



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Day 39**

**19<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Monday, October 19, 2020**

Pages 1299 - 1316

**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for NWT*  
*Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

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*Minister responsible for NWT Housing*  
*Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*  
*Minister of Municipal and Community*  
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(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous*  
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*Minister responsible for the Covid-10*  
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**Hon. Julie Green**

(Yellowknife Centre)  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with*  
*Disabilities*

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(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**

(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Steve Norn**

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

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

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Environment and*  
*Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers'*  
*Safety and Compensation*  
*Commission*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of*  
*Women*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and*  
*Investment*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, October 19, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Colleagues, before we begin, I would just like to ask you to join me in wishing our colleague, Minister Green, a very happy birthday. I would not say how many years.

---Applause

We are wishing you many more to come. Enjoy your day and questions today. Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 65-19(2):  
UPDATE ON THE 2030 ENERGY STRATEGY**

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Mr. Speaker, despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Government of Northwest Territories has continued to roll out energy initiatives under the 2030 Energy Strategy Action Plan that will help ensure NWT residents, communities, businesses, and industry have access to secure, affordable, and sustainable energy.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a mandate commitment to strengthen our leadership and authority on climate change, and the way we will achieve this is through the implementation of the 2030 strategy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly know, the energy strategy has six strategic objectives to reach the 2030 vision. They include:

1. working together to find solutions: Community engagement, participation, and empowerment;
2. reducing greenhouse gas emissions directly from electricity generation in diesel-powered communities by an average of 25 percent;
3. reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from road vehicles by 10 percent per capita;

4. increasing the share of renewable energy used for space heating to 40 percent;
5. increasing residential-, commercial-, and government-building energy efficiency by 15 percent; and
6. the longer-term vision is developing the NWT's energy potential, addressing industrial emissions, and doing our part to meet national climate change objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to update Members today on the status of achieving these objectives.

A number of community projects have been funded jointly by the territorial and federal governments, under the Greenhouse Gas Grant Program to reduce the use of fuel and lower emissions. For example, the YK1 school board received funding to install wood-pellet boilers in two Yellowknife school facilities, and the Town of Fort Smith was funded to make energy efficiency and electric heating upgrades in three town buildings.

The Arctic Energy Alliance, AEA, also continued its Regional Office Program, which operates in six regional offices to engage with communities, promote AEA programs, and to provide support for local energy projects. Last year, this program invested \$800,000 into the work of these offices, resulting in over a million dollars' worth of energy rebates paid directly to communities, business, and residents outside Yellowknife, for things like energy-efficient appliances, efficiency upgrades to buildings, and alternative heating like wood stoves. This is out of a total AEA budget of about \$5.9 million, of which there was a record total of \$1.9 million in rebates given out across the Northwest Territories last year. Over 50 percent of these rebates were provided to communities outside of Yellowknife.

The GNWT is advancing a project to build a 170-kilometer transmission line from the Taltson hydro system to serve Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Dory Point. This project is essential for the NWT to meet its greenhouse-gas reduction commitments, providing about 15 percent of the total reduction target for electricity generation and would remove up to one million litres of diesel and 2.5 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually. The project

will use power from the existing Taltson system to eliminate the use of diesel for electrical generation in these communities and reduce the cost of power.

Mr. Speaker, to help reduce their emissions from the transportation, the AEA launched an electric vehicle rebate program in June of this year, which provides rebates up to \$5,000 for a new electrical vehicle and up to \$500 for charging stations in hydropower communities. The GNWT is also exploring new technologies that could help reduce transportation emissions, including liquid biofuels. The department is currently conducting a study that would not only help us understand whether liquid biofuels can work in a cold northern climate, but also how factors like availability, storage, and cost affect their feasibility in northern climates. This study is scheduled to be completed early 2021.

With the new federal funding from the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, the AEA launched new and expanded programs and nearly doubled the number of rebates that it provided in 2019-2020 compared to the previous year, for an increase of 150 percent worth about almost a million dollars. These programs provided rebates to Northerners who purchased energy-efficient products such as wood stoves, LED light bulbs, and ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. They also provide rebates to communities that install renewable-energy systems and support community energy-plan implementation and made it possible to run a program to help lower-income homeowners and energy efficiency upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT continues to lead by example in energy conservation and efficiency by upgrading our own facilities through the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund. Last year, energy efficiency projects were funded including the Inuvik hospital, Angik School in Paulatuk, and four of the schools in Hay River. Last year, these and other initiatives under the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund reduced greenhouse-gas emissions by almost 15 thousand tonnes and saved the GNWT almost four million dollars.

As part of the government's long-term vision for our territories' energy systems, the GNWT is currently upgrading both its hydro systems. At Snare Forks, a total overhaul of the generating unit was undertaken. Although delayed by COVID, the work is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2020.

The Taltson overhaul was delayed by COVID, but the facility underwent its annual maintenance shutdown last summer. During the shutdown, equipment assessments were completed to firm up design, manufacturing, and procurement details for the major overhauls. Parts are scheduled to arrive in 2020, with the overhaul scheduled for 2022.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the initiatives that demonstrate our government's ongoing efforts in conjunction with the Government of Canada, Indigenous and community governments, the AEA, and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to ensure residents, businesses, and industry have access to secure and affordable energy as we transition to a strong, healthy economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels. The GNWT's annual Energy Initiatives Report, which will be released this fall, provides a full view of last year's energy initiatives. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 66-19(2):  
NWT ESERVICES PORTAL

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to making its programs, services, and functions accessible to people in as many ways as possible. We are committed to keeping up with the worldwide shift towards online portals to access information and services of all kinds.

Our goal is that, to the greatest extent possible, people should be able to access Government of the Northwest Territories' programs and services how they want, where they want, and when they want.

The eServices team within the Department of Finance is close to a major milestone that will support our work towards this goal of greater accessibility: the launch of the new NWT eServices Portal. This new portal will allow people and businesses to access programs and services online, from one safe, reliable location. It is worth noting that, over the past six months, the importance of online services has only been further highlighted as our residents have adapted to working remotely and socially distancing. The goal of the portal is to provide users with secure and convenient online access to GNWT programs and services through a single account. Once it is launched, by the end of 2020, residents will be able to use it to register for and renew their healthcare cards; request birth, death and marriage certificates. Existing driver and motor vehicle services, existing MyECE services, and an improved online application for Northwest Territories fishing licenses will also be accessible, all through the new portal. This initial bundle of services is just the start of our efforts to bring more programs and services online, and we plan to add a second bundle of services to the portal in early 2021. Additional ongoing releases will continue to be prioritized, planned, and launched moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the demand for online programs and services is high; as Minister of Finance, I am committed to making sure that our department works across government to ensure that we are doing our best to meet the needs of people and businesses by bringing the right programs and services online through the portal. Further, we are committed to protecting the security and privacy of our users' data. As we speak, the eServices team is conducting thorough privacy and security assessments of the portal, all integrated back-end systems and each service being connected.

As I stated earlier, it is important that we provide our people and businesses with access to programs and services how they want, where they want, and when they want. So let me very clear about another aspect of this improvement: the new eServices Portal creates an additional way to access the GNWT's programs and services. It does not take away or diminish the other access points to government services. For clarity, this means that a resident can choose to access a program or service online or can continue to access that program or service how they always have, on the phone, in person, or through other access points. This milestone shows how we will execute our commitment, as a government, to providing the best possible service and constantly exploring innovative and creative ways to improve that service. 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 ON-THE-LAND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our priorities for this government is to increase the number and variety of culturally respectful community-based mental health and addictions programs, including after-care for our residents. While we do have some programming available to our residents, I think there is a disconnect from what we are currently doing to what our people actually need and are asking for. For example, we have specialized treatment facilities that residents can be sent to out of the territory, which is an option for those who need this treatment. We also currently have some Indigenous groups providing on-the-land programs. However, there needs to be a gateway program that allows more people to seek help.

Mr. Speaker, often it is difficult for people with addictions to navigate the system to access out-of-

territory addictions treatment. For on-the-land, some can't just jump up and leave out on the land for one to two weeks, because they may suffer from withdrawals or other physical or mental health conditions when going through withdrawals. Unfortunately, our current programs don't allow, for some of our residents, a safe gateway to enter into some of our longer-term programs. As a result, our people in need continue to suffer.

We need gateway programs like the Arctic Indigenous Wellness program in Inuvik, in the Beaufort Delta, in all of the regional areas throughout the Northwest Territories. We need GNWT to sit down with our communities and Indigenous groups to deal with and come up with options to deal with gaps in services that I've mentioned. We need the GNWT addiction counsellors to have outreach offices to engage and to get to know the residents who currently reside in the shelters and for those who are struggling with their addiction because going into a facility is not always the right answer for everyone.

This current system is not one Indigenous people trust, and therefore they don't access assistance. We must do better to build a relationship between our mental health and addictions counsellors and our residents who need it the most. We have to change the way we do things, as it is obvious it hasn't been working the way the service is being provided now. Status quo is no longer acceptable when we are losing our family members. Our family members are becoming victims and hostages to the drugs and alcohol in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE AND ENFORCEMENT IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, I spoke about addictions and the need for additional supports to combat the disease. My statement today will focus on the drug trade and drug enforcement in the NWT. We often hear that drug dealers are well-known in the community and that nothing is being done to round them up or lock them up. We hear all too often that the RCMP and government are not doing their part to curb drugs entering the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, when we reflect on the impact illegal drugs have on individuals and families, it is easy to understand the frustration of our residents. We have a justice system that more often places restraints on those officers enforcing the law to curb distribution, sale, or use than it does on drug

dealers. There is a substantial difference between someone possessing for personal use and possessing with the intent to distribute or sell. To prove someone guilty is not a simple task. It requires a substantial number of investigative hours by police and many more by others as it winds through the court system, and then there is no guarantee of a successful conviction.

Mr. Speaker, the criminal justice system is complex, and the players are many. Players include the police, defendants, Crown prosecutors, lawyers, judges, correctional officers, parole officers, victims, complainants, witnesses, informants, and others. One can see how information can be overlooked and a matter thrown out of court because of a technicality. The reality is that we find ourselves fighting a battle, and a battle that we appear to be losing. Our opponent is well-funded, well-organized, adapts quickly to change, and when we remove a piece, it is quickly replaced by another. If this government expects to lessen the impact of the drug trade in the NWT, it must be a collaborative and interdepartmental approach with additional federal support. The million-dollar question is: do we have sufficient resources in the NWT and in each community to deal with not only drug enforcement, but the many issues that show up daily on the desk of an RCMP officer? As drugs kill off our residents, many question why our justice system appears to be failing the same people it is meant to protect.

Mr. Speaker, although this is a complex matter, it remains our responsibility to ensure that we not allow another person in the NWT to die because of the illicit drug trade. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPORTANCE OF LANDS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Department of Lands is the single most important department in the GNWT. Now, I think many would laugh at that. I think perhaps even the Department of Lands might laugh at that, Mr. Speaker, but whether it be land claims, on-the-land healing, agricultural land, municipal control of land, land tenure so people can get mortgages or insurance, our own residents' spiritual connection to the land, increasing mineral exploration on withdrawn land, or habitat protection for caribou, land lies at the heart of many of our solutions. Yet, the Department of Lands presently has a broken mandate. They do not have control over many of

these items, and EIA is busy at the negotiating table such that they are not given the proper attention. This is a call to our Cabinet to make a comprehensive strategy for how we approach land in this territory and, in many cases, how we give that land back.

Mr. Speaker, recently Deninu K'ue First Nation got a cease-and-desist letter for trying to build a mini-putt and RV course on a parcel of withdrawn land, a parcel of withdrawn land that, in all likelihood, will be given back to them once they settle a land claim the size of New Brunswick. Now, I recognize there are competing interests between the Metis and the Deninu K'ue First Nation, and I don't wish to weigh in on that. I recognize the complexity of resolving these issues in the NWT, and many times it can be hard to figure out who even comes to the table, let alone who we give the land back to. Yet, trying to separate the issue of building an RV park and settling one of the largest land claims in Canadian history needs to be done.

These are clear and distinct issues. The Department of Lands needs to create a process for transferring lands to Indigenous governments outside of the comprehensive land claim process. We are doing this for municipalities; I believe we need to do it for Indigenous governments. We need to, once and for all, settle the land tenure issue. Many residents simply cannot own their home or own the land it is on and get access to insurance and mortgages in this territory. I believe we need to set out a process such that Indigenous residents can own land in fee simple. This is one of the main issues for the Housing Corporation. It is one of the main issues for municipalities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, land use planning in this territory is a Gordian knot. However, Alexander broke the Gordian knot by taking a sword to it, and I encourage the Minister of Lands to come up with a comprehensive land strategy and break that Gordian knot. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN GETTING STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOL

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, I took double the time that I was allowed, so today, I'm going to keep my statement very short and sweet. I just wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of the teachers in the Northwest Territories for the hard work that they have done in trying to get our students back to work. As the daughter of educators, I watched my mother spend countless hours working well beyond

her eight-hour day in order to prepare lesson plans as well as to mark tests. Our entire basement, as I just recently cleaned out, was full of teaching supplies, so I know how hard teachers work, and I know their dedication. I can't even imagine trying to move it all virtually or to do all of the adjustments they've had to do. I wanted to take today to give a shout out to the teachers. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM IN GOVERNMENT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of systemic racism existing within government institutions and agencies is not something new. This has been a known fact for decades. However, it's something that has not always been taken seriously by most people in positions of power.

Mr. Speaker, I think the tide is starting to turn because more and more people are getting to speak more openly against systemic racism. Not only have we seen several months of global protests against police brutality and racial inequality, but we are also seeing key politicians begin to acknowledge and address systemic racism.

For example, in June 2020, Prime Minister Trudeau said, "Systemic racism is an issue right across the country in all our institutions including in our police forces, including in the RCMP." That's what systemic racism is. Moreover, the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Belleguard just said this past weekend, "There is systemic racism. There is systemic discrimination. Let's deal with it. Let's put an action plan in place so that it no longer puts us in 2020 and beyond because we're all in it together."

Mr. Speaker despite the public appetite and near unanimous calls by First Nation leaders of governments to address this issue, we here in the NWT do not seem to be getting the message. Our government is not immune to the realities of systemic racism. For example, over the last year since becoming MLA, I have been dealing with several constituency issues pertaining to the systemic racism specifically within the Fort Smith Correctional Complex of the Department of Justice of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the problem I am referring to is to do with Indigenous employees with corrections not having sufficient protections in place to air certain grievances about management. The current system in place is simply inadequate, so substantive

changes must be made by this government on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, the status quo cannot persist on this matter, otherwise systemic racism will continue to persist throughout corrections and carry on straight up the chain of command. Change must come from the top down on this very important issue, otherwise Indigenous correctional staff will continue to lose their jobs if they speak out against racism or discriminatory policies that they see taking place. If nothing is done on this issue, if it continues to be ignored by this government, then our government is signaling that what the Department of Justice is doing is okay and that systemic racism is allowed to continue unchecked and without accountability. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LARGE EMITTER REBATES AND THE CARBON TAX

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I voted against the carbon tax in the last Assembly because Cabinet would not require any public reporting or transparency. On December 10, 2019, the Minister of Finance said the following about the guidelines being developed for large-emitter carbon tax grants, "I can assure the Member that, indeed, draft guidelines will be shared with the committees for review."

Those guidelines, as specified in Section 6.6(5) of the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Regulations, were shared with committee in March, just as the pandemic hit. MLAs were also given an opportunity to comment on an approach for carbon tax reporting. While I recognize that COVID-19 has delayed a lot of our work together, there was no review of the large-emitter grant program or policy under our current carbon pricing regime, and it's not clear if the program has even been used.

These guidelines are now on the departmental website after I asked about them in September. I've reviewed them and can summarize as follows: The carbon tax paid by large emitters, basically the diamond mines and Norman Wells production facility, are expected to amount to about \$4.1 million for 2020-2021, with about \$530,000 available for the grant program. This money stays in individual accounts for each emitter for up to five

years before it is forfeited to the government. Projects can be pre-approved for a grant to cover up to the amount held in the individual accounts with costs recoverable as long as there is money in the account. Equipment replacement, alternative energy and fuel consumption reductions are all eligible expenses but must account for at least a five percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to a project baseline as calculated by an independent engineer.

This looks like a high bar for any large emitter to get over, and the costs of an engineering assessment don't appear to be eligible. The narrow eligibility requirements also work against smaller projects or innovation that could emerge from experimental or novel technology, including renewable diesel. Given the low amount of funding that is available and the narrow criteria for approval, I will be surprised to learn if any large emitters have actually submitted applications.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance on the implementation of the carbon tax, working with committees and how we can better encourage greenhouse gas reductions, and the movement to a green economy. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COVID-19 RESPONSE

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. On September 3, 2020, the GNWT announced their intention to create a brand-new department called the COVID-19 secretariat. In all honesty, right from the start, I remain skeptical of the purpose and efficacy of this proposed secretariat. For starters, Mr. Speaker, since this initial announcement, there have been minimal updates as to the status of the secretariat. I feel like the Department of Health and Social Services could do better, and in my opinion, they've dropped the ball in terms of updating the NWT regarding new cases of COVID-19 in a timely manner and putting the whole NWT at risk.

Mr. Speaker, small communities remain most at risk against this pandemic, and many people are travelling to and from Yellowknife for medical visits, shopping, et cetera. Without up-to-date information, we could seriously be putting these communities at risk. An example would be LKDFM. They have their own COVID response, and they'd have to be waiting on our government to respond. Again, that's something that we should look at, and I think it's an issue. Mr. Speaker, at this time, in terms of COVID, funds are being appropriated, or what the Premier

wants to put towards this secretariat are absolutely being wasted. Fancy bar graphs once in a while is not effective and not worth our already inflated deficit.

On that note, something that I don't think any of us in this House have really heard is fiscal restraint. It's not been part of this government's vernacular. I think we need to do that. We need to really -- it should come across mind when we do our business here. We are at \$1.8 billion in debt and counting. We, the North, since time immemorial, have always made the most with the resources we had, right from Thebacha all the way up to Ulukhaktok. That's how we've always done it. We've always made the most of what we have, and I think that's an example that this government could follow. With that, marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'll have some questions for the Minister of health.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GIANT MINE REMEDIATION BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, this week, Parsons, the main construction manager for the Giant Mine remediation, is hosting an online industry week. This is an opportunity for local contractors to learn about the project's upcoming multi-million-dollar contract opportunities.

For half a century over 7 million ounces of gold was extracted from Giant Mine, leaving behind hundreds of thousands of tons of arsenic contamination and a \$1-billion clean-up, making it one of the largest Canadian environmental remediation projects. While this project is being overseen by the Federal Government, the GNWT is still a co-proponent. It is still in our backyard, and it still carries with it high expectations for NWT benefit retention.

Last year, the Giant Mine Oversight Board reported employees were 44 percent Northerner and 19 percent Indigenous, while suppliers were 56 percent Northerner and 28 percent Indigenous.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that "Northerner" according to the federal government means any of the three territories, and it is unclear if "Indigenous" means local to the NWT. I cannot identify if this brings significant benefit to the NWT. In addition, hours worked are reported rather than types or numbers of jobs held by Northerners and fails to satisfy concerns that Northerners and Indigenous people are in lower-wage, entry-level positions. Entry-level positions that support rather than do remediation do not build remediation leaders for a remediation economy. Successful procurement is

more than contracts being awarded to NWT businesses. This work more importantly needs to equate to trades and professional employment for residents as well as training and apprenticeships for NWT workers. With a declining GDP, mine slowdowns and closures, and a shrinking skilled labour force, this project is imperative to the future of the NWT economy.

Mr. Speaker, NWT residents are vocal about the socio-economic importance of this project. In response, the Federal Government released a socio-economic strategy and established multi-agency committees with a mandate to better coordinate socio-economic and capacity-building opportunities. I appreciate the federal government and Parsons' for their intent to create northern benefit, but I am concerned about intent becoming reality.

Parsons' mandates that tenders foster northern employment, training, and apprenticeships, and the federal government uses their Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business Initiative to increase federal contracting opportunities for Indigenous businesses, also fining businesses that do not meet their Aboriginal Opportunity commitments. However, how many contractors are fined under this initiative, and how do these fines benefit the NWT, given the NWT suffers by missed procurement opportunities, not Ottawa?

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, we only get one shot at NWT benefit retention from the Giant Mine remediation. We cannot afford to fail. We need jobs, we need apprenticeships, and we need to grow into a territory capable of leading its own remediation economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARY LOUISE SANGUEZ EULOGY

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mary Louise Sanguéz was born on September 6, 1930, in Horn River, near Fort Providence. She was the only child born to Baptiste and Adeline Sabourin. She had a half-brother. She married James Sanguéz when she was 15 years old and had her first child at 16. She had 15 children in total, 29 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-great grandchildren.

She liked to tan moose hides and make slippers, mitts, gloves, moccasins, and mukluks. Her mother

taught her at a young age how to work on moose hides, and she passed that knowledge on to her daughters. No matter the weather, there was learning to be done. Her daughter Lucy took her travelling to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario for family events, like weddings and the swearing in of her granddaughter as an RCMP officer.

About 45 years ago, Mary Louise and her daughter travelled to numerous places across Canada to showcase her work. Pictures of her work can be found in the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa, the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, the Yellowknife Heritage Museum, and the museum in Whitehorse.

When she moved to long-term care, she didn't want to stay in her room all the time. She liked to be "in the thick of things," as she would say. She was used to noise, and she liked to be in the middle of the action. She wanted to see people coming and going and visit other residents.

She passed away on March 22, 2020, 40 years and one day since her husband, James, passed on on March 23, 1980. She is predeceased by her parents; her husband, James Sanguéz; half-brother, Jimmy Sabourin; son, Morris; and two daughters, Florence and Virginia.

The family would like to thank the Fort Simpson long-term care staff for looking after their mother during this time. The family would like to share this quote with us: "Your mother is the greatest mom in the world for you." She will be sadly missed.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to welcome all those who are joining us in the gallery today. It's always good to have an audience. Member for Sahtu.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome Ms. Tracy Yakeleya, who is the constituent assistant for Sahtu. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

#### Oral Questions

QUESTION 363-19(2):  
POLICING IN HAY RIVER AND THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I look at the community of Hay River and consider our population, our proximity to the border, and the limited number of RCMP stationed there, it concerns me in that we are understaffed when it comes to dealing with illicit drugs. Can the Minister of Justice confirm the number of funded RCMP positions and support staff in Hay River and around the NWT? How is it determined that this is the number we require to provide effective policing in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Northwest Territories, there are 225 RCMP positions and 42 public servants who serve the NWT as part of the territorial police service agreement and First Nations policing agreement. In addition, there are 13 federal policing positions. Specifically in Hay River, there are 16 regular members, including 12 constables, who we would see out on patrol, and three public servants. This includes two additional members who are included in the 2018-2019 budget.

To the Member's point about the resources in Hay River, I know that over the past few years there have been staffing issues, and it has been tough to get that detachment staffed up. I know those have been taken care of, and I believe they are at full capacity and that they have been for the last couple of years, which is good news.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** The drug trade in the territories, you seem to hear more and more about it lately. We have more youth dying because of it. What I would like to ask the Minister is if he can confirm if the direction this government is taking to combat the drug trade in the NWT is working, or is the department re-evaluating their approach to the way they deal with the drug trade?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** In terms of combatting the drug trade, despite what the perceptions might be, it is my opinion that, the RCMP and the Department of Justice, this is the last line of defence. The first line of defence is preventative measures. It's ensuring kids have something to do in the evening so that they do not go out and get into trouble. It's ensuring that there is the type of supports that kids and adults need in terms of counselling, having easy access to those things. However, the Member's question is about what we are doing for enforcement, so I do have some information.

Enforcement is not just the RCMP. There needs to be a multisector approach. Of course, the Department of Justice and the RCMP have been working with health and education and NGOs over the years on things such as the Opioid Task Force,

which included the department and subject matters in the RCMP who have been working closely to ensure that we do not see the type of opioid crisis here that we have been seeing in the South. There is also collaboration on the alcohol strategy.

We have all seen the significant number of drug seizures over the past number of years. Every time I look on the news, there is a photograph with a pile of drugs, a pile of money, and then guns, and we see those on a regular basis. In addition to those large seizures, the RCMP are also focusing on enhancing the frontline officers' ability to target drug trafficking at a community level through collaboration, training, and development. We do not hear a lot of the things that the department, that the RCMP do, as well. I know that, speaking with the RCMP in Hay River, they have partnered or they work closely with the RCMP in Alberta, and they stop drugs before they get into the territory. We don't see that. We do not hear a lot of the things they do. They are not self-promoters in a lot of ways, and maybe that is so the people do not figure out their tactics. However, I am always happy when I speak with them and I find out that they are doing things that I never knew were happening. There is also the development of a gun and gang strategy that the NWT is embarking on with support for the federal government. There are a number of things that we're doing. That being said, this is the last line of defence. We really need to work on the first line of defence.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Can the Minister of Justice confirm the annual cost specifically associated with drug enforcement? This would include a breakdown of RCMP, courts, and corrections cost, knowing that there is probably an education component, a health component, and all that. It's just those three I'm asking about.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I can't provide a breakout. Drug enforcement is so intertwined with everything that the justice system does, whether it's an RCMP doing a drug seizure, whether it's a court hearing, a case, or whether it's someone in the prison system. It's not possible without a significant amount of time and effort to really parse that. I will go back to the department and see if we can get some more precise information, understanding that it would be impossible to get the exact numbers that you're looking for.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I would like to see on that is a cost between what it costs for enforcement versus education, so I guess it would be the last line of defence versus the cost of the first line of defence. The last question I have is: can the Minister tell me how much

emphasis is placed on education addiction support in the battle to reduce access to drug dependency in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Again, that's a big question. Education is part of addiction support that I would assume would include everything from being able to call a counselor to being sent away for counseling and aftercare. I can give a little bit of information about what's happening. In the schools, in grades seven to nine, there is a program typically offered called the Fourth R, and it's a skill-focused and relationship-based program. Each grade level includes a unit on substance abuse and addictions and related behaviours, and that makes up a good chunk of the program. The high school level, there is the Healthy Relationships Program Plus, which includes a unit on the impact of substance use and abuse. There are counselling supports in schools, whether it be the Child and Youth Care counselors, itinerant travelling, mental health school-based counselors, community counselling program, and so on.

I'll speak a little bit about the education done by the Department of Health. The Department Health has the Dope Experience, which is a campaign focused on cannabis, which was developed in consultation with Northerners and northern youth and northern youth supporters. There is a public awareness campaign about opioids, there is the My Voice, My Choice campaign for youth wellness, and there is the NWT Help Line Facebook page. There is a lot of effort being put into this. That being said, there are a lot of things out there. I've spoken to students in school. There are so many things that they need to get to into in the curriculum, but this is one of them. I think, sometimes, it's in one ear, out the other. There is no easy fix. I've listed off a ton of things that are happening. This is something that takes collaboration, not just with the government and organizations, but with every individual, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 364-19(2):

SYSTEM RACISM IN CORRECTIONS DIVISION

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, my first question is: does the Minister acknowledge that there is an issue of systemic racism faced by Indigenous staff within the correctional division of the Department of Justice? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, in the Member's statement, she referenced comments by the Prime Minister about systemic

racism, by the AFN National Chief about systemic racism, and she could have referenced the MLA for Hay River North's comments at the Black Lives Matter rally at Hay River recently because, in every western institution, there is systemic racism. There is no getting around it, and anyone who disagrees I think is willfully blind. That said, it's how we deal with it. The North, I think we do a better job than other places, but these are systems that were created in a colonial culture. Systemic racism exists, and we have to deal with it. We have to use the advantages we have in the territory and the people we have in the territory to ensure that it doesn't creep into our systems and then, when it is there, that we can get it out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Addresses against systemic racism must start somewhere. Can the Minister explain what the terms of reference are for the recent workplace assessment, which is being completed by an independent contractor, and explain what the expected outcomes are? Also, would the systemic racism issues in the files that were presented by my constituents be addressed by this assessment? If not, how is the Minister going to address these issues?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I apologize. I'll talk slower for the interpreters. I know I've been racing through things. The workplace assessment is being undertaken by a third party across corrections. The goal of that is to tease out the issues that employees feel they are facing, to determine how the workplace relationships, roles, responsibilities, and the operations of the corrections services can be improved. From the data that is collected, I'm going to make sure that we look at that data with an eye to systemic racism and what could be symptoms of systemic racism.

I know there are a number of questions in that single question, so I'll try to answer all of them. The Member has brought constituent issues to me. I believe that some of those constituents might be participating in this assessment, and if they are, I hope they bring those cases forward. As I stated, I'm going to make sure that we look for systemic racism. Again, I don't have an intimate knowledge of this assessment and the questions being asked, but perhaps those might not exactly target systemic racism in the way that we would like them to. I'm going to make sure that we try and tease those out, if we can.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** The Minister sent me some emails, which were puzzling, regarding the individual files and my concerns of systemic racism at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex. Bureaucratic answers given to me by the Minister when this is such a hot and pressing issue for my constituents who are Indigenous staff are not

acceptable. Will the Minister be more thoughtful, considerate, and give more compassionate solutions to systemic racism within the corrections system?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The Member is correct. She received bureaucratic responses from me, which are not common. Those are usually the ones that are sent back, but when they are answers to HR issues, I'm going to send a bureaucratic response. I don't want to get into the specifics of HR issues. That's not a Minister's role. That being said, there are times when HR issues can indicate a larger pattern, and that's when we do have to pay attention. I have read every document that the Member has shared with me from her constituents, and I am using that to help inform my understanding of the justice system.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, the Indigenous staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex deserve justice. Systemic racism at this facility is unacceptable and must be corrected. I am wondering if the Minister will take the high road, do the correct thing, and acknowledge systemic racism. My question is: will the Minister consider doing an external review of the Fort Smith Correctional Complex? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Right now, we have a workplace assessment that is happening, and I've been looking forward to seeing the results of that. Frankly, if the results of that warrant some additional investigation, then I'm happy to pursue that, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 365-19(2):  
ACCESS TO TREATMENT PROGRAMS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services related to her statement in the House on October 15<sup>th</sup>, where, I quote, "the reason it's in the South is because people can get in right away." How long does it take from the time one accesses help and wants treatment to arriving at a treatment facility? From what I've seen and from what I've heard, it's not such an easy process to navigate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer to this question really depends on a number of variables. The person who wants to go

into treatment starts by discussing that possibility with their doctor, nurse practitioner, counsellor, or a health professional of that kind. They then take a look at what needs to be in place to access the facilities. There is a new assessment now for COVID that has to be completed. There are questions whether medical detox will be required. There are some variables there that need to be worked out. Then, the person applies to the facility and gets an answer about how long the waiting time will be. The Poundmaker's Lodge waiting time now is 10 days to two weeks; Aventa, which is the facility specifically for women, is between four and six weeks; Edgewood in BC is between six and 12 weeks; and Fresh Start in Calgary, which is specifically for men, is between eight and 12 weeks. It is worth noting that, because we have contracts with these facilities, our clients are prioritized for admission. Thank you.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thanks to the Minister for that. My next question is based on her statements, the same day where she said, I just want to be very clear, that we're focusing the department on things like after-care and things like on-the-land healing and what supports we can put in place to help people hang onto their sobriety when they come back. Well, after-care, yes, we've all agreed here that that is extremely important, but how is the department looking at ways it engages with residents in need of culturally respectful community treatment, like our priority says, and other ways within the local GNWT mental health and addictions departments?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** What the department of health has done is really had the Indigenous organizations take the lead on on-the-land treatment by having a pot of money for them to apply for in order to provide programming where they want to and in what form they want to. This is a fund that is easy to apply for and which has few restrictions on the way that money is spent. In terms of other kinds of after-care, such as AA, that doesn't exist in every community. Some communities don't feel there is enough confidentiality to offer AA. There are apps for the phone. There are client surveys every two years, which look at how the treatment programs and after-care programs have assisted or not assisted the residents, so we are taking a multifaceted approach, knowing that it isn't a one-size-fits-all proposition.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I'm looking for the Minister to commit to see if she can look at more of an outreach-type drug and addiction counsellor, for example setting up space in our shelters to aid with building the trust and relationship and better be able to assist them navigate the process of choosing help.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Certainly, I can commit to that approach. It's a common-sense approach, to meet people where they are at, where they congregate, and to talk to them there about what kinds of supports they need or referrals. I know that, often, in the shelters, medical practitioners do visit, counselors do visit, or people can have appointments at medical facilities. This is something we're very interested in doing, is meeting clients where they are at in order to provide them with the services they need.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I look forward to seeing that in my community. Will the GNWT also commit to changing the way mental health and addiction service is done? I know we have the mental health and addiction counselors within the GNWT. The way that they work within the system with each region will be different, and I understand that. What would a culturally respectful community drug and alcohol program look like, including elders and traditional spaces, with the counselors that we have currently within the GNWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you for that question. This is an area in which I need to take a little time to think about how this might be applicable. We have the child and youth care counsellors and the Community Counselling Program, and I think they operate within offices. They don't go out to on-the-land camps or other types of settings. The question is: how would we make that work better? I think it's a really good question, and I look forward to working with the Member to figure out how that can be implemented. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 366-19(2):  
LARGE EMITTER CARBON TAX GRANT  
PROGRAM

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for the NWT carbon tax. Earlier today, I discussed some of the shortcomings of the large emitter carbon tax grant program. Can the Minister confirm whether there was any public engagement and work with standing committee to develop the large carbon emitter carbon tax grant program? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There hasn't been a formal engagement process since the time that the regime was proposed back in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. However, the Standing Committee on Government Operations has been consulted both at the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, as well as here earlier in 2020, as I think the MLA did earlier reference. They were given a copy in advance of the large emitter grant policy back in March, and similarly, the industry itself, the large emitters themselves who would be subject to this, were also given an opportunity for some feedback on this, which came after the committee's opportunity to review. Then, there were some, I believe, adjustments to some of those documents and templates after that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I can assure the Minister there was very little consultation with committee in terms of developing the actual bill that was brought forward, and that was one of the reasons why I voted against it in the last Assembly. The Minister promised that there would be some consultation on the development of these guidelines, and I'm not convinced that really happened. On to my question: can the Minister tell us whether there have been any applications under the large emitter carbon tax grant program or policy, and if so, how many have been successful?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The accounts for this program were only set up as of March 31, 2020, which obviously falls and coincides quite a bit with what is happening with COVID-19. As of this point, with a few months, no, there have not been any applications yet to date.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that, and I'm kind of not surprised, given the high bar that the current guidelines put on applicants. Can the Minister tell us what the available revenues are projected for the 2020-2021 fiscal year for large emitter carbon tax grant program? Sorry, I did give the Minister a head's up before coming to the House today.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes. I do happen to have those numbers now right in front of me. For the fiscal year of 2020-2021, we are projecting \$25 million in carbon tax revenues, which, based on that projection and assuming no drawdowns, at the end of this fiscal year, the large emitter individual accounts would be estimated to be just over \$2 million.

**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 those figures. Earlier today, I outlined some of the limitations with the

large emitter carbon tax grant program and policy. These include the narrow scope of the eligibility criteria that does not encourage innovation or experimentation; the requirement for a third-party engineering assessment; the lack of public reporting of any project submitted or approved; there are no forums for submission of projects; and more. Would the Minister agree that it is already time to review the large emitter carbon tax grant program and policy, and how will she ensure this time that there is some level of accountability and public engagement while working with standing committee? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Fortunately, this is a policy-based item, so there certainly is opportunity to refine it as it has now rolled out and before any applications come in. Again, it's fairly early in its stages. The Member mentions the need for innovation, the desire for innovation. I have actually heard the same from industry, that they also want the opportunity to innovate, that they want the opportunity to access these funds, to be real leaders in this area. To the extent that that can be considered, I think that is a great opportunity. Again, the policy itself is not complex. It's not lengthy. It may very easily be subject to the opportunity to fix it and to move forward with it in a way that is really meaningful and that will address these issues that are coming forward now, at this early stage. It is the right time to be looking at it. It is the right time to be having that engagement. Mr. Speaker, indeed, as I have said, industry has already been in contact around this. Now, the Member is also speaking to it. I am quite certain that we will be able to find a way forward that is accountable and innovative. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 367-19(2):  
TRANSFERRING LANDS TO MUNICIPAL  
GOVERNMENTS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I spoke about a number of issues I believe the Department of Lands is facing. In general, I think the theme was that we have a lot of work giving land back, whether it be to Indigenous governments, residents, companies, or municipalities. My first question for the Minister of Lands is: can I get an update on the mandate commitment to have a process guide for transferring land to municipalities by winter 2021? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. I did

have the opportunity to meet with a number of the Yellowknife MLAs and talked about it. We have a draft process that we are working on. We shared it with the City of Yellowknife, but we are now finalizing it. We will hope to have it within this session.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I do believe that is a mandate commitment that is well ahead of schedule, so I congratulate the Minister on that. However, Mr. Speaker, the process guide is really only the first step. It is how and when we will transfer the land that matters, so what I am looking for in order to stop asking this question of the Minister repeatedly is: can I get a firm date when we expect the land transfer to the City of Yellowknife to be completed?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The Department of Lands is very much committed to transfer vacant land to the City of Yellowknife or any municipality that wishes it. Unfortunately, I cannot give a firm date because it depends on a number of things, the City of Yellowknife, our Indigenous governments, as we try to work forward. It is about working together. If we need to, we will address small parcels of lands or projects moving forward right now.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I do believe that, if we cannot get a firm date based on the process guide, then some work needs to be done. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that one of the solutions with land transfer is to break it down into smaller parcels. I am glad to hear the Minister say that. I spoke today in my statement about Deninu Kue First Nation trying to build an RV park on interim land that requires one of the largest land claims in Canada to be settled before they can build an RV park. Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a disconnect between these problems. Is the Minister willing to create a similar process for transferring land to Indigenous governments outside of the formal land claim process?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, the department is able to transfer land to Indigenous governments, much like it does to any applicants for public land. When the Indigenous government is interested in acquiring land, their corporation or the business arm of their organization needs to submit their lease application moving forward.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That answer almost had everything, and then he said, "lease application." What I am looking for is a process guide to transfer land in fee simple. Is the Minister willing to do that? I am sick of leases. I want to transfer and provide some certainty to our Indigenous governments, to our municipalities. Is the Minister willing to create a process document

for land in fee simple or Aboriginal title, whatever it may be?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The Member is probably going to not like my answer: no. We are working with the municipalities, and we are working with Indigenous governments. We need to work through a consultation process. I just spent the last two hours with an Indigenous government actually talking about this process. We are working with everybody to try to resolve this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 368-19(2):  
CONTRACTS TO NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
BUSINESSES AT THE GIANT MINE  
REMEDIATION PROJECT

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I alluded to some differences in definition between the federal government and the GNWT and how they refer to "northern" or "Indigenous" content within their procurement guidelines. I want to kind of get away from that a little bit because assumptions can be concerning when it comes to procurement, and I want to have a very good understanding of how the NWT is benefitting from the Giant Mine Remediation Project. What I am wondering from the Minister of ENR today, Mr. Speaker, is: how many contracts have been awarded to NWT businesses, both as suppliers and contractors, and what dollar value percentage of the entire value of the contracts does this represent?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I answer the questions, I want to clarify that, although the GNWT is a co-component of the Giant Mine Remediation Project, the Government of Canada is ultimately the project authority when it comes to procurement. The percentage of contracts the Giant Mine Remediation Project in 2018-2019 awarded was 91 percent; 79 percent of that was northern Indigenous suppliers, and 12 percent went to northern non-Indigenous suppliers. This, the 2019-2020, saw 83 percent of this amount given out; 81 was to northern Indigenous suppliers, and 22 of that was to northern non-Indigenous. In regard to the dollar value, in 2018-2019, there was \$26 million out of the \$28.8 million that went to northern and non-Indigenous suppliers; 2019-2020 saw \$45.85 million out of the total of \$49 million.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Before I go on to my next question, I would like to request that those numbers be provided in writing and also the definitions used for each of those, as well, pretty please. Thank you. My second question, Mr. Speaker, is: a significant focus of the Giant Mine Remediation Project needs to be training and apprenticeship; this is an opportunity for the Northwest Territories to develop made-in-the-North experience for remediation workers for a future remediation economy. How many apprentices are currently working on the Giant Mine Remediation Project?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. In regard to apprentices, I do not know the exact number. Right now, we know that 62 percent of onsite employees report themselves as NWT residents.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** The numbers again today are very different than what is being reported in the annual report from the Giant Mine Oversight Board, and so I would love to be able to figure out with the Minister where the discrepancies are coming from and to better understand if it is a difference in definitions used or if there is something else happening. However, my next question, Mr. Speaker, is: companies that do not follow their contract responsibilities under the federal Aboriginal Opportunity considerations are fined by the federal government; given that the repercussions of that and the damages of that are felt by the NWT and not by Ottawa, what is the process for those fines? Do the fines go to Ottawa? Are any amount of the fines left behind here in the Northwest Territories? Is there any NWT benefit to those fines?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** There are contract deductions are brought back to communities mostly impacted by Giant Mine via contribution agreement. In 2019-2020 the federal government provided approximately \$957,000 in funding to positions within Yellowknife Dene First Nations, North Slave Metis Alliance, City of Yellowknife, and Alternatives North. In addition, approximately \$450,000 has been provided to Yellowknives Dene, Dechinta Naowo, for environmental monitoring training program.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question was in regard to specifically the fines received by the federal government for contracts that don't fulfil what they call their "Aboriginal criteria" for their federal procurement process. It's outside of other contracts that the government provides for remediation or for partnerships with Indigenous governments. This is very specific to people not following what they say they are going to do with the procurement contracts that they have with the federal government. Maybe

I can request that in writing. I can do that tomorrow in a written question for the Minister.

My next question is: one of the recommendations of the Giant Mine Oversight Board was for the federal government to appoint a special envoy to develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated economic strategy for the Giant Mine Remediation Project. This role or this position would act as a liaison between the federal, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous agencies. What I'd like to know is: has this been done with the federal government, if the Minister knows that? If the federal government has not done this because this is so important to the Northwest Territories, would the GNWT be willing to appoint a GNWT staff member to do this work? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The project team met with Giant Mine Oversight Board in August, discussed the specific recommendations and to clarify the intent of the special envoy. The GMOB clarified that they would like to see focused attention on solutions to help remove federal procurement barriers within the federal government. The project team committed to bringing this forward to senior management in Ottawa on a broader scale. It should be noted that through the project's socio-economic working group and senior advisory body, the project team already works closely with Yellowknives Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Tlicho government, City of Yellowknife, Alternatives North, and Parsons, to address socio-economic aspects of this project. I'd also like to note that Parsons and the project team will be hosting a three-day online industry day event, October 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>th</sup>. The Member talked about it in her Member's statement. The intent of the industry day is to provide local contractors in the community with advice, advance information on upcoming work and procurement opportunities at the site. More information can be found on Parsons' website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 369-19(2):  
VALIDATING TEST RESULTS FOR COVID-19

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Through my Member's statement today, I mentioned that some of our responses for COVID in terms of cases. It's important that we keep our Aboriginal governments up to date because they each have their own populations to deal with, their own people to respond to. This goes to those three presumptive cases that we have, that currently we're looking at. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. My first question is: when will the Department of Health and Social Services let the

public know when these presumptive cases are positive or negative?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for the question. The issue here is that our rapid testing machines are not validated for positive tests because we've had so few positive tests. In fact, none since these machines were procured. The situation is that we need to have them validated by the Alberta lab. There is some transportation time. Then, we get into the queue in the Alberta lab, and they provide us with the results. As soon as those results are known, we will inform everyone via public health advisory, the way we did on Friday with the presumptive cases. I can't speed it up. There are factors beyond our control. We are as anxious as everyone else to hear whether these cases have been validated. In the meantime, we have taken the precaution of treating the presumptive cases as positive cases and responding on that basis for maximum precautions.

**MR. NORN:** Marsi for that response from the Minister. I understand there is an investigation as well. Are there any big updates on this investigation?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I'm not exactly sure what kind of investigation you're asking for an update on. I don't have any more information to share than what I just said.

**MR. NORN:** I came up with some of these questions on the fly, so my apologies for that. My last question is: are we going to be expecting any more cases aside from these three presumptive cases?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I have no way of knowing whether there are going to be additional cases. There was some contact tracing going on, I haven't seen the results of that. If there are additional cases as a result of that the public will be notified through the public health advisory process which we used last week through the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.

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

QUESTION 368-19(2):  
PROTOCOLS AROUND CONTACT TRACING

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. If a person tests positive after being in a community already, what is the government's response or protocols around contact tracing?

Could the Minister please walk me through a scenario of what would happen in that instance? Thank you.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for the question. There is a protocol in the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer that a team who are trained to do contact tracing then figure out who the contacts are and then confidentially call those people and make them aware that they are a contact of somebody who has tested positive. They give them advice on the next steps to take in the event that that has happened.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** I heard her mention that there had been training on contact tracing. Has the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services as well as the CPHO had formal training, certified training, on contact tracing?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. The training is done by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer. I'm not sure what the Member has in mind with formal training. There is a national protocol that is being followed. I don't know if that's what she means, but this is not something unique to the NWT. There is a formal process, or a national process, that is followed in contact tracing.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** I'd ask then, if there has been training done, if the Minister would supply me with records of training for the staff of the CPHO and the HSS. In the recent cases of COVID in Yellowknife, were these protocols followed?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I don't have an answer to the Member's question.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** More of a comment: I can't believe the Minister doesn't know if her own protocols were followed in a case such as this.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 371-19(2):  
LAND LEASE ONLY POLICY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue my questioning of the Minister of Lands. He refuses to create a process guide for transferring land in fee simple for Aboriginal titled Indigenous governments because presently he cannot. We have a land lease only policy in the Northwest Territories. I believe it is a Cabinet policy. My question for the Minister of Lands is: is he willing to get rid of the lease only policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lands is undertaking a broad review of the effectiveness of the Land Lease only policy in collaboration with EIA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I appreciate that there is a review and work is being done. Will part of this review consult existing lease holders and see whether they can transfer their land to fee simple? I believe a great example is: I think we have six agricultural leases in the Northwest Territories. That's about six farmers who would be better off getting mortgages, getting loans, and running their farms if they had their land. Will such work conduct a review of leases we can convert to title?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** As I said before, we need to consult with EIA and with our Indigenous governments moving forward.

**MR. JOHNSON:** That's not quite the answer that I'm looking for. That would be an answer that we are going to get rid of the lease-to-own policy and replace it with something that allows fee simple title. In this same vein, presently, about half of Akaitcho territory, half of the southern Northwest Territories, is withdrawn. Does the Department of Lands have any role or plan to decrease the amount of land that is presently withdrawn in interim land withdrawals?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The quick answer is no, but the Member should ask the Minister responsible for EIA that type of question.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the problem I'm trying to get to. Right now, I am not prepared to support putting a multi-billion-dollar road through Akaitcho territory when half of it is withdrawn, the other half will likely go to Akaitcho, and we have no guarantee what their mineral staking regime will look like. We have not provided investors certainty in this area, and I don't believe it's just EIA. I think it's EIA, ITI, MACA, and Lands, and this huge gap in land administration in the Northwest Territories. My question is: will the Minister of Lands work with EIA to come up with a comprehensive strategy on what we are going to do with land outside of the formal land claim process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** [Microphone turned off] ...the Member, but to make him feel better: yes, we will work with the Minister of EIA. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 372-19(2):  
LARGE EMITTER CARBON TAX GRANT  
PROGRAM

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to just ask a couple of more questions, if I may, of the Minister of Finance on the large emitter carbon tax grant program. I think she almost started to make a commitment that she was prepared to review the current program and the policy that is in place, so is the Minister prepared to do that? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am hesitating only because I don't want to get mired in reviews on a program that hasn't even really barely rolled out. I agree with some of the comments the Member has made around ensuring that there is enough flexibility in this program to really capture true innovation, and so that we are really encouraging a sea change in terms of how we deal and how we can really use this funding to advance green opportunities and green mining. Whether it's maybe a small-scale, internal review that happens, that much, I think, is probably safe to say. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. She's almost there. If I had had a chance to look at the guidelines and the policy, I would have given her that advice back in March, but of course, everything kind of shut down with COVID. One of my concerns is that renewable diesel, and I'm not talking about biofuels, renewable diesel, as I understand, at least one of the diamond mines is very interested in trying to trial it and maybe even use some of the money that is available through the large emitter carbon tax grant program, but it doesn't make any sense to try to apply, the way that it is currently formulated. Has the Minister heard about this proposal to look at renewable diesel at one of the diamond mines?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I don't have the details about some of the different proposals. What I do have is some engagement that has come, frankly, from my other hat, from the diamond mines who are looking for opportunities to be innovative. Whether that is through renewable diesel project or others, I think I take the point that there are some ideas out there that are going to be innovative where, right now, if we're demanding proof of a 5-percent reduction as part of the application process, that may be a difficult target to be able to provide that advance proof of, if what you're trying to do is something innovative. There has to be a way to modify what we're doing to ensure that we're capturing that true innovation. That is something I've spoken about many times, and again, as I say,

it may be simply a matter of an internal, small-R-type review that needs to happen so that the eligibility criteria are not excluding otherwise valid, good projects that will advance green energy and green mining.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I mentioned this in my Member's statement, that one of the conditions for eligibility under this grant program policy is that a large emitter, the project is supposed to reduce the annual GHG emissions by 5 percent relative to a project baseline, business-as-usual scenario. I'm actually looking at the document, but it's not clear to me whether that is 5 percent for the entire project or 5 percent for the specific area that an application covers. I'm not sure if the Minister can answer that question. I'd like to ask it, and we'll see where the answer is.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The simple fact is: as I said earlier, having only been really up and running since the accounts were set up at the end of March, there hasn't even been an application yet, but I think, at the very least, as I've said already, whether it's a small-R internal review or whether it's a question of putting out some guidelines to help understand the interpretation of the criteria, which are admittedly short, I also have it in front of me, I think we'll have to do that to make sure that we are actually, again, capturing and targeting good projects, good ideas, so that we can actually demonstrate that this is going to be a program that encourages innovation. I think the Member's point has been clearly made, that there is some work to be done here to make this an even better program.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Honourable Premier.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 186-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
239-19(2): BUSINESS LICENSE FOR LUTSELK'E  
DENE FIRST NATION-OWNED FRONTIER  
FISHING LODGE

TABLED DOCUMENT 187-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
274-19(2): SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS  
IMPACTED BY FLOODING

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 239-19(2): Business

License for Lutselk'e Dene First Nation-Owned Frontier Fishing Lodge;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 274-19(2): Support for Residents Impacted by Flooding." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

TABLED DOCUMENT 188-19(2):  
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION  
COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2019  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission 2019-2020 Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Bill 11, Member for Yellowknife North.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 11:  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OFFICERS  
STANDARDIZATION ACT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 11, Legislative Assembly Officers Standardization Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 11 has had first reading.

---Carried

First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole and bills and other matters, tabled document 181-19(2) Capital Estimates 2021-2022, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I move that the Chair rise and report progress.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I have the report from 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 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2022, and reports progress. I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Member for Nahendeh. All those in favour. All those opposed. Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 20, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 16-19(2), Referral of Tabled Documents 165-19(2): Government Mr. O'Reilly of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recover - Recommendations to the GNWT; 166-19(2): Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; and TD 167-19(2): Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 11, Legislative Assembly Officers Standardization Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2022
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Clerk, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 20, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:08 p.m.