th Assembly. It does cross more than just the ITI spectrum and into other departments, as we mentioned earlier, like ENR and Health and Social Services, as well. We have hired a senior advisor for food security for a one-year time frame at this point. The senior advisor for food security will assist us in the immediate COVID-related food security issues and coordinate the entire GNWT food security effort to identify any of the gaps and the opportunities that we can to strengthen food security results across the territory. It is our hope that, in this work right now, they're doing immediate relief for food security, but in that same time, they are going to be looking forward to the overarching direction that the GNWT needs to take to ensure that we are not so vulnerable to southern producers.

When this all started, even before COVID, what was going on in the United States was concerning to me because a lot of our food not only comes from the US, it comes through the US from Mexico. Already, in my mind, even way before COVID was ever on our radar, it occurred to me that, in the North, we are particularly vulnerable if the US and Canadian border were to ever shut off. As I have sat on the agriculture calls now with the federal Minister and my territorial and provincial counterparts, they also are very aware of the food security issues. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I think this is everybody's favourite section. I note that this section also covers the BIP, Business Incentive Policy. I am wondering if I am allowed to speak to it in this section here.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Yes. Go ahead, Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Okay. I guess, while there has been lots of talk about reviewing the whole BIP program and possibly revising it to suit northern businesses, I think there is a lot of talk about supporting our northern businesses, there are lots of stories about Southerners coming up and taking work from northern people. Even way up in the Beaufort-Delta, we are getting Southerners coming up there and taking work from Northerners.

In my previous life as a project officer, I have dealt with some contracts. I have seen that the Northerners lost big time to some southern contractors because they were able to underbid them, in some instances, by about half of the value.

That was kind of shocking. They're going to keep coming up because they know they are taking work away from us. They're the ones getting the money, and the northern people don't because we have to deal with northern prices for materials and to get them shipped up, too. If we're talking about the Northern Manufactured Products Policy, you would want to buy from the northern-based companies. You can't compete with somebody that's going into Alberta because the southern companies, when they put their bids in they are using their product prices from the South, which is not fair to us. Because we're talking about because we've got to support northern companies, how do we put an even keel to the northern contractor because we keep losing out? We want the money to stay in the North.

We also have a BIP monitoring office in Hay River. I don't know what their relationship is with the whole program and whether you receive any type of reports on what has been used for northern labour, northern materials, a breakdown of those specific types of products, the procurement of northern products. Something like that may be able to help with the review when you see those types of itemized items because the Southerners will buy from the South. We note that if there are any Northerners, where do they buy from?

There are also instances when I've seen on BIP forms, I don't know if I'm allowed to disclose this type of information, but I've seen where Northern, local companies in the small communities, their business names were used on forms to get BIP points. What I've done in my position back then was I actually went and phoned the companies, the northern local companies, businesses, and they were just shocked, and they had never, ever heard. Nobody phoned them to tell them that they could use their name. If there are those types of things happening there, we never had anybody to really monitor anything or had a complaint mechanism type of thing in place where anything could have been investigated. I don't think anything has ever been, to my knowledge. I think we need to improve on a lot of these areas here, to really help the northern contractors. I know there is more to it than just meets the eye. We also have to confer with northern businesses, too. I'm wondering what your take for your staff on the whole BIP policy review and everything as the Members on this side of the House have been crying for ever since we've got into this Assembly. Mahsi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. A few things, there. This wears both my hats because some of the procurement tracking is through infrastructure, as well. That's good. That's

probably why both of these are usually with the same person. That work is going on. I have asked in that department for a review of where the money is being spent in the different regions. We are conducting that overarching procurement and BIP review that we've been discussing lots and then coming to AOC for conversations and input on moving forward.

The BIP office in Hay River is the BIP office. There are two people working there. They are there to check whether there is eligibility being met, those types of things, in the registration of the BIP companies. They have also been doing BIP training. All regions have an update on their BIP companies done in the last three years. We have the Beaufort Delta and the Sahtu to be done this year. We did 15 BIP workshops in 2019-2020. Those were stopped by COVID. We're ready to go once we are allowed to get back at it. That was actually one of the first things I said was one of my frustrations. I know the Member and I have talked about this, was always trying to go to a community, put somebody in my form as a BIP registered company, knowing they're a northern-owned company but that they weren't in the registry because, literally, they just hadn't filled out the forms, or no one had showed them how. That was one of the first things I thought we could do, was just getting as many of those companies registered.

To your point that sometimes people haven't phoned the company, as a bidder, for example, if I was to go do work in Tulita, there is one hotel in Tulita. I would obviously stay at the one hotel. It never would have occurred to me that I actually had to call the hotel to say that they would be okay to take me as a guest. I'm going to guess that's probably sometimes why that has happened, is they are maybe the only vendor, or they are the preferred vendor. I would recommend, and I will take that back to my industry counterparts, that they actually contact the companies to tell them that they are planning to stay with them if they use them.

I do acknowledge what you're saying that oftentimes something will be put on the form and that there is no accountability after the fact. Some of that does lie with the client departments, and the project officers for those projects specifically need to be ensuring that what is in the proposal is being met and carried out, and I think that's a larger issue that we've been talking about that needs fixing. I know within infrastructure the project officers have been instructed now, or reminded because they should have been doing it to begin with, but checking to ensure that, if this is the person who is put forward as a BIP northern, local labour, that that person is actually on the job. If you look at the federal government for the same type of situation. They actually require a reporting. I've instructed my

department that that has to happen and has to happen now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho, did you have any questions?

MR. BONNETROUGE: Very encouraging to know that the reviews are in place, and you touch upon several of the areas that are kind of key. I noticed on even one job that I had in a small community, there was no local employment on the job. That was really surprising. There wasn't any. I'm saying that those people that lost out, it does happen here and there to some of the northern companies. That was a northern company. They just weren't using local labour. They were using other specialized tradespeople, I guess. We were talking about siding. You could still use local people. Some businesses are really good about using local people. There are still problems there, and it's encouraging that we will look at it because eventually, if things don't improve, we're losing businesses in our communities or areas. We're going to be crying for negotiated contracts. That might have to be the way to go, sooner or later. I know we're trying to be fair with chapter five or whatever it was of the agreement with the other territories. The other program here that is listed is, it says, the traditional economy program. What does that program entail? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Just noting the time, I'll let this one last question go. Your time is up, but just repeat the question, and, Minister, keep it short.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Pardon?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Repeat your question, and which program is it under?

MR. BONNETROUGE: [Microphone turned off]... program is and what is it about?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Which one is that under? Sorry, which page are you referring to, Member for Deh Cho?

MR. BONNETROUGE: That was on 201. It's not listed anywhere else, but it's listed on page 201, under the second paragraph.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Traditional economy. Minister.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that this is just stating that part of ITI's role in these programs is for the end game to have an economy around traditional methods. So there is not an actual, say, program called "Traditional Economy." It's just the catch-all for our harvesting and furs, et cetera. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I'm going to go back to the Member for Kam Lake to allow her to finish up her questions under I think it was, where was it, the questions that you were finishing off with before, just to let you finish up. Thank you. Sorry.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I'd just like the opportunity to come back around to the Nominee Program, just to understand it a little bit better. We discussed that we make money by collecting fees. We spend money through staff. The program is currently on pause. Madam Chair, I'm wondering if the Minister could just speak a little to what mechanisms we use to protect the GNWT's investment in the Nominee Program.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hate to do this, Madam Chair, but I'm going to take that question and return with a written answer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: No, that's fair. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In that case, I will wait and we'll continue this conversation later. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Seeing that we have gone through everybody, any more -- oh, Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. The community transfer initiatives, \$1.6 million. That doesn't really specify what it's for. It just says it's contributions to provide funding for the services of economic development officers. What does that entail? Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We support communities to have their own employees within the community to do their own economic development, so that money goes to regional governments for their own hiring in that area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. Similar to the Member for Thebacha, the breakdown in the regions. Obviously, I'm very interested in the breakdown to my communities. If the Minister doesn't have it, could that be provided, as well? Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will probably provide it, because it is a big list, but I can look for -- I have to see what your organization is called, here, just one second. I'm not seeing you guys. I think you'd be under the Akaitcho? No. They're not done by regions, my apologies. Some of them are regions; some are business development centres. How about we'll return to the Member with that as a written answer? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. The community futures, \$825,000. It has been existence before I started with the GNWT, because I was on a band council involved in the establishment in my community of Behchoko, so I would say 20 years. It's been very, very useful programming because what tends to happen is that individuals, entrepreneurs, apply for certain BDIC, Metis Dene Development Fund, and others. If they don't qualify, then the last resort, basically, it falls on the community anyways, but \$825,000 seems like it's not enough to stretch across the Northwest Territories. I'm just wondering why that number is low, I guess. Has that been fully utilized across the Northwest Territories? Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, Madam Chair, I'm just going to return. I do have your number; I didn't scroll far enough over. For the Tlicho Government, we provide \$292,000 for the economic development officer, the initiatives there. Then, back to the community futures, those are always very well over-subscribed, definitely. I know that is one that we do in conjunction sometimes with CanNor, and such, and they provide funding that way, as well. So there were 18 of 19 vacancies on that last time; that's why there's the variance, there.

Yes, I would agree, community futures is an area that we definitely want to explore in supporting. I personally would prefer to see communities doing their own work and empowered and in control of their own projects and their economic development, rather than thinking that the GNWT can do it better for them. They know what they need, so I'm supportive of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. Definitely, I think this is an area of interest. If there could be

some sort of a nominal increase, I think it would go a long way in the communities.

Madam Chair, just moving on to the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. This is highlighted as an agreement between the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories. As you've heard and noticed, the Gameti has been involved with growing their own vegetables, potatoes, and even animals there. They have done a lot to start off, but, at times, there were some struggles with getting funding through the GNWT. I can only speak to the past; there has been some red tape that they were struggling with and I have had to help out a bit. I'm just wondering: where are things standing? Because, right now, it says \$488,000. If it's between the federal government and the GNWT, what is our contribution, from the GNWT's perspective, when an individual wants to start agriculture in the community, whether it be planting seeds or vegetables, or whatnot? Where is that specified in this budget, aside from the \$488,000, Madam Chair? That will be my first question. Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We pay 40 percent and the federal government pays 60 percent of the funding under the CAP program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: So, Madam Chair, is that the overall budget for agriculture in the Northwest Territories? Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The total for the year is \$1.2 million. This is our contribution. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. Just to finish off, distribution. Obviously, each Member always has a keen interest in the funding going to our region, and more specifically I'm speaking about Gameti. My four communities, what was their contribution? If the Minister doesn't have that at their fingertips, then if they could provide that, it would be greatly appreciated. Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. In Gameti, we spent \$18,536. In Whati, we spent \$6,500. In Wekweeti, we spent \$4,000. Now, you're going to make me know all of your communities. Sorry, I don't have them on here, so maybe I'll just ask Ms. St-Denis to confirm for the remainder of the Member's region. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The CAP budget is actually divided amongst the five regions and is application-based. The Minister has highlighted some of the communities in the Tlicho region that have applied for funding, so there is definitely interest in those communities for growing food. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. St-Denis. Member for Monfwi. No? Are there any further questions under the economic diversification and business support? Seeing none, please turn to page 202. Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$17,966,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We are going to move on to ITI, minerals and petroleum resources on page 206, with information pages up to 209. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister had previously made statements that she is working with industry as a number of exploration companies don't qualify for federal wage subsidies as they don't have revenue. They typically don't lose revenue or make revenue, exploration companies. This puts a lot of our smaller exploration companies in a difficult position of not being eligible for federal programming. Can the Minister update any advocacy work that is done with the federal government or whether there is any intention to fill that gap from the department? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I have just been advised. Sergeant-at-Arms, we are going to change some of the witnesses. Minister, which witnesses?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: [Microphone turned off] ...will leave, and we will bring in our director of finance and administration. My apologies. I tried to catch you. No. It's all good.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): [Microphone turned off] ...time yet, Mr. Johnson, in case you have to repeat your question. Minister, if I could just

have you introduce your witness for the record? Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to introduce Ms. Nina Salvador, our director of finance and administration. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome, Ms. Salvador. I am going to give the question back to the Member for Yellowknife North to re-ask, just in case we need to. Thanks.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. A number of exploration companies are not eligible for federal wage subsidy programs given that they don't really have revenue or have the qualified drop in revenue. Can the Minister update me on any advocacy work to address this gap with the federal government or any intentions for the department to address this gap? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Since this has all started, I have been meeting very regularly with our mineral resource extraction sector, including the Nunavut and NWT Chamber of Mines as well as Indigenous development corporations who rely heavily on the resource sector, as well. We all work together to come out with a united voice so that I am more informed when I am at my federal tables as to their asks and their gaps and the lack of ability to access some of the federal programs. At every single one of my federal tables, I raise these issues. I have had one-on-one bilateral meetings with Ministers of NRCan and with infrastructure Ministers, as well, because there is some element of infrastructure to do with the mining sector. Also, we have advocated long and hard for the airline industry and the airline supports as they are also critical to the mining and exploration companies.

We are currently in the process of finalizing a pan-territorial letter between the three territories, myself and my counterparts in the mining Ministers for the Yukon and Nunavut, asking the federal government to look at these gaps and the wage subsidies benefits that have been provided. We have just been tirelessly advocating. We have sent letters. We have recommended or endorsed letters from our chambers of commerce on this subject. As I mentioned, we have a weekly meeting, bi-weekly meetings. We are meeting with the mines. I would say this has been a major focus of ITI, advocating and identifying the gaps. Unfortunately, the federal government has not moved fast enough, I would say on listening to us telling them what the gaps are, but we have been vocal. The Premier has been vocal, as well, with the federal government, with the

Prime Minister about these gaps and the importance of the resource sector to our economy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope there is a solution to this issue soon. Another issue, as the Minister is well aware, Dominion Diamond is in creditor protection, under that list of creditors is a long list of northern businesses, many small businesses that got hit with an economic recession, had cash-flow problems, and now are looking at potentially not having their debts covered. I know there is a new recent agreement for Washington companies to purchase Dominion's assets. Can the Minister update committee on any advocacy work that the department has been doing and any sense of whether those northern creditors are going to get their money in this new deal? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I will allow this question, but please make sure that comments stay general. Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have external counsel as the Government of the Northwest Territories, who is in the court advocating or taking part in the proceedings on behalf of the GNWT and our own interests in this situation. We also have been advocating with the court for northern businesses to be paid first out of the list of creditors. However, that is not a legal requirement, is my understanding. I am not going to profess to be a CCAA expert, but I think our role in that is just in advocacy. We don't actually have a legal right to ask for that is my understanding. We have been working very hard with my counterpart in the Department of Finance and Justice to keep an eye on this. The department itself has been modelling different scenarios as what it will mean to our economy with the different potential outcomes this.

We have been talking lots with the other two operating mines, as well, to ensure that they are going to not be able to be served by northern contractors who may be fiscally impacted by the CCAA filing. We do recognize that several of our construction companies, et cetera, our business development corporations are creditors on this list. We have asked that the two operating mines identify any contractors they felt were struggling or potentially were going to have concerns themselves about cash flow and liquidity, to identify those to my department soon so that we can reach out to help them with the other supports that we have available, the business supports within the GNWT itself. We are just very carefully monitoring this situation. Wherever we can offer supports to step in

and help those businesses that have been affected, we are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I would appreciate some regular updates on that process. I think there is a lot of interest in the public to making sure and understanding. It's a very complicated process. I think a lot of northern businesses are nervous. I think a little more public outreach on what exactly is occurring and what the GNWT's role would be appreciated. I want to move to the \$4,935,000 for mineral and petroleum resources. I have no issue with the first half, the mineral, but I have quite a few issues with the second half, petroleum resources.

At one point someone would pay you to take a barrel of oil. LNG, we have seen basically that the market has no interest in investing in LNG infrastructure right now. BC's investing billions of dollars, and that project is taking a huge risk on what the future of LNG says. I really question throwing good taxpayer money after bad in this year. I know we have an oil and gas strategy, but I think we could probably throw it out the window considering what the oil and gas economic complete uncertainty is. I think we really have to wait for the market to settle down a year or two before we put any more money into oil and gas.

My question is: in this line item, how much is spent on the minerals, and how much is spent on petroleum resources, if the Minister could give me a general idea of breaking that out? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member expresses that opinion, I can see on the faces of other Members that they maybe do not share that opinion. I think this is a much more complex situation than at this moment in time. "Gas is not looking good, so therefore we'll just throw it out the window." I would caution that that is not quite prudent or responsible of our government to do so. There is a lot of interest in LNG in the Beaufort-Delta.

Perhaps, if the Member is not aware of that, then I am lacking in communicating and educating the Member on what that department is doing up in the Beaufort-Delta. I commit to going back to the Member and providing him with a briefing on our oil and petroleum sectors. We don't split them out. These are people and staff in an office that do both, and they work in many sort of facets, so, no, there

is no hard separation between mineral and petroleum. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I get there is a bit of a politicization of oil and gas. My concern is that the strategy is based on one market reality that has significantly changed. Perhaps I will try again. Can I get a sense of whether we have specific positions and how many work on petroleum versus minerals? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I think it is trying to separate out something that is actually a little bit more complex than just this or that. How about I commit to coming back to the Member with a response to that question? Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would appreciate it. Perhaps, going forward, it's a corporate restructuring thing. Every time I am talking about mineral economy versus petroleum, they are not in one department, in one section, in one line item, because they are obviously very different conversations. If they are wrapped up in this \$5 million, I would like to know what's going to the mining versus what's going to the petroleum. I would appreciate that response.

My other question is: I really support the work that the NWT geological survey does. It's really the backbone. Some of the permafrost work is great. A lot of that science data has applications well beyond mining. It's used all over the world. It's really great data they use and produce. I am concerned to see a \$1.1 million decrease in their budget. Can the Minister explain that decrease to me?

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have had an increase, actually, of -- sorry, I'm getting my accounting stuff done, end of the day here, tired. We had a sunset on the Slave geological province exploration development of \$1.2 million. That's the biggest chunk there. We did see a small increase for the salary, the collective bargaining. Generally, it's the airborne geophysical survey finishing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. We are going to take a break, and we will resume by 6:30. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right, committee. We are going to call committee back to order, and we are going to continue on where we left off, ITI, mineral and petroleum resources. We are going to the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that the department contracted with PricewaterhouseCoopers for \$300,000 to do a review of the NWT royalty regime for mining. I think it might have been a broader review. I think phase 1 was to be completed in fall of 2019. Is there a report done, and, if so, can we get a copy? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there was a report that was done. It was a benchmarking report that did not contain any recommendations. I just want to preface that. We are putting it through our deputy ministers and Cabinet, and then, afterwards, we will bring it to AOC to share. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Any idea when that is going to be available? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have a time frame at this time, but I do commit to making that a timely response to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay. It's got to go through some deputy ministers' committee and up to Cabinet. If the work's done, I don't know why we can't be given it in confidence now, especially if there are no recommendations. Is it like two, three months down the road, two years down the road? When does the Minister expect to be able to make this report available to Regular MLAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll have that report to you within the next four to six weeks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Phase 2 is supposed to involve some kind of public engagement. What's that going to look like given COVID and so on, and are there going to be independent experts who are actually going to be conducting the review? How is this going to be done? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As part of the MRA regulations, we are doing a royalty review and are planning that currently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. Yes, I had understood that there was going to be a second phase to the work that the contractor was doing. Can I get a commitment, then, out of the Minister that she's prepared to share this public engagement plan or whatever it's going to be with Regular MLAs before it's finalized? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we can share that with you before it's finalized. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Great, thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Minister's commitment. This follows up on the recommendation from the last Assembly that the review should be done, an independent panel or some other form as has been done in Alberta twice with regard to their oil and gas regime, because the feds never really did this when they had jurisdiction. I think it's timely that this government takes that approach, so I am pleased to hear that the Minister is going to share the approach that she's going to develop with Regular MLAs.

I want to move on. My colleague from Yellowknife North asked about the staff that the department had in place to help with oil and gas development and promotion of it and so on. I'm actually looking at the organizational charters, the phone directory. There are a number of positions that are clearly identified

here with regard to oil and gas activities. Look, I've met some of these people. They work very hard. I want these jobs to stay in Yellowknife. Sorry, not in Yellowknife, in Inuvik. Let's be clear on that. There are, I think, seven, eight people in Inuvik. They were hired to promote oil and gas development, but there's nothing happening, nothing, absolutely nothing. What sort of thinking is the department going through in terms of repurposing some of these positions to areas of the economy where there is potential for growth, particularly, say, tourism, with the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway? Maybe not this summer, but there's a lot of promotion work that can and should be done there. What is the plan? Because I just don't see oil and gas ever coming back here, and that's what everybody else predicts, not just my colleague from Yellowknife North. What is the longer term plan for repurposing some of these positions to support the areas of the economy where there is potential for expansion and growth and creating jobs in small communities? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps, that just indicates that we need to properly name these positions for what they actually do. Nobody in the North really does only one thing. There are many Jacks-of-all-trades or Jills-of-all-trades in the North, so these people actually do things that are beyond the oil and gas sector. I would like to say that "nothing going on" is a mischaracterization, and I believe those people believe their work is important, so I do want to say that they're working hard in our oil and gas sector. As mentioned to the other Member, perhaps I need to come back to the committee with a better briefing on what the oil and gas work is that's going on in the Beaufort Delta. Those people also have supported the regional mineral development strategies that we unfolded at our roundup there, so they do do work that's beyond oil and gas. We also have tenured oil and gas rights that are still ongoing and need to be managed in those regions. As we mentioned before, we'll come back to the committee with a better explanation of what our oil and gas sector is doing, but I would not characterize it as "nothing." Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just to be clear, I'm not saying that these people are doing nothing. There's nothing happening in terms of oil and gas exploration, development, rights issuances. There's nothing happening. I'm not saying these people are not doing anything, and I hope that the Minister will correct the record to

reflect what I said rather than what she thinks I said. I know some of these people. I've worked with them in the past. I think they do good work. Some of these positions, at least it seems to me that they've been renamed, reconfigured, even from a year ago. Can the Minister confirm whether there's been some reorganization, renaming of some of the positions or this function within ITI? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have new changes that are coming into force within the next month. Based on that work before, no, we have not been renaming those positions. When you said there's nothing going on in oil and gas, and then state that there are people working in oil and gas, that's why I would draw that conclusion. I stand corrected. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I really look forward to that plan for this function within ITI. I know that there was a lot of work to be done to get our systems in place for administering oil and gas rights and our own system and so on. That's all fine and dandy, but, if there's no activity taking place, then I think we need to look at what kind of resources we dedicate to those functions. I'm not going to get into an argument with the Minister. I've never said that these people are not working or doing a fine job because I know that they do. I just would ask that the Minister be a little more careful in interpreting what I say. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just offer that that goes both ways. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions, Member for Frame Lake? Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Oh, Madam Chair, I think I'm an interpreter tonight. We have in the Beaufort Delta in my riding, in our riding back home, I guess we have immense petroleum resources. We have 52 petroleum fields, 263 wells, gas, sitting dormant. When they did the Ikhil pipeline, they had 30 BCF that was providing Inuvik with natural gas. Now with the M18 which is 13 kilometers out of Tuktoyaktuk and 6 kilometers off the highway, we have 500 BCF that could provide condensate to run Inuvik for natural gas, provide jobs, all that good stuff, condensate to provide LNG to our more northerly

communities. We're not going to run off of solar and wind. It can't happen. I mean, with all the trees in the world, this ain't going to happen.

For myself, we have to take a step back. Providing condensate and for the northern mines, potentially, if we do that road to nowhere, five mines get brought back up. I guess, if the diamond mine industry gets healthy again, who could provide that natural gas? It's going to be us, as a territory, providing our own fuel. The safety of our people on the Dempster Highway, knowing how many times that road closed this year and the other years in regard to LNG trucks flipping over and tipping, and they can't even go past them for 48 hours for safety, it shuts the road down for two days, and we have so many problems with that road, anyway, in regard to weather this year. Weather has been bad everywhere. Not just for myself, I just thought I'd get clarity on that for my two colleagues here from Yellowknife. I really think, with all the oil and gas in the Beaufort Delta, we should keep our dialogue open with the oil companies and stuff like that. Let it be known the Inuvialuit and, I know, the Gwich'in, in the oil and gas play, is any kind of work is good work. That's just more of a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. If you have no further questions, I will call for questions under the minerals and petroleum resources. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister had mentioned earlier about looking at shipping oil, I think, down the Mackenzie and around the coast, somewhere, anyway. Can she just restate, I guess, what she said?

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason we are exploring that option in the Beaufort Delta is not only for our own energy and fuel needs but also to export to Asian markets. We're talking about using, potentially, an offshore loading facility or such or a port in which we would then be able to load shippers and tankers off to Asia because that's actually a shorter route than they are currently using at the moment to go from different parts of Canada out to the coasts through pipelines, et cetera. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there any discussion with Alberta on a potential pipeline down the Mackenzie for moving oil sand oil around? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this moment, not that I am aware of. We are not exploring pipelines to Alberta at this time. I think that the department would confirm that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the positions in Inuvik, I had brought this up before, is that, in South Slave and I guess the Deh Cho as well, it would be nice to have somebody look at tying in the communities into natural gas. Assuming that natural gas is probably going to have to come out of Alberta, have we looked at that at all or explored that area? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, our Inuvik office is working on that option, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does that include something for Hay River, as well?

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I will pass this to Ms. Strand to provide more information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we have an inventory of wells throughout the territory, and we have not yet done a detailed assessment in the Deh Cho or in the South Slave. That is one area that needs to have some work done to see if there are any suitable sources to provide those resources to the Hay River area. That is part of a study that we would do. We would like to have some buy-in from the regions, as well. We can use some of our petroleum resources strategy funding to move down that avenue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: [microphone turned off]... the reality is we probably, around the Hay River area, we probably won't find any resources. We would have to bring it in from Alberta or BC. I just

want to know if we've looked at that and the cost or feasibility of building a line from the south into Hay River and possibly some of the other smaller communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Currently, I don't know if we're looking down that, specifically. It doesn't sound like, from my deputy minister's response, that it is one. Hay River is not a thermal community. A lot of times, we are exploring LNG as an alternate to heavier hydrocarbon-intensive fuels such as diesel. If we have a nonthermal community, I don't believe that the push is there as much for an LNG-type diesel replacement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure if you're speaking about diesel generation from the Power Corporation or not, or from the Northland, but Hay River is basically on diesel fuel and on propane. What I'm talking about is bringing in natural gas to replace propane and possibly diesel. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have some sources there letting me know some gas options in the southwest of the Northwest Territories. I will come back to the Member with a more fulsome answer on this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Probably in the past five years, maybe it was five years ago, there was some work done on some older wells in the Hay River region. Has there been more monitoring of some of those wells and if there looks like there will be any work done on them in the next while? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I will have Ms. Strand answer this question, thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there are some sour gas wells in the southwest NWT. OROGO is responsible for their monitoring.

They have got their well watch program. Obviously, that is the lead right now. It is not a concern, but they are being watched and observed and also monitored. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all for now, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under minerals and petroleum resources from the Members? Seeing none, please turn to page 207, Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$16,130,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now move on to Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks. Sergeant-at-Arms, can we change witnesses. Thank you. We are on pages 210 to 213, tourism and parks. Questions? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to sitting on the hamlet council prior to myself coming back to the Assembly, we've been working with our community and I thought we'd been short-changed in the community of Tuktoyaktuk in regard to having a tourism office, any kind of support that you'd get for camping. Are there any plans, I guess? I don't see it in the Main Estimates, here, but are there any plans to change that to work with the community of Tuktoyaktuk in regard to having that work looked at and getting it done for the community, instead of putting it onto the hamlet and stretching their dollars out to having almost nothing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'm just going to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if you can bring in the witness, and then I'll get you to introduce and then answer the question. Minister.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome back Ms. St-Denis. Thank you for coming back and joining us.

Thank you for that. Personally, yes, I'm going to work with you to support tourism in Tuktoyaktuk. I commit that to the Member right now. We are supporting currently a temporary visitors' centre in Tuktoyaktuk. Clearly, at the moment, maybe not quite so needed, but that is the plan, was to have something there temporarily until we could work with the community for a better solution permanently and get that resolved. We are supporting the hamlet on a community tourism strategy. I want to also commit that the department

has learned some lessons, and I notice, working in Tulita, that they had started already with some of those supports in place for that community in anticipation of their road. So, while not relevant to your riding, the department did take lessons from the Tuktoyaktuk experience and improved upon it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, just in regard to that, with the temporary shelter, hopefully you guys are going to donate it at the end, instead of pulling it out; donate it to the community. I know the community corporation, they want to build a really nice visitors' centre in the community, because Tuktoyaktuk is so awesome, and we just want to work together. Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all I have to say.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Are there further questions? Did you want to comment? Minister.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we will be donating that building back to you afterwards. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions? Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. [Translation] I'd like to speak on the North Arm area. When we look at it, it's just past Edzo, and that's where they have some gatherings over there. The Edzo people, the Behchoko people, and people travelling from the South also travel over there. It's not very big or huge, but we know that area gets really crowded, so this is why I want to ask the Minister [End of translation].

I'd like to inquire or ask questions about the North Arm Park just beyond Edzo. There have been some minor upgrades over the years, because my family has been going there, community members have been going there, I have been going there. We've seen some changes, but I do believe, once Edzo family members and also Rae Behchoko utilize that area, it gets full and there is no place to park for tourists who are coming from the South. Before COVID, of course. So that place gets full, and there is not much space in that area. I know they've done some extensions to the left side, to the north side; for the south side, they haven't touched the south side, yet, in all these years.

Madam Chair, I want to see the North Arm Park, it's such a beautiful park area, where, on the south shore of it, there can be a further expansion. It's just a beautiful spot, but all these years, nothing has been happening in that area. Is there a plan in place? Because my community is growing and we

have tourism that is growing, as well, and that place could become a safety hazard eventually. I know there have been minor upgrades, and they may be coming again, but we need some major improvement on the south side of the shore. I'm just curious, from the Minister's perspective and her department, is there such a plan in place to further explore the southern part of the shore of North Arm? Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are starting the development of a 10- to 15-site campground at the North Arm. We also are constructing an outhouse and a new access road, a new gate house. In total, it's a capital project of \$1.225 million. I do have a little bit more of a list of the breakdown: the gate house and living quarters; a campground loop design; an access road, as mentioned; the outhouse. So, yes, we are investing in the North Arm park. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. I certainly hope this is not one of those projects that has been deferred, because, on the left side, from the northern perspective, there have been some upgrades. I'm just wondering if the Minister is referring to that side, because I'm referring to the southern side, which has beautiful lake access. There can be further expansion in that area. If not, I certainly hope that the Minister will consider it down the road. I'm not talking immediately, but my community is growing and, with the tourism population growing, as well, there needs to be further expansion to the southern section of the shore. However, the Minister can clarify. She might be referring to the northern part, but that can be clarified. Madam Chair, masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I would have to look at a map to clarify, so we will return. I do just want to say that, growing up, my parents were teachers, and we went camping all summer long, so I'm fully in support of expanding campgrounds across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. Since this North Arm Park obviously is in the heart of the Tlicho land, as well, there will obviously be engagement with the Aboriginal leadership, the communities, to have their input. Usually, when

there's a major expansion, there is public engagement of what they want to see, whether it be a tourism spot with a history of the Tlicho Nation, and so forth. So I'm assuming that those are discussions that will be undertaken. If there is, then engaging the general public of the nearby communities, such as Behchoko and Edzo. I understand the Minister is open to that, which is much appreciated. Masi.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I most definitely want to consult and engage. I had to drill once and had everybody come and tell me that nobody wanted the health centre where I was drilling, and it was very, very uncomfortable for me; so I am well aware of what happens when a community does not have buy-in to a location. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you have any further questions? No. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first question I have is: when the parks do open, are we doing anything with the rental fees that go with it? Are we going to be waiving those during this period? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: At this time, we haven't discussed waiving the rental fees for the parks. I do think that they are fairly nominal; however, definitely something I can have a discussion with my department about. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just thinking about it, I am hoping that we can encourage a lot of northern people to use the facilities and move around the territory. I would suggest that, if it is nominal, then it's something we probably won't really miss, and we can mark it up as COVID dollars. I would recommend that we actually eliminate the fees for this year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have to look at what number that would account to; however, I am very open to exploring it. It would be about \$825,000 of loss, so I guess I probably shouldn't have said it's nominal.

It's nominal for an individual to come to the site. However, I would offer that, if people are finding that that is a burden, to come and talk to me, and we will see what we can do. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Even if we cut them in half or something like that, I think that the people of the territories would appreciate that.

The second question I have: if the border was to open, will the management of the parks be operating any differently? I suspect, even if we did open the borders at some point, that visitors coming in are going to have to self-isolate anyway. I'm just wondering what that's going to do with the parks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, I really couldn't tell you what was going to happen. We would be taking direction under the Chief Public Health Officer. Depending where we were at in her plan and what the regulations or what she had in place, we would be adapting to that. That is part of, actually, what we are working on right now to get the parks open when she does move into phase 2, is what does that look like from a logistics perspective, if there are still restrictions of people being able to be in proximity. We'll have to look at each campground. Are we closing this site because it's too close to that site? There are things like that. As mentioned, I think, in question period, we will not necessarily be opening all facilities at the parks as a result. Some more of the things, like the shower rooms, those will be case-by-case. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about, I guess, tourism in Hay River. We have the Hay River Tourism Society, a museum, I guess it is, and we have a facility, which is fairly old and beat up. I know that they are trying to do a little bit of work to do it, and I think they had made an application for something like \$160,000. They got that cut in half, which did a little bit for them, but not enough. It would be nice if the department would take a look at that again and reconsider that amount. It is an opportunity to do something while things are slow in the territories and provide some opportunities for our local contractors to get some work. Thank you for the "yes." Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We know that the town is doing some planning and looking at it. I believe that there are potentially some issues with the building, so I would need to look at that. I would imagine that would then, again, involve the other hat I wear in how we deal with that. I will take that away and commit to coming back to the Member with a bit more of an answer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The other concern that I have, as well, are the opening dates and closing dates of the park. People are constantly wanting to have access to it during the winter for skiing and snowshoeing and whatever, but we seem to keep them locked out. Has there been any consideration by the department to possibly have those accessible during the off-season, at least to local residents? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I imagine this has something to do around liability, as our parks operators carry the liability insurance for the parks. We did look at, last year, a winter strategy in getting our parks opened. It's something that I am committed to revisiting now that I am the Minister of the department. I will definitely have a look at potentially a winter strategy coming up, especially if we are not going to be having our residents leaving the North to go do, maybe, some of those winter vacations, considering where we may be next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One other issue that comes up in Hay River is the group camping at -- I can't remember the name of that little area there. Anyways, there is a group camping area there, and it seems to be the gate is locked all of the time. I am not sure how much use it gets, but it would be nice to know, I guess, if that can be, not repurposed, but reprofiled for day use. I know it used to be day use, and now it just seems to be closed all of the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe after, the Member can provide me with the location so that I could answer, but if that's the case, and there is an area that's not being used, and the department doesn't really want the overnight camping, we could definitely explore whether or not we could open it for a day use type situation. I would just need to look at that particular case. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister mentioned outhouses, and my ears perked up. That is one of the problems we usually run into. It's usually during the spring. They get used during the winter. We have wooden outhouses. Of course, the wood just absorbs the smell, and usually, they fill up. The thing is, what I would like to see is we consider looking at concrete washrooms, because it's easier to go in and wash them down. Of course, it will still smell, but it won't be embedded in the wood. Is that something that your department would consider? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would assume that the Department of Infrastructure, actually, probably looks at how the outhouses will be built. I will take this back as a comment to both departments and say, "Have we considered something that makes a little bit more sense from a cleaning standpoint," and we can definitely throw the COVID urgency on top of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, just in closing here, I would like to make a comment, and I would like to say that, in the South Slave there, I am pretty impressed with the way the parks are operated. They are looked after pretty well. The park manager is doing a good job, and the staff seem to be doing a good job, as well. I really appreciate that. They seem to be responsive. Yes. Good job. Just the outhouses. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I will take that as a comment. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to pick up on a few points made by some of my colleagues, and we'll start with the outhouse issue. If the Minister digs down into her pile from the previous Assembly, she will see that there were a

number of complaints about the 60th parallel outhouse in particular. I don't know what it was like this spring, but there were photos sent to me. They were shared with the previous ITI Minister. The Minister made a commitment to try to improve the cleaning regimen, so I don't know whatever happened, but, if the Minister digs down far enough in her pile, she'll find all of that in files with her department, I'm sure.

I want to go on to support for Tuktoyaktuk with a visitors' centre. I had a chance to go up to the community last summer, drive the road. Once you get there, there's really not a lot to do. There's nowhere to stay. There's no campground. We just kind of parked out at the point for a while, walked around. The hamlet actually had to have a guy sitting in a truck all night long to just watch what people are doing out at the point. It's not a great place to be. The community needs more help. This was a problem of the Department of Infrastructure planning a road but not planning for the impacts on the community and supporting the community in developing the tourism potential. If we're going to plan roads, you've got to make sure that the community is supported to deal with the travel that's going to come with it. That clearly didn't happen with Tuktoyaktuk, and now I'm worried with what's going to happen with Whati because the road is going in there. Some of us who were in the last Assembly, we had a retreat at a fishing lodge on Lac La Martre. Great fishing, nice place, but, if a road goes in there, what assistance is being provided to the community to get prepared for the traffic that's going to come in there? I'm worried in particular about what's going to happen with fishing on that lake because there are going to be a lot of people from Yellowknife who are going to want to go in there and fish. If it's not controlled in some way, it's not going to be good. I'd like to know from the department what kind of planning is going on to assist the community of Whati to get better prepared for the tourism? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to first address the comments about the outhouse. I'm well aware. I've been around. I've heard about the outhouses. This year, with COVID, we have a \$74,000 increase for funding to clean our washrooms in our parks, so that should hopefully have been taken care of. I would urge any of the Members that, if they hear otherwise, to please let me know.

Like all our other communities, we are working with Whati to develop their tourism strategy and what they would like to see in their community. They did come to our recent tourism AGM, I believe my first gala as Minister. I'm going to pass this over to Ms.

St-Denis to provide more details as to the work we're doing with the community of Whati. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. St-Denis.

MS. ST-DENIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Further to the Minister's comments about the connection between Tuktoyaktuk and the community of Whati, we actually arranged last year for the EDO from Tuktoyaktuk to actually meet with the community of Whati to kind of have discussions around lessons learned. We've also provided the community support around tourism business workshops, as well as discussions around road readiness and northern host training. I just want to assure Members that there has been work being done with the community of Whati to the point that they've actually even toured some of the parks in the North Slave region to see if there may be interest for the community to actually develop a park at some point. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Great to hear that, and I look forward to seeing some of the products from that work. I've raised this with my colleague with ENR. I think we have to look at fishing restrictions on Lac La Martre sometime soon before the road gets finished, to protect the fish resources there, so I'm just going to leave that with you folks, and I'll probably come back and ask about it at some future point.

With regard to overall tourism promotion, clearly, we're not going to get much international or even domestic tourism from other parts of Canada this summer. What is the department doing to try to promote tourism within the NWT? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are having many discussions within the department about the "staycation," for lack of a better word, program. We're definitely going to be focusing our marketing efforts on getting people to move around within the territory while we can't move outside of it. Northwest Territories tourism has provided free promotional advertising opportunities to their members. We are launching a campaign to "buy north, stay north," so, anything that we maybe would have been focusing this summer externally, outside of the territory, we will be reallocating those resources back towards internal and residents. If we should enter into any sort of agreements with other provinces or

territories to open up borders, then, we would also be extending to those people, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. One of the ideas that I raised with the Premier the other day was this idea of a travel bubble, and it's been in the news in some other jurisdictions. It'd be great if we could have a way where the Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories residents could travel across the territorial borders to visit each other's jurisdictions for summer holidays. I really want to see that idea pursued by Cabinet.

I want to raise one other issue while I still have three minutes on the clock. It's about the lack of a proper visitors' centre in Yellowknife. About 500 metres south of us here, we, a few weeks ago, witnessed the demolition of the former Northern Frontier Visitors' Centre. I'd like to know what the department's plans are to contribute towards a proper visitors' centre for Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are currently working with the City of Yellowknife as we fund them to provide visitors' services in Yellowknife. That is our centre, our hub, for the rest of our tourism communities or destinations. Currently, we've provided the city with \$160,000 to operate the Yellowknife Visitors' Centre. They are reviewing plans to implement their visitors' services strategy. The new territorial visitors' information centre is one that ITI does support. However, we do want to recognize and acknowledge that it will be to facilitate people also leaving outside of Yellowknife. It's not going to be a Yellowknife-centric visitors' centre. It will be for the entire Northwest Territories. We know that many visitors are looking for digital information, so Northwest Territories Tourism has strategically taken a step to enhance their website and digital presence. The department has been working to find potential partners to share with this investment. As our work progresses, I will continue to provide updates to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I'm well aware of the \$160,000 that's provided to the city. That's the same amount that was given to the Northern Frontier Visitors' Association that eventually resulted in the building going kaput with the lack of support from our government. That was,

I think, a major contributing factor in my view. It was in my riding, as well. Is there any money specifically above and beyond the \$160,000 in this budget to help with planning and development of a proper visitors' centre in Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe, Madam Chair, the department has provided the Member with a response to this to an email request that he could then refer to for more information. We are having conversations with the City of Yellowknife, and, when they have identified what their strategy will be in conjunction with our department, we will help them in supporting them to look for the funding to build whatever they would like to build. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Time is up. I will move on to Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I want to start a little more high level. We're looking at \$16 million for tourism and parks. In the wake of COVID, we're not going to see the same industry at all that we've seen in this fiscal year. Can the Minister speak to: are we going to spend all this money? A lot of these programs just simply don't work in the current reality, and I very much think we need to see an increase in this section, but it needs to be framed as a tourism bail-out. I think a lot of the current programs are designed for a world that is not the current one. If the Minister could just speak to how this \$16 million we're approving has changed and is expected to change? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I should sort of again preface that these are estimates from pre-COVID. It was not part of the process to have us update them with respect to the COVID lens, so, just to state that. One of the things, though, is we can't abandon tourism right now, saying that there are no tourists coming and therefore we should be spending this money elsewhere. We need to be ready for when tourists do start again returning. Some of this work will be towards our tourism diversification products, which was already something that we were planning to do, and we will continue on. Of course, the entire GNWT now has to have the COVID lens on any of our spending. That does include the Department of ITI.

One thing that we are doing and we've decided to do to continue on and help with the economy, as well, is we are going to continue with our small parks infrastructure and our small projects. One of the things that we will be doing is spending our money towards improving parks, mainly in the communities, and doing small infrastructure such as kitchen shelters, picnic tables, tent platforms, things like that. We do plan to use the dollars within the tourism budget to sustain local and northern business, as well as to help our operators make it through. Some of this money will be reallocated to the removal of the tourism fees that was just announced recently. We will not be charging operators who are not operating any licence fees, and we'll also be waiving, as I mentioned to you, all of the liability insurance requirements if they are not operating. We have 27 small capital projects that we are considering to be our economic stimulus and, like I said, mostly focused on small communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Additionally, we charged all of our tourism operators \$500 to get started up. I don't think we should do this in the first place, but can we refund that money or get rid of that fee? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that is in line with what we were already talking about with the fees. I will take that back to the department and just get back to you with an answer. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm going to share a bit of a personal anecdote, here. Last summer, I ran a sailing tour business just kind of on the side, and I did a few thousand dollars in tourism. It was nothing, but I had to pay \$500 to get a licence, and then I had to pay about \$2,000 to get insurance. Anyone who just wants to start an on-the-side tourism business, really, it doesn't make sense. You either go all in or all out. I think right now our regulations are killing that kind of small tourism operator. For example, right now, if you wanted to start a walking tour in Yellowknife, you would have to pay \$500, and then you'd get \$1 million insurance, which doesn't make sense. We don't require insurance for any other business licence. For some reason, we created a Tourism Act and we decided to overregulate tourism. My question for the Minister is: can we get rid of the

requirement to have the \$1 million in public insurance in the regulations? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know of any business, really, that can operate without some sort of form of insurance. As a very risk-adverse engineer, I am going to say that really scares me, to hear that we would then be entrusting people. I do acknowledge in the case in point, or the example, a walking tour, it does seem somewhat ridiculous. However, I don't anticipate that that case actually comes up very often and that most of our tour operators are taking people in vehicles, they're taking them on the water, they're taking them on the ice, all things that have large amounts of risk involved and do require a certain amount of insurance. I'd love to live in a world with no insurance, but we don't. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Minister would be very surprised at the number of businesses that don't operate with insurance. It's largely up to the business to decide whether to take on that risk or not. There are all sorts of businesses that decide not to have general liability insurance. It's an interesting decision by the GNWT to essentially step in and mandate that these operators have to have insurance. I can see reasons for it in certain cases. Perhaps the Minister can commit to review that section. I think, especially now, there are plenty of tourism operators who are paying very, very expensive insurance premiums that make no sense and probably won't make sense for the next couple of years. I know I have tourism operators who are stuck with insurance bills and no clients. Could I at least have the Minister to commit the requirement that we have everyone having \$1 million in public liability insurance be reviewed given the current COVID reality? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We definitely can look at that and review. I did just want to point out that we are only one of two jurisdictions in all of Canada that does require tourism licences. The reason we do so, there are a few things. It's not cheap to come and do a tour in the Northwest Territories, so, if we don't have some sort of form of regulating the tourism operators up here, the damage that potentially could happen to our reputation as a destination would be

insurmountable, I think, if we were to have people operating willy-nilly. I guess I shouldn't say that anyone who is not operating with insurance is operating willy-nilly, but that is one way that does assure our visitors that there is some measure of safety that is being followed. As well, part of our Tourism Act does require consultation with Indigenous organizations, so that was a way that we could ensure that people were not out on the land, desecrating sites or taking advantage of places where they should not be. I think that the requirement to have the licence in the act is very needed. I do see and acknowledge what the Member is saying. I'm scared when I hear that people are operating without insurance, but you're right, that is an individual's risk to take on, not mine to dictate to them, I guess. In this case, the department felt that it was needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. As you said, only two in Canada have this thing. Most jurisdictions, you have to get your municipal business licence and you go out and run a business. I guess I have no issue with the actual licence. I have the issue with the fact that we are imposing extra costs on small business operators. I think that the duty-to-consult aspect is great. Having a clear record of all our operators is great, and this is a process to do that, but we've essentially put an extra cost for it on small business operators. At some point, any smart business that runs into a requirement to get insurance, whether if you have land, if you have vehicles, if you're on boats, you have the Transport Canada regulations. There is no shortage of other areas regulating this. You can't drive a vehicle without insurance. I think that we have added an extra specific public liability insurance, a very specific type of insurance, and I don't think we really considered that. We just went, "Oh, this is what is required." Once again, given the reality that some of my tour operators have certain insurance for their lodges that may not meet this requirement and then they have to go out and find an additional policy, once again, we're just putting an extra burden on them. I think, going forward, we have to do everything we can to support our northern tour operators. Another question for this section I have is: there are a few million dollars here for tourism. I understand that quite a bit goes to the NWT Tourism Association. One of my issues with the NWT Tourism Association is it does a lot of great marketing work, they do a lot of great work, but their membership doesn't really distinguish between northern companies and southern companies. As the northern tourist industry has grown, a lot of those longstanding southern companies, I think, are starting to unnecessarily

and unfairly compete. They have guiding tours that are very specific or certain licences to run, such as hunting and guiding. They already kind of have an advantage. I was hoping if the Minister could commit to looking at how much we spend in tourism that actually goes to northern tourism businesses versus southern tourism businesses. The problem here is that BIP exists, but it doesn't really figure into this entire world and the way we are spending our tourism dollars. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I definitely will commit to looking at this. There is the argument, and I have had lots of conversations with tourism operators in the last while, of if there is a business and they have an asset in the Northwest Territories, they spend money in the Northwest Territories, they employ Northwest Territories people, and this, again, is a larger conversation we're having in procurement, as well, where is the line of you could have the company owned by the guy in the Northwest Territories who is then hiring everybody out of the South and all the money is flowing out, or you can have it the other way around and you have this southern-owned business that actually is spending and keeping more money in the North. This is the complex situation that I find myself in with both hats on at this point. I commit to reviewing that for the Member. I did just also want to say that, if you do know of operators who have a very small business where the \$500 fee is onerous, then have them please come to us and have that conversation. I don't think that there is any reason why, at times, that there couldn't be exceptions made for hard cases. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will. The problem is: the examples that I have are probably people when just decided to never get a tourism operator licence. And we all know that, as this legislation came on, there was going to be an education piece and there was going to be slowly walling people in. I think there is a reality that plenty of members especially in the communities are running tourism businesses without licences. I don't want, all of a sudden, us to crack down on them. The person who was just doing a small, part-time thing, all of a sudden, it's not even profitable for them. I think there needs to be a look at that kind of really small, start-up business because that is how tourism businesses start.

In regards to the debate of southern verses northern getting tourism dollars, I get that. I think, probably, the most important factor there is whether

they are actually employing northern residents. At some point, I guess it doesn't matter if they are located somewhere else, but if they are simply a business that doesn't hire any northern residents and doesn't reside here, I would like some sort of policy to be in place that preferences our other businesses, recognizing we have that principle in procurement. We have that in the Business Incentive Policy. If the Minister could commit to looking into a policy that would apply that same lens and obviously there is nuance and there is a bit of a debate to how we spend our tourism dollars, I think that would go a long way. Can I get that commitment from the Minister? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I commit to looking into whether we can create that policy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. You have one more? Okay. Short.

MR. JOHNSON: All right. I will try and sneak one more in. I know that the Minister is a huge fan of the Geoscience Forum. We have been doing that for 47 years, I believe. I think there is a lot of potential in bringing people to the North for trading convention, tourism. I know even the Dene Nation was looking at getting a huge conference with the First Nations Assembly, which would mean hundreds or thousands of chiefs coming here. I am not quite sure we have the tourism infrastructure to hold those large conferences, but I really do think that, looking at the Geoscience Forum, there is a huge market to tap into in business tourism. If I could get the Minister to direct her department to develop some more strategies and research into how to really take advantage of that business tourism, I would appreciate that. I know some of work has begun. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that is actually a really great point. We put on a conference as the engineers, and, for the first time ever, we are like, "Hey, the snow castle's on," and they provided a little bit of a tourism piece for their partners or anyone who came. They were all like, "Oh my God, this is fantastic." Even just a small organization taking two seconds to put together a one-pager to say, "These are all the other benefits," and getting that out in time enough so that people can actually extend it onto their business trip, I would say that, in the business circles I run in, I hear that actually quite a bit. A lot of people would come. Then they are like, "I have to

bring my partner up to see this," and then they come back as tourists. I think that is an awesome idea and definitely an area that my department should be exploring. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. We will move on to Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think I am going to fall in line with my colleague from Yellowknife North a little bit. The southern tour operators who operate in the Northwest Territories, do they pay the exact same tour operating licence as members from the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, they do pay the same fee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This might be a way for us to be able to distinguish between northern and southern operators and being able to potentially give our northern operators a little bit of an arm up here on their southern counterparts. One of the rumours that I have heard in my constituency is that southern tour operators qualify for ITI funding for business development. I would like to know if this is accurate. Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know with the BDIC loans that we just recently did, the first intake was only northern residents. Then we did have money left after that, so we opened to southern. For that particular instance, yes, they were the same. They are eligible for the tourism product funding. I would say that the answer there would be yes, but we do look at, when we are evaluating the proposals, how much the money is being spent in the North. It's not so much where the owner or the person making the proposal resides. It's about how much of that money is going to be retained in the North and spent on northern contractors and northern procurement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much for that answer. I would like to request potentially being able to sit down with the Minister and discuss this one in greater detail. I have a lit bit of concern

about this one and how we are actually ensuring the money stays here and doesn't end up walking away with a southern contractor and also that any monies left over are going to our northern businesses, especially this year. Our northern businesses are suffering right now. They are looking for cash flow to be able to evolve in a new COVID landscape, and it's really important that we can provide that to them.

My next concern is just in regards to something the Minister said where as long as people are not operating, as long as tour operators are not operating, then they don't have to pay their fees this year. If someone has an opportunity to take on a couple families here and there throughout this really difficult time when, really, northern tourism or domestic tourism isn't going to match the dollars they would have had otherwise, I think it would be a kind gesture for us to be able to waive all of the 2020-2021 tour operator licensing fees in order to allow people to take on a couple of people because they are really not going to match the dollars that they would have seen from international tourism this year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I sent you all an email a few days ago in which we indicated that all of the fees for tourism operators will be waived for the 2020-2021 year, set to zero, actually. We had to change them within the act. They will be set to zero. They will continue to have the licence. If they do want to go out and operate, though, they do have to have their insurance. That is part of the thing. In the meantime, they can continue to keep their licence without having the insurance if they are not operating. I do understand that this might create a little bit of "Is someone going to get their insurance for the five people they may take out on the land?" I would encourage, then, in those case-by-case situations, they come and discuss that with us, with the department. We, of course, would like to see as many people operating and continuing to operate as possible. I commit to having that sit-down with the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I forwarded that email to a few of my constituents and just wanted to make sure that your comments to the Member for Yellowknife North were in line with that. My next question is in regards to domestic tourism. This year, within the Northwest Territories, we would love for all of our residents to be able to stay in the Northwest Territories and, to the best of people's

ability, be able to really explore their own backyards. Has the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment looked into helping local tourism companies that are able to stay open during this time do some marketing campaigns and really help them get the word out about what people can do in their own backyards? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do fund Northwest Territories Tourism, and they are offering free advertising to local and northern businesses. There are free ads going out. We have allowed Northwest Territories Tourism to take the lead on this. This is their deal, their thing they do and they do quite well. Yes, we are looking at that. We are also looking, honestly, through all of our communications with tourism operators in ways in which we can support them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Many tour operators throughout the Northwest Territories have seasonal income where they may not have had anything for the first part of the year. Really, they were waiting until right about now to open their doors and be able to start bringing in their income for their families for the entire year. Is there any type of program that ITI is thinking of putting together? Since they have put so much money into tourism in the last decade, is there any type of program they are looking at doing to help tourism operators cover their costs if they have no clientele, they are not opening their doors because it's just not worth it because of the cost associated with opening their doors? What type of programs do you have available for people in that situation? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. CanNor is taking the supporting lead on those types of costs. Of course, any tourism operator can also then apply on the same reliefs any of the businesses can. We have long recognized, and the industry has been telling me over the past couple of months, about the need for a tourism-specific bailout or relief. We're live to that. I have had my colleague here, the Premier, write to the Prime Minister of Canada to ask for specific tourism sector supports. We do recognize that the tourism sector, because they can't make the same type of proof or they don't have the same type of financial situation that a regular business that operates, you know 24/7, 365, that they're falling

through those gaps with the federal government programming, and with some of our programming, as well. We recognize this. We're mentioning it, and we're not alone in mentioning it. I would say, at the tourism federal table, all of the provinces and territories are mentioning that the tourism sector is falling through the cracks quite badly, actually, in just the way that they are structured.

There will likely be a Destination Canada marketing campaign starting once the internal borders within Canada start to reopen. The federal government is quite keen on that, which is great for us, because the majority of our visitors and our tourists are from Canada, surprisingly. People may think that Asia is our largest market, but it's not; it's domestic tourism. So that's actually a good thing for us, going forward.

We do recognize that there is a gap that's not being filled at times, so what I would like to ask is that you continue, and you are, as the rest of the Members are, to identify those gaps to us so that we can look to fill them and support them. I would say, please, if any of your constituents are at a point of failure of their business, have them just reach out to the regional office directly and we'll look for where we can find supports to help them. We don't want to see businesses failing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My final question for the Minister today is just: how has COVID affected your five-year tourism plan? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Is this the one where I should just kind of toss it out the window? No, I shouldn't make jokes. Obviously, the new one is we're going to pivot, right? We have to figure out how we're going to change our strategy. Clearly, we're going to have to make some changes around our marketing. Will we be focusing the marketing dollars into the Asian market? We are going to have concerns with, as other international borders start opening up and ours doesn't, we are going to lose our aurora tourism, likely, to other jurisdictions. The department is very live to this. We're having those conversations. We are discussing as much as we can with the Chief Public Health Officer on the ways that we can have the tourism sector start reopening again, and not just to people from Yellowknife or regional places moving around, or other centres, but actually getting to where we could bring people in from the South again, such as, perhaps, outfitters bringing people in where they go straight into the bush, they don't interact with Northwest Territories

residents, they have their own emergency response and Medevac plan in plan that doesn't impact ours.

So those are sorts of scenarios that we're looking to explore, hopefully, and in conjunction with the Chief Public Health Officer, as to whether or not we can come up with scenarios where we can have people operate safely. That actually also has a lot of implications in the exploration sector, because exploration camps are very similar to tourism camps. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Maybe it's a very short question. Has the Minister considered in any of their tourism discussions making Yellowknife an international airport? Thank you.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that would be awesome, because I'd love to fly over to Germany, or whatever, Iceland and places I'm hearing about from other jurisdictions. I can't speak to a specific discussion I've personally had about an international airport; however, I think it sounds great. It's definitely something we can talk about going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake. I will give you your last question, then I'll cut you off.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, I'll try this again. Just on Yellowknife being an international airport, I raised this in the last Assembly. Whitehorse, they get direct charters from Europe, and I don't know why we're not pursuing federal funding to try to do the same here.

I asked the Minister whether there is any funding in this budget beyond \$160,000 that is given to the City of Yellowknife to support the tourist visitors' centre, such as it is in the basement of city hall? Is there any other funding in the budget to support planning and development of a visitors' centre for Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, currently, in this budget, there is nothing for a new building, but the file is moving forward and we are having those discussions with the City of Yellowknife, and we are going to look to use internal funds to do that planning. We are also going to look to tap into CanNor and see if we can

get some funding through them when we're at that stage. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Members. I think we've got everybody's questions, now, so, if there are no further questions, please turn to page 211. Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$16,349,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we have information items left. Knowing that we have BDIC on the information items and we probably have a lot of Members who are going to ask questions, can I just get a gauge of how many of you are going to ask questions on the information items? Nobody? One? Do we want to have the one finish? Sergeant-at-Arms, can we change the witness? Please introduce your witness, Minister.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have our director of finance and administration, Nina Salvador. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. So the information items are on page 214, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation; we have page 216, Northwest Territories Environmental Studies Research Fund; page 217, lease commitments; and page 218, work performed on behalf of others. I'm going to give the floor for questions to the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I had asked questions about why BDIC, at least in their 2018-2019 annual report, has an accumulated surplus of \$33.445 million, and whether that was available for use, and so on. The Minister told me that I had to wait until the DAF -- I'm sorry, I may not get the acronym right -- was here, so I'd like to ask that question. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm a firm believer in bringing in the experts to explain complicated situations, so I will pass it over to Ms. Salvador to answer. Could you actually repeat the question? You wanted to have the breakdown on why that's not considered to be a full surplus? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. SALVADOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. Basically, accumulated surplus is comprised of all past operating surpluses, which is the excess of

revenue over expenses. This also represents the net economic resources such as assets and liabilities of BDIC. What this means is that BDIC has net positive resources that could be used to provide services in the future. So, in BDIC's balance sheets, they have \$55 million of assets. Now, we have to account, in that \$55 million, there is \$38 million that is tied in their loans receivable under their loan portfolio. Also, in their \$17 million cash, \$11 million of this is restricted, so only \$6 million of their cash is used for operations. With the \$33 million that we have for accumulated surplus for BDIC, this is not an amount that we can readily use. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That is quite helpful in understanding the consolidated statement page that I'm looking at. I didn't have a chance to look at all of the notes. I guess I would like to ask the Minister, then, what is the plan to reorganize, rejig, reinvigorate BDIC moving forward so that we can find ways to ensure that the money that it does have is going to create jobs in small communities and help with economic recovery? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am a different Minister, as stated before. I have given the direction to BDIC that I would like to see the developmental side of things go forward. I believe, before, it was more of a banking type institution. We will, as mentioned, have a new CEO. That person will be selected by the selection committee, and then names will be put forward to me. I will have the final recommendation on that.

My goal is to have a person in place who is creative, who is flexible, who is approachable, who is neutral, and who is going to do what is best for the people of this territory, somebody who can think outside of the box when it comes to being creative and having new solutions. We have been doing things the same old way for a really long time, it looks like, in the Northwest Territories, and it's not working for us. Now COVID gives us an opportunity for us to be more flexible, to be more creative, and to come up with new solutions. I commit that, whoever that person is, that that is the criteria I am looking for when I am helping to select that person. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Any idea when this new plan is going to be ready for us to have a look at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have closed the intake on the applications of the CEO. I believe that they will be coming to me soon with their recommendations. Hopefully, we will have someone in that role within the next couple of months, and then I would imagine that it would take that person some time -- I just have clarification that it closed last Friday. During that time, the person will need a little bit of time to get a climatized to their job and to learn the role after which the first task will be to tell me what they're going to do with the BDIC, and tell the board, and how we're going to change this and do things better. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that a new person is going to have to have some time to get up to speed and so on, but I will just pick a date. Is this going to be a Christmas present that the Minister is going to give us as MLAs to have a look at a new plan for BDIC? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it would be premature to commit to an exact date at this time, given that we are all sitting here in phase 1 of COVID emerging and have no idea when wave 2 or wave 3 may hit. I would like to commit to having that to the Member by the end of the year; however, at this time, I really can't predict the future. Given that there are a lot of uncertainties here, I don't want to make a promise that I can't keep. Therefore, I will just state that and leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that there are lots of uncertainties. I guess, when the House sits again in the fall, maybe the Minister can give us an update at that point to say where she thinks things are at. Look, this person has a pretty heavy load of saving the North, it sounds like, so I appreciate the Minister's response. I look forward to an update in the fall. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I've got.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, any final comments?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would say that we, as the North, love to make it all one person's responsibility all of the time, and I will just leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Seeing that the Members have no further questions, I ask you to now turn to the department summary on page 195. Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment at this time. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Norn. 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

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Norn. The motion is in order. The motion is 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

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 adopted, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Item 22, third reading of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 6:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Bill 6 be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Hay River North.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, when the time comes. To the principle of the bill. This motion that is in order is debatable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Monfwi, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 6 has had its third reading. I just may join you from sunny Tsiigehtchic tomorrow, for the remainder of session.

---Laughter

I'm just kidding. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
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
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:01 p.m.