



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 43

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Pages 1413 - 1442

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

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

(Sahtu)
Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for Homelessness
Minister responsible for Youth
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister responsible for Youth

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Minister responsible for the Covid-19 Secretariat

Hon. Julie Green

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

Mr. Jackie Jacobson

(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 of Justice
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 responsible for the Status of Women
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment

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	1413
ASSENT TO BILLS	1413
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1414
75-19(2) – Community Government Engagement on COVID-19 Response (Chinna)	1414
76-19(2) – Harvester Support for 2020-2021 (Thompson)	1414
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1415
Border Camp Services (R. Simpson)	1415
Marine Transportation Services Appreciation (Jacobson)	1416
Fire Hall in Detah (Norn)	1416
Addictions and Aftercare (Martselos)	1416
Indigenous Languages (Semmler)	1417
Addictions and Culturally Appropriate Aftercare (Nokleby)	1417
Stanton Territorial Hospital Sterilization of Instruments (O'Reilly)	1418
Housing (Cleveland)	1418
SPCA Core Funding (Johnson)	1419
Self-Isolation Exemptions (Bonnetrouge)	1419
Addictions Treatment Centre in the North (Lafferty)	1420
Eulogy for Isadore Sam Ekotla (Thompson)	1420
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1420
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	1421
RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS	1427
ORAL QUESTIONS	1429
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1439
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	1440
Bill 15 – Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020	1440
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1440
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1441
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1441

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 27, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, 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 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Colleagues, please be seated. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom, is ready to enter the Chamber, and to assent bills? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret M. Thom): Thank you. Please be seated. Mahsi. Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon, and good to see all of you.

Assent to Bills

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

- Bill 11, Legislative Assembly Officers Standardization Act

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

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Colleagues, I would like to extend the appreciation of this House to the Commissioner, Margaret M. Thom. It is always the pleasure to have her in the House.

Colleagues, before we begin today, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge three of our statutory officers as they prepare for their upcoming retirements.

Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengtts was appointed as the first Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in 1997 and has held the position for 23 years.

Ms. Deborah McLeod has been with the Human Rights Commission since its inception in 2004, first as the deputy director and then as director. Her retirement marks 16 years with the Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Shannon Gullberg is retiring after 15 years of involvement with the office of the Languages Commissioner. Ms. Gullberg acted as legal counsel for the Languages Commissioner from 1996 to 2000 and became the Languages Commissioner in 2005. Unfortunately, Shannon was unable to attend the sitting today, but we wish her all the best in her retirement.

To each of you, thank you for your many years of dedication and service to the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

Colleagues, please join me in thanking our statutory officers for their service and wishing them all the best in their retirement. Mahsi cho, thank you.

The Member for Frame Lake has requested to address the House this afternoon on a matter of personal explanation. Mr. O'Reilly, please proceed.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I rise pursuant to Rule 21(1) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly to make a personal explanation. During the debate on Motion 12-19(2), revocation of appointment of the Honourable Member for Great Slave to the Executive Council on August 26, 2020, I made the following statement, "The Yellowknives First Nation publicly withdrew their support for the SGP Road on August 1, 2020, given that the GNWT contracted another southern company for up to \$20 million worth of work."

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation issued a news release dated August 1, 2020, that included the following, "The most significant of these contracts was a standing offer agreement which was recently awarded to two large multinational consulting firms." I will table this news release later today. I have been asked to clarify my remarks made on August 26th by the Association of Consulting and Engineering Companies NWT in a letter dated October 23, 2020. I will also table that letter later today. I will speak to the particulars of my remarks and not the merits of the Slave Geological Province road as my views on this subject are well known. I do not support that project.

In July 2020, Stantec Consulting Limited and Golder Associates Ltd. were awarded standing offer

agreements for the provision of environmental and engineering support services for the advancement of the Slave Geological Province Corridor. The contract values were \$9.9 million and \$7.4 million respectively. Of the two firms, Golder Associates is registered for the business incentive policy. Both firms have offices in the NWT, Stantec for over 30 years and Golder for 25 years, with a significant number of local employees, some of whom are expected to work on the Slave Geological Province road. I apologize unreservedly to anyone who may have taken offence or felt to be misrepresented from my earlier remarks. I wish to thank the Association of Consulting and Engineering Companies NWT for bringing this matter to my attention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to correct the record.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Orders of the day, item number 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 75-19(2): COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT ON COVID-19 RESPONSE

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I wish to provide an update on the ongoing efforts of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to work with community government partners to support the COVID-19 pandemic response.

We have all been affected by COVID-19. Taking action to slow the spread and protect public health has required leaders from all levels of government to act and adjust operations in order to continue serving the Northwest Territories' residents. Since mid-March, MACA has worked with community governments to identify and monitor impacts to communities, share information about the government response to the pandemic, update community emergency plans, and ensure local emergency and essential services are provided. Community governments have also needed to adapt. Practical changes have been met with creative solutions such as holding council meetings remotely and making changes to bylaws to do so.

Mr. Speaker, these efforts have been supported in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities through virtual town-hall meetings with community leaders that have happened since the beginning of the pandemic. Other Ministers and GNWT officials have worked collaboratively at these meetings to share information and answer questions that leaders may have about specific topics. I am proud to say that

these meetings have fostered engagements between our community governments, resulting in responsive made-in-the-NWT plans that have helped to provide assistance and support to the Northwest Territories' residents. These include food hampers and on-the-land supports. MACA also worked with other departments to create multimedia communications about safety during the pandemic, fact sheets, and how-to-get-help guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, MACA continues to connect with community governments regularly to share current COVID-19 information, provide support with problems and issues they are encountering, to hear their concerns, to answer any questions they may have, and to provide a mechanism to feed their information into the government response. Currently, MACA is continuing our work with the health authorities, the Department of Health and Social Services, and to engage community governments to provide community-specific details and updates to community pandemic plans that reflect the capacity and resources in each community and region to support the health response efforts.

Mr. Speaker, we want to share our gratitude and thanks on the ongoing efforts of the community governments, not only maintaining support for their residents as well as their support for the government in maintaining isolation centres and border check points, both on our highways and at the airports. On that note, I also must recognize the GNWT staff, especially those who have put their hands forward to be redeployed to support these efforts. As the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I want to echo an early statement by our Premier and take a moment to recognize them in the Legislative Assembly and say thank you.

Mr. Speaker, we have benefitted greatly and appreciated the collaboration and solution-based approach of everyone involved. We thank the leadership in our communities for their efforts and their cooperation. MACA is committed to continue working with the communities to share information, to listen, and to respond to issues and concerns. We will work together to continue to manage the risk and protect our residents. Nothing is more important than the safety of our people. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 76-19(2): HARVESTER SUPPORT FOR 2020-2021

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year particularly has been hard for many Northwest Territories communities and

residents who were already struggling to make ends meet. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new economic challenges for some families in the Northwest Territories.

In response to these concerns, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is increasing funding this year to support harvesters and families going out on the land. Three new programs will promote the sharing of land-based knowledge and provide training for the next generation of hunters and trappers. The Take a Family on the Land Program will provide subsidies to Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, and non-profits to help offset costs for families in need to go out on the land. The Regional Training, Mentorship and Support Program will provide funding to regional Indigenous governments to increase mentorship opportunities and support land-based training needs. The pilot trappers mentoring program will support trappers who want to learn trapping skills this season. Applications for the Take a Family on the Land and the Regional Training, Mentorship and Support Programs launched on October 21, 2020, and applications are now being accepted. The pilot trapper mentoring program will be launched in November.

The Department has also increased the amounts for this year's grubstake payments. These payments are made to trappers at the beginning of the season, based on the number of furs brought in the year before. Trappers use these grubstake payments to help offset some of the annual start-up costs of trapping, which supports participation in the fur industry. This year's trappers will be provided with more start-up funds, and more trappers will be able to access the program.

As a government, we are committed to supporting our residents to go out on the land. During the engagement on the Environment and Natural Resources Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, we heard from communities about the importance of mentorship programs for beginning harvesters and trappers. We also heard about the need to provide support for families to pursue on-the-land activities.

Each of these new programs draws on the strengths of the northern tradition of land-based learning, mentorship, and sharing of knowledge. They support a number of actions identified in the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, including providing starter kits for new trappers, support for harvesting mentorship, and funding for families with limited resources to go out on the land. The new funding for this season builds on the successful community partnerships that have been developed through our regular programs, such as Take a Kid Trapping, the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur

program, Community Harvesters Assistance Program, hunter education, and trappers' training.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from Indigenous governments and organizations about the importance of land-based skills and knowledge. This government believes that sustainable livelihoods are vital to a prosperous, diverse, and sustainable territory. Land-based skills and knowledge help ensure harvesters can access nutritious country foods and that our communities maintain strong and resilient. Environment and Natural Resources remains committed to supporting the next generation of harvesters and stewards of the land and promoting sustainable access to country foods. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I would like to also wish all my fellow trappers a very good season this year. I know there is not much snow, but I am sure they will make the best of it. Mahsi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BORDER CAMP SERVICES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: [English translation not available] ...check point was initially set up at Enterprise. The reasoning, I assume, was to have something in place immediately. Eventually, with some persuasion, reflection, and evaluation, the COVID task force concluded that the appropriate location for the check point would be at the border. In my mind, that was the correct decision then and remains so today.

Mr. Speaker, staff, while at Enterprise, were in a position to travel home after each shift. This was not the case when the check point was subsequently relocated to the border. The border setup with the addition of a portable camp sleeper and use of government equipment already onsite provided an alternative for staff from having to endure a one-and-a-half-hour daily commute each way home. The initial services in part were supplied by GNWT park infrastructure and that of private sector. This appeared to work well with the warm weather, where freeze-up of water and sewer lines were not an issue.

Knowing that cold weather would be upon us and knowing the camp business, I provided the task force with a recommendation as to what would be required for accommodation at the border during the winter months. I suggested a two-unit Texas camp, which included a kitchen, washroom, rec room, and six single bedrooms. The camp would further require, of course, lighting, yard lighting, communication tower, power, propane, heated

water storage, and heated grey water storage. All this could be set up within eight hours.

Mr. Speaker, operating a camp, big or small, requires qualified and at times certified maintenance staff to ensure worker and environmental safety. I mean no disrespect to the supplier of the current facility, which is made up of infrastructure more suited to remote mining camps that do not have road access. It is important that we provide our staff with safe and comfortable infrastructure while they work to secure our borders and keep us safe. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES APPRECIATION

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I talked in this House many a time with regard to sealift to our communities in Nunakput. Once a year, there is an opportunity for our constituents to order dry-goods supplies that they need to get through the winter season, and I am really happy to say that, for the residents in our small, remote communities, it helps them reduce the cost of living and the high cost, brutally high cost, of everything that is brought in by air.

I want to give credit where credit is due, Mr. Speaker, to our former ITI, our former Minister, our current Minister. Thank you very much for the work that MTS did this year. I kind of warned them at the start of the season to make sure we get into our communities and get what goods that are needed for the communities, and they did. They did an awesome job. I am very happy again to say the 2020 sealift season was a success. I want to thank MTS staff out of Tuktoyaktuk and Hay River and John Vandenberg. For instance, he was up in Tuktoyaktuk more than once, and I thank him for the hard work that he has done. It is important to the GNWT to make sure of our vital services and support to our remote and vulnerable communities. They did an awesome job. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIRE HALL IN DETAH

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. As an MLA, I regularly confer with leaders in and around my constituency. Very recently, while having one of these discussions, an idea was shared about

firefighting services, which I might share with this House.

Mr. Speaker, this is an idea which my colleague the Member for Yellowknife North and his constituents will appreciate and I am hoping they will support. Within the next five months, residents of the Ingraham Trail will no longer have firefighting services provided by the City of Yellowknife. This has left much speculation for how this void of vital public services will be filled for the people on the Ingraham Trail.

Mr. Speaker, here is an idea that will possibly strike two birds with one stone. One, the GNWT can help increase its capacity, training, and infrastructure at the existing fire hall in Detah. In addition, MACA could contract out all fire services for the Ingraham Trail to Detah. Two, this will help Detah become more self-sufficient as a community and as a First Nation. Also, Mr. Speaker, it will provide much-needed public services to residents along the nearby Ingraham Trail, and this will relieve the City of Yellowknife and territorial government from this responsibility.

I think this is a very reasonable idea that would be a win-win for all parties involved. It will, however, take some time, preparation, and resources to achieve this, but time is of the essence. For example, Detah will need to assemble a pool of volunteers who will remain on-call in case of emergencies. They will also need more equipment in terms of vehicles and personnel and protective gear, as well as training exercise to ensure that best health and safety practices are being followed.

Mr. Speaker, cost is always a consideration. What I do know is that building on what we already have in place is far more cost-efficient than starting from scratch. Mr. Speaker, I urge our government to work with all relevant departments on this, along with the YKDFN and the City of Yellowknife, to make this idea a reality. With that, I will have questions for the Minister of MACA at the appropriate time. Marsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS AND AFTERCARE

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, for my Member's statement today, I am going to talk about aftercare addiction services in the NWT. As a mother, a former Dene leader, and now as an MLA, I have seen from multiple lenses the adverse effects that addictions have on people. I am very passionate about this issue because it is something which affects me directly because addictions affect all

people; addictions affect all walks of life, of every family. Addictions do not discriminate based on skin colour, social class, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or language. Addictions are considered a disease, and anonymity is an essential part of recovery and aftercare.

Mr. Speaker, during my previous leadership at the Salt River First Nation, the former Minister of health and the present deputy minister of health had a three-day meeting on the delivery of addiction services to the North. All 33 community leaders, both Dene and Metis, were included in this meeting, and it was decided at that time that the external delivery was more effective because the teams required to treat these different levels of addiction were not available in the Northwest Territories. These teams include an addictions doctor, a clinical advisor, an elder, a psychologist or psychiatrist, counsellors, and supervisors. These are very highly trained staff. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think the gap in addictions services in the NWT is the aftercare component. Once a client comes back into the NWT from the outside treatment centre, they go back to the same environment that they left, and it is very hard to remain clean and sober. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indigenous languages are an important part of the NWT identity, given that over 50 percent of our residents are Indigenous. Languages are vital to our Indigenous groups, and they signify identity and pride of our Indigenous people here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we know our Indigenous public service numbers remain low and have been that way for 30-plus years. We continue to struggle in increasing those numbers for a variety of reasons. One reason, I believe, is because of GNWT policies that do not have any teeth, and we lack the will to create policies that will actually make a difference in bringing those numbers up and moving away from colonial practices like cuts to vital programs because they do not measure up to somebody's measurements.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, languages are important to all cultures, and we must make equal effort to promote and encourage language use. While I recognize our French language is thriving, I do have some serious concerns about forcing our Indigenous public service members to provide

active offers in French. Mr. Speaker, I do not need to remind this House of the systemic attempts made by government policies in the past to strip language from our Indigenous people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for languages.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AFTERCARE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 1980s Yellowknife was a prosperous goldmining town where only a handful of people did not have homes. These folks were known as "The Bailey Boys" as Reverend and Mrs. Bailey cared for these souls with love and compassion. The downtown was bustling, commerce was thriving, and people felt safe to walk with their children on the streets. Fast-forward 40 years, Yellowknife is the diamond capital of North America, the population has grown and, with it, so has access to money, designer drugs, and alcohol. The capital now plays host to a burgeoning population of people who are homeless, have addictions, and are in desperate need of help.

As Northerners, we are prone to addiction. The roots of our addiction issues have long been linked to residential school trauma and abuse. This has created a multi-generational cycle of addiction that needs to stop now. We now know that addiction is often closely linked to childhood trauma. People are looking for an escape from their pain and turn to substances as a way to numb themselves. While sending addicts to a treatment centre in the South seems like a direct and forward approach to dealing with addictions, it is merely a band-aid solution if other pieces of recovery are missing.

There are several phases to a successful recovery. The first phase is counselling. When an addict receives counselling, they are accessing assistance to take the next step forward in their recovery. Counsellors help people to understand the steps required. Once people are finally ready to get help, there is a very short window of opportunity to get them into a detoxification program. An addict cannot enter a rehabilitation program in the South until they have sobered up. In order to board a plane, make the journey to a facility, whether it be in the North or the South, they need to take this crucial first step in their path.

In the NWT, there are significant delays at this critical step that often cause patients to withdraw their requests for help or to remove themselves from the treatment process. Once in a southern-

based treatment facility, patients have access to resources to help with the struggle of addiction and often times are able to move forward in their progress. However, the journey doesn't end with treatment in a facility. Once a rehabilitated person has returned to their community, access to a lifetime of ongoing supports is also required. This is the piece that is missing in the Northwest Territories, the aftercare. Culturally appropriate after-care, such as on-the-land based programs, ongoing trauma counselling, sober living facilities, online and social media supports, and sober event programming will help to establish a healthy support network for all NWT residents battling addiction. I will have questions for the health Minister. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL STERILIZATION OF INSTRUMENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The problems with sterilization of instruments and equipment at Stanton Territorial Hospital will be known to Members through media reports, health authority updates, and even calls from constituents awaiting surgery as I've had. As the problem remains unresolved into its third month, it's time to step up with urgent action.

The issue is as detailed as it is longstanding, but basically, it's this: on July 23rd, the hospital's three sterilizer units simultaneously started producing instruments contaminated by moisture. This means the instruments can't be considered sterile, because moisture can attract bacteria. In a series of public updates issued July 24th, September 14th, and October 5th, the health authority has described efforts taken with the facility operator, Dexterra, Boreal Health Partnership, the Department of Infrastructure, and the sterilization equipment manufacturer. The number of sterile instrument packs produced has been increased, but there is no guarantee that packs are reliably sterile. The description of the measure being used to fix the problem is basically a continued jiggling of the many factors that go into successful sterilization: varying instrument wraps and tray methods and sizes, to the adjusting the machines themselves, steam production and delivery, the list goes on, all aimed at finding the perfect combination of factors or settings. What's being described basically sounds like a big experiment.

Stanton has worked to stockpile sterile instrument packs for use in emergency surgeries and for some small elective procedures. However, the authority reported October 5th that 124 elective surgeries

have been cancelled and remain unscheduled because no reliable fix to the problem can be predicted.

What's at stake here is not the functionality of a technical system but the health and even suffering of our residents. For example, delayed hip-joint surgeries mean day after day of misery for patients awaiting surgery. I don't think it's an oversimplification to say that I have heard of no comparable situation at other hospitals in Canada. We can't get this right, and does it mean that we will never have reliable sterilization at Stanton? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services on an urgent solution to this crisis in patient care. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've said before that a home is not a home. A home is a place that assures us safety, individual and community health, a platform for participating in community, and is embedded sustainably into the fabric of an emerging North and provides reliable comfort. The focus of a home, Mr. Speaker, is the person.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights argues that housing is a human right that underpins an adequate standard of living throughout all stages of life with focused attention on mothers and children. Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples distinguishes the right to housing as an integral part of the Indigenous right to economic and social development consistent with their unique cultural character in the context of self-determination. A home is not a big box commodity available to those that can afford it. A home is fundamental to the dignity and worth of every human life that is free of poverty, underdevelopment, and discrimination.

Housing must support and express the diversity and richness of our communities and cultures. Canada's 2017 National Housing Strategy begins with the principle that every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable home grounded in the principles of inclusion, participation, accountability, and non-discrimination. It is intended that housing program should align with sustainable and accessible communities, climate change, the needs of the most vulnerable, and the values of Indigenous self-determination, reconciliation, respect, and cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is at a fork in the road, and it is time to prioritize housing NWT residents. We need to look at the barriers NWT residents face to access affordable housing. We need to actively set up partnerships to build housing, and we need to ensure trauma-focused client service is there to support the GNWT's efforts to house Northerners. Housing is theme that permeates the priorities of this Assembly. It shows up as affordable homes and the reduction of core housing. It shows up by enabling seniors to age in place with dignity. It shows up as the container for childhood development and as economic benefit retention in home construction. It shows up in the adaptation and transformation of climate change impacts. Housing is critical to building a North that provides a secure and healthy home for us now and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members, before we carry on, I'd like to recognize Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, who is with us in the gallery. She was appointed as the first Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in 1997 and has held the position for the last 23 years. Wish you all the best in your future time. Mahsi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPCA CORE FUNDING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin today, I'd like to thank the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for raising the idea of Detah providing fire services for the Ingraham Trail. I'll note that this is actually from Detah to the junction as opposed to the Yellowknife North Fire Hall to the junction is actually a few kilometers shorter, so it could result in a quicker response time. Also, the risk profile of a fire occurring in the Detah and the Ingraham Trail at the same time is much lower than a fire occurring in Yellowknife and the Ingraham Trail. I hope the Minister can get all those parties together and find a resolution for that.

My statement today, Mr. Speaker, is about something that has been mentioned in this House multiple times by multiple MLAs, and that's core funding for the SPCA. I think, in one sense, core funding for the SPCA is the ultimate goal, but my frustration lies in that we've had dribs and drabs of funding in different policies over the years and we haven't even got to the process where there is some sort of application funding for the SPCA. Mr. Speaker, presently, it is not clear in the GNWT who is responsible for animal welfare.

There is an argument that dogs in ditches is just municipalities. However, the work of the SPCA and the work of animal welfare is so much larger than that. Rabies is endemic to Arctic foxes in the NWT.

There is no way for us to meaningfully address rabies in this territory other than consistently vaccinate our dogs. Public health has provided rabies vaccines in the past, however, consistently making sure they got out into the public has fallen on the wayside. Our ENR wildlife vet does great work making sure anthrax outbreaks do not occur, making sure that we are tracking, as ticks move south, the possibility of Lyme disease. I am grateful for their work, but the ENR mandate stops as soon as it stops being wildlife.

Climate change is going to make these issues more apparent, and I'm not asking for a lot. I'm asking for a pool of funding such that a very important organization can have some stability, and to make sure someone in the GNWT across all these departments is looking at the issues surrounding animal welfare. ITI has part of that mandate if we are dealing with livestock or egg producers and the commercial aspects of it. As we sit here in a global pandemic and as we see the increases of viruses largely due to animal and human interaction, I think it is not too much to ask to make sure there is someone in the GNWT looking for this and one of the key organizations who has long brought stability to this area is properly funded. Today, I will have questions for the Minister of health on the public aspect, health aspect, of animal health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SELF-ISOLATION EXEMPTIONS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak about the exemptions of many of the medical travel patients and their escorts, which, in most cases, include family such as children. Many of the patients have to go to Edmonton to see a specialist for serious ailments as there are not many or very few specialists in the Northwest Territories. Upon return to the NWT, they would have to self-isolate at a regional centre for 14 days. According to the document, thresholds and criteria for exemptions to self-isolate in a non-hub community for compassionate or exceptional reasons, the Chief Public Health Officer after review of requests in relation to set criteria may grant approval to self-isolate at home in their home community.

Mr. Speaker, the document goes on to state that in addition to ensuring that there are clear, compassionate or exceptional circumstances associated with an application, there is also a need to ensure that community leadership is advised of decisions made by the CPHO respecting exemptions. It goes on to state this is not an

approval nor an opportunity for leadership to deny but an opportunity to expect concern or not of exemptions to isolate in their community and to be aware of exemptions.

Mr. Speaker, this is good news for many of the patients on medical travel and, perhaps, alleviate their stress of having to be away from home for long stretches of time and then do the routine all over again after the next appointment. There could be many more appointments. Mr. Speaker, a decision that is made solely by the CPHO who does not live in the communities where there are concerns with people self-isolating in the community without submitting a coronavirus test result is very concerning to the local leadership. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS TREATMENT CENTRE IN THE NORTH

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about how we receive funding. I'm talking about billions of dollars, and it's very difficult. Sometimes, it's really difficult to get an addiction treatment centre here in our homeland. Instead, I'm going to talk about the treatment centre [Translation ends]. Why can't we as a territory with our billion-dollar budgets find a way of providing residential addiction treatment here in our homeland in the Northwest Territories instead of spending \$2 million a year sending people south?

Mr. Speaker, our sister territory Nunavut is proceeding with a new treatment centre. That territory is using \$25 million to leverage an additional \$50 million in federal funding for a treatment centre to be built in Nunavut. Furthermore, they have committed \$11 million for training counsellors because, unlike the Northwest Territories, Nunavut believes in Northerners caring for Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, the federal contribution stems from a call to action by the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Call to action number 20 calls for a sustainable federal funding for "New Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual harms caused by residential schools," and to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and Northwest Territories is a priority. Unlike the NWT, Mr. Speaker, Nunavut took the action seriously.

Mr. Speaker, shame on us. Shame on us that we would take this so lightly, dismissed the

recommendation of truth and reconciliation commission report. Shame on us, Mr. Speaker, which we would so recklessly disregard the federal funding, opportunity contained into call to action number 20. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Masi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR ISADORE SAM EKOTLA

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Isadore Sam Ekolta was born September 20, 1936, in Snake River, B.C., and passed away on July 10, 2020, at the age of 84. Isadore was preceded by his father, Charles Edward, his mother, Alice, his sons, Gordon (ph), Frederick (ph), Leonard (ph), Emile (ph), and his daughter Joan.

Sam was a very knowledgeable hunter and trapper that was well-respected in the community of Nahanni Butte. He was always able to provide good advice when asked. He had an open-door policy and was always encouraging people to drop by and chat. Isadore is survived by his wife, Maribella; his son, Brian; his daughters, Helen and Ellen; and his sister, Pauline Bertrand; half-brother, Frederick Work; his greatgrandchildren, Hailey, Shawna, Destiny, Shawn, Gary, Tangris, Trevor, and Leonard; his aunt, Mary, and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews.

The family would like to thank everybody for their kind words and for those who were able to attend the funeral from out-of-town during this trying time. He will be sadly missed by the family and the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements.

Colleagues, before we begin, I'd also like to welcome with us today, the staff of Ms. Keenan-Bengts: Lee Pipers, I hope I pronounced that right; Tyla Cra. Welcome. Also, the husband of Ms. McLeod, Ted. Welcome to the proceedings today. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce Ms. Deborah McLeod and her husband. They are my constituents, and I wish them the very best for their retirement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: I'd like to recognize Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts as my constituent, as well, and congratulate her on her retirement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. For all those joining us today, welcome to the gallery. It's always good to have an audience with us. Mahsi.

Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Thebacha.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 4-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2018-2019 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on the review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission's annual report and commends it to the House.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations Committee has reviewed the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission. The committee thanks Mr. Charles Dent, chair of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission; Ms. Deborah McLeod, director of Human Rights; and Mr. Sheldon Toner, chair of the Adjudication Panel for their appearance before the committee on June 1, 2020.

The Human Rights Act requires the commission to prepare annual reports. These reports include information on the numbers and grounds of complaints filed. The Speaker tables the report in the Legislative Assembly. Once tabled, committee reviews the report.

The commission's 2018-2019 report highlighted its focus on accessibility and outreach. It also addressed recent changes made to the Human Rights Act. The commission's work and recommendations are reflected in committee's observations. In our report, committee makes recommendations to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities to government buildings and information on the Internet.

The committee acknowledges the unique circumstances of this year's review of the commission's report. The COVID-19 global pandemic created challenges for everyone, and

particularly those living in vulnerable circumstances. The committee noted that inclusiveness and accessibility are critically important in government responses to the pandemic.

I will now pass the reading on to the Member for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: The NWT Human Rights Commission is separate from the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is part of the human rights system set up under the Human Rights Act. Most legislation in the Northwest Territories has a Cabinet Minister responsible for the act. This is different for the Human Rights Act. It says the commission is responsible to the Legislative Assembly for the administration of the act. The Assembly's Office of the Clerk is responsible for the oversight of the territory's statutory officers, including the Human Rights Commission.

The commission's role is to protect people from discrimination. They promote equality through education, research, and advocacy. The act makes it illegal to discriminate or harass anyone based on age, disability, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, social condition, religion, political belief, or pardoned criminal conviction. The commission promotes the compliance with the act, and they also monitor and assess how well the act is working.

Transitioning to a Restorative Approach

The committee has followed the transition of the Human Rights Commission to a restorative practice approach with interest. It began in 2014, with the comprehensive review of the Human Rights Act. This was followed by the three independent agencies of the NWT human rights system: the commission; the adjudication panel; and the director accepting the review's recommendations. In 2015, the three agencies published an implementation plan for the commission's transition to a restorative approach to human rights work.

The restorative process moves away from the existing legal and confrontational court-like process. Instead, the process focuses on the relationship between the parties and on resolving the dispute. The goal is to "manage conflict and tension by repairing harm and building relationships."

The committee supports the commission's offering opportunities for settling complaints voluntarily through a dispute resolution process. During the public hearing, Director McLeod stated that the commission started with the restorative approach

early in 2017, and immediately saw a large number of parties participating.

The commission reports that 40 percent of all files closed in 2018-2019 were settled through restorative dispute resolution. This is similar to 2017-2018, where almost half of the complaints settled this way.

Committee learned that, in 2018-2019, 60 percent of complaints went into the restorative dispute resolution process. This is a positive sign. It shows more people are sitting down together to work out their human rights issues.

Organizational Structure of the Human Rights Commission

When preparing the 2018-2019 annual report, the commission was composed of three agencies: the appointed members of the commission (five individuals); the director; and the adjudication panel (five individuals). Both the Office of the Director and the adjudication panel have support staff. Commission members are members of the public appointed by the Legislative Assembly. The director's office administers the complaint process, refers complaints to the adjudication panel, and acts as secretary to the commission.

The number of parties navigating the system without support or representation was a key concern in the comprehensive review of the act. The change to the structure of the commission by combining the commission and the director's office into one agency is part of addressing this concern.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass it to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In March 2019, an amended Human Rights Act consolidated the Office of the Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Director into a single agency: the Human Rights Commission. With the amendments, the commission gains a role in the complaints process by looking after complaints and preparing to bring them before the adjudicator. This is referred to as "carriage of complaints." Complaints that cannot be resolved through the director's dispute resolution process go to the adjudication panel for hearing.

Committee welcomes that the commission now has a legal counsel who can provide advice in the later part of the complaint process.

During 2018-2019, commission members and staff took a course on fairness as a principle of restorative practice. The commission also held sessions for members of the adjudication panel.

They also offered educational sessions and workshops on restorative practices to interest groups.

The committee welcomes the commission's proactiveness and preparatory work toward implementing the changes made to the Human Rights Act. The amendments will come into force annually over a three-year period, from 2019 to 2021.

Focus on Accessibility

During 2018-2019, the commission focused on accessibility. The commission's key achievement of 2018-2019 was developing an accessibility checklist to help make public events more accessible to persons with disabilities. Committee notes that the commission's goal is to create inclusive hamlets, villages, towns, and cities by ensuring people are feeling "welcomed in a way that respects each person's dignity."

Accessibility includes physical access, web access, and access to services. It also includes social inclusion, equality, respect, and equity in opportunity. The checklist helps businesses and groups to identify if their services and products are accessible to all people. It also talks about how to accommodate people with specific needs.

The commission's website now offers a separate tab for accessibility. The webpage provides resources and links for improving accessibility to all services, including how to improve web experiences for users with disabilities, how to use plain language, and other ways to improve accessibility. It also provides information on legal rights for people who use service animals.

Complaints on the Grounds of Disability

Disability is the basis for the majority of complaints filed. This is not just in the NWT but across Canada. Disability includes mental and physical disabilities and can relate to hearing, vision, mobility, memory, or something else.

During 2018-2019, two-thirds of all new complaints alleged discrimination based on disability. The rate was almost the same for the previous two years.

According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, 20 percent of adults 15 years and over in the NWT are limited in their daily activities due to a disability. This is a large increase compared to 2012, where 8.2 percent of adults were limited due to a disability. It is expected that the population with some sort of disability will increase, partly based on the aging of society.

According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, the population of seniors, those aged 60 and older,

grew by 68.5 percent over the past 10 years. Nationwide, the territories experienced the second-highest growth in seniors population, with only the Yukon having higher numbers. Seniors present nearly 15 percent of the NWT's total population. Aging increases the risk of having disabilities, and many seniors experience moderate to severe disability.

I will pass the reading of the report to the Member for Yellowknife North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Accessible Design for Buildings

The committee heard the commission's concern that many NWT businesses and service providers believe that the National Building Code sets the standard for accessibility and that "compliance with this code allows them to meet their responsibilities under the Human Rights Act." The commission says this is not always the case.

The commission held an International Human Rights Day event with the theme "accessibility" in Yellowknife. Mr. Van Dyke presented on how the National Building Code affects him as a person with a disability. The commission expressed much concern about limitations of full accessibility for all in the NWT.

The commission believes accessibility is one of the most important parts of building a healthy community. The commission is concerned about the barriers that prevent full accessibility, including:

- the lack of connection between the requirements set out in the National Building Code and what is actually considered an accessible space;
- that the ongoing update of the National Building Code will be completed soon; and
- that the National Building Code in the NWT include reference to Canadian Standards Association standard B651-18, "Accessible Design for the Built Environment."

For the coming year, the commission will campaign on the relationship between the National Building Code and the act to enable NWT businesses and service providers to better understand their rights and responsibilities under the act.

The committee recognizes the need for the GNWT to ensure that residents have equitable access to opportunities and services and that standards and

codes adopted in the NWT are consistent with legislation.

Other options under discussion are that the GNWT adopt the National Building Code to have legislation that includes rules for accessibility. One challenge is that the code is part of the Fire Prevention Regulations by the Fire Marshall. This could mean that accessibility is not a priority, as the code sets a minimum requirement for buildings that may not meet the requirements under the human rights law.

Committee agrees that NWT residents, builders, and building owners need to know what is required to make a building completely accessible. Committee also identified many points that are unclear regarding who is responsible for funding accessible building design or renovations. It is not clear whether the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs would be responsible for retrofits and, if yes, whether this would apply to communities outside of Yellowknife or not.

Finally, the committee wondered whether the GNWT would consider incentives for builders to use building designs in projects such as small-scale construction, renovation, or retrofit programming that would provide the accessibility requirements under the NWT Human Rights Act.

Consequently, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories investigate and take the necessary steps to solve the issues, and remove the barriers, that prevent the alignment between building codes and standards and the Human Rights Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now pass the reading of the report on to the Member for Deh Cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Outreach and Digital Transformation

A key task of the commission is to educate employers, businesses, community groups, and residents about their rights and responsibilities under the act. During 2018-2019, the commission reported that 15 communities were visited in person. Thirteen of these were visited as part of community wellness fairs organized by the Indigenous Health and Community Wellness Division of Health and Social Services. Due to the pandemic, the fairs have stopped and outreach will focus on online activities.

The committee commends the commission on improving their website. This includes enlarged buttons and increased colour contrasts to aid persons with visual disabilities. Other improvements include that documents and resources are made in an accessible format, such as MS Word documents.

Now is the time for government to update its web services, focusing on online communication and digital access. The government response to the COVID-19 pandemic relied heavily on online service.

Committee encourages the GNWT to take this important step to open the doors to persons with disabilities. Examples of service standards for accessibility of electronic platforms exist in other Canadian jurisdictions. Regulations created in Ontario establish accessibility standards for customer service, including training requirements of staff and service standards.

The GNWT can make concrete changes that will make a difference. This includes ensuring documents posted to government websites are accessible for users who do not have specific software for reading documents saved in portable document format.

Consequently, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories enhance digital access and inclusion for people living with disabilities in the NWT by reviewing current practices in serving the public and identifying measures to improve the existing situation with the goal to reduce the number of complaints to the Human Rights Commission on the grounds of disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report to the MLA for Thebacha. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the NWT Human Rights Commission 2018-2019 Annual Report.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 4-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Committee Report 4-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Thebacha.

COMMITTEE REPORT 5-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories and commends it to this House.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an Officer of the Legislative Assembly. The IPC operates independently of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The IPC reports to the Legislative Assembly. They provide oversight and enforcement of the government's duties under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act. The IPC plays a similar role under the Health Information Act (HIA).

The ATIPP Act promotes government accountability. It balances the public's right to access information the government holds while protecting people's privacy rights.

People can make a complaint to the IPC about access to, or disclosure of, information. The IPC will investigate, mediate, or resolve these complaints. They also comment on privacy issues in proposed laws. The IPC also educates people about their rights. Under the ATIPP Act, the IPC files an annual

report on her activities. This report can include recommendations.

The IPC has duties under the Health Information Act. This legislation applies to collecting, using, protecting, and disclosing personal health information. It applies to health information records. This includes both public and private health practitioners.

The Health Information Act requires that the IPC file an annual report. This report includes the IPC's activities under the HIA. They can also include recommendations made by the IPC that the government did not follow. It can also include recommendations or comments about the act.

The Speaker tabled the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner on December 11, 2019. On May 27, 2020, the Standing Committee on Government Operations met with the IPC to review her report. This is committee's report of that review.

Acknowledging the Long Service of the IPC

In 1997, the Assembly appointed Elaine Keenan-Bengtts as the first IPC. After four reappointments, Ms. Keenan-Bengtts will retire on October 30, 2020. This makes her the longest-serving IPC in Canada. During her time, much has changed in how our government collects and uses information. This is also true for the technology used to process and hold that information.

Ms. Keenan-Bengtts has served the people of the Northwest Territories well. She has been an advocate for both access to information and protection of privacy. The committee recognizes Ms. Keenan-Bengtts' service and wishes her the best in her retirement.

I will now pass the reading on to the MLA for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND:

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The ATIPP Act applies to GNWT departments. It also applies to most government boards and agencies. The act states that public records must be accessible. It also requires the GNWT to protect personal information. The act states how the public can access GNWT records. It also includes rules about how the GNWT collects, uses, and discloses information to protect people's privacy.

The act states that the GNWT should only collect the information it needs to deliver a program. The

ATIPP Act overrules over other laws, unless those laws otherwise say.

Providing access to information is the starting point of the act. There are limited exceptions where the GNWT can refuse to provide access. These exceptions are to protect individuals' privacy, private business information, and advice to Cabinet.

In her opening remarks to committee, the IPC noted that, in 2018-2019, most files involved access to information. She told committee that 30 of 55 files opened under ATIPP related to "access to information." In eight of these files, the public body had failed to respond to an access request within the required time period. There were 14 files opened on privacy breaches, and the IPC issued 18 review reports. She summarizes these in her report.

Health Information Act

The Health Information Act (HIA) covers the collection, use, disclosure, and protection of personal information. The legislation applies to health records under the control of health practitioners, such as doctors or pharmacists.

The act says health practitioners should only have access to information they need to provide care. The act assumes a person seeking healthcare has consented to the collection, use, or disclosure of their health information. However, the practitioners must believe that the patient understands how their information will be collected, used, and disclosed.

The HIA gives patients the right to access their own health records. The GNWT can charge a fee to copy health records. If someone believes their records were wrongly collected, used, or disclosed, they can ask the IPC for a review. This applies to complaints about both access and privacy issues.

The act requires health practitioners to tell you and the IPC if the privacy of your health information has been breached.

In 2018-2019, the IPC opened 29 files under the HIA. Of these, 18 were breach-of-privacy notifications. While most were minor breaches, the media reported on two breaches. The first was a theft of a laptop containing health information of 40,000 NWT residents. The second was mental health and addictions records found at the Fort Simpson dump.

Noting the public concerns about these events, the IPC stated that awareness of privacy matters is on the increase and senior management is working toward improvement.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass over to Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Public Hearing

During their review, standing committee had good discussion with the IPC. They discussed both the ATIPP Act and the HIA. They also spoke about how the GNWT meets their duties under these acts. Committee is making recommendations in the following areas:

When Recent Changes to the ATIPP Act will Take Effect

The IPC noted it had been a year since the Assembly had amended the ATIPP Act. However, the changes to the ATIPP Act have not taken effect. Committee has not received an update from the GNWT on when the changes will take effect.

As a result, Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the GNWT provide an update on the work being done to bring into force the amended sections of the ATIPP Act, including a schedule indicating when the changes will take effect.

One major change to the ATIPP Act is it will apply to municipalities. The committee in the 18th Assembly recommended that the Departments of Justice and Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) develop a detailed plan to guide the implementation of ATIPP for municipalities.

In response, Justice and MACA said that they would develop draft terms of reference for a working group. This group would include municipal leaders and administrators. The GNWT agreed to share the draft plan with committee for input.

Committee notes the concern of some municipalities about the costs associated with ATIPP. Municipalities have asked if ATIPP will apply to older records or on a go-forward basis. Committee asks that information about this be included in the response to this report and in the implementation plan.

Bringing Together ATIPP Skills

The IPC is concerned about the "significantly increased lack of capacity within the public bodies to address access and privacy matters." In her remarks to committee, she said, "The timeframes for responding to ATIPP requests are not being met, and submissions to my office are significantly lacking in detail." She also noted, "Exceptions are

not well applied. I am seeing huge delays and failures to respond to correspondence from my office..." The IPC believes this reduced capacity to deal with ATIPP is the result of access and privacy knowledge not being highly valued in the job evaluation process. This results in pay levels being insufficient to attract employees with expertise.

The IPC suggested the GNWT needs a group of well-trained ATIPP coordinators. She mentioned that there had been talk about centralizing the ATIPP function within the government. This would create a pool of expertise and consistent application of the act.

Committee was interested in this approach, and there has been a trend toward centralizing some functions in the GNWT. This includes financial and information technology services. Committee also recognizes that the Department of Finance provides ATIPP administration for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

Committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the GNWT investigate and explore options for centralizing the management and administration of ATIPP on behalf of GNWT departments. The standing committee further recommends that the government share the results of this review for committee's input.

I will pass the reading to the Member for Yellowknife North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Proactive Disclosure

Committee's discussion with the IPC turned to the subject of "open government." The purpose of open government is to make information the government holds easily available to the public. A person would not need to make a special request for information. This makes government more accessible and accountable. It could also reduce ATIPP requests.

The IPC noted the benefits of government building access and privacy into programs, policies, and legislation as they are developed. This process is called "access by design" or "proactive disclosure." It helps ensure that the ability to access information or protect people's privacy exists from the beginning.

Committee believes that the GNWT needs to make a clear commitment to open government. As a result, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the GNWT update committee on work to develop a standard approach to including "access by design" principles into the design of communications, programs, policies, and legislation. Committee requests details on how the GNWT will formalize and share the standard approach with GNWT staff.

Stopping the Use of Fax Machines in the Health Sector

Committee and the IPC remain concerned about the use of faxes to share personal health information. Committee is aware this is an issue across Canada. In fact, our healthcare system links with Alberta may prevent changes in this area. However, committee believes the health sector must begin to adopt practices that provide greater privacy protections.

Therefore, committee recommends:

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop and implement a plan for ending the use of fax machines in the health and social services sector.

The Potential Privacy Impacts of COVID-19

Committee questioned the IPC about the effect COVID-19 has had on the GNWT's response times to ATIPP requests. The IPC said she had not seen any deemed refusals because of COVID-19. The IPC did caution committee about the pandemic's potential risks to privacy. She pointed to contact tracing apps used by governments. The IPC noted she had not received a privacy impact assessment on any of the GNWT's COVID-19 responses.

Committee cautions the government to be mindful of privacy concerns as it responds to the pandemic.

I will pass the reading of the report on to the Member for Deh Cho. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Committee again wishes Ms. Keenan-

Bengts well in her retirement and looks forward to working with the new IPC.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the GNWT provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 5-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Committee Report 5-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 375-19(2):
RESIDENTIAL ADDICTIONS TREATMENT

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Monfwi on October 20, 2020, regarding residential addictions treatment.

It is a priority in the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories to "increase the number and variety of culturally respectful, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare." I am committed to making this priority a reality.

The Member said that the previous Minister and the current deputy minister made a promise to look into

creating a northern treatment center. I have reviewed Hansard for that day, and there was no promise made. The deputy minister did say that looking at a northern treatment center is "not off the table." That means there is space for Indigenous government leadership on next steps.

I want to turn now to providing some background on facility-based addictions treatment in the Northwest Territories. We have had four treatment centres over the last couple of decades. The last one to close was Nats'ejee K'eh in 2013. Since then, the department has contracted four facilities in Alberta and BC in order to expand the range of options available to Northerners and reduce wait times to get in. The cost of operating Nats'ejee K'eh when it closed in 2013 was about \$2.1 million a year. The current fiscal year budget for out-of-territory addictions treatment is \$2.1 million, with an anticipated spend this year of \$2.3 million.

Nats'ejee K'eh was a 30-bed facility that offered 28-day, gender-specific programming. In the final three years of operations, Nats'ejee K'eh operated at an average of 38 percent capacity. In its final full year of operations, 133 people attended treatment. In contrast, over the past six years, since we started using southern facilities, an average of 228 people attend treatment each year. When factoring in utilization rates and the annual \$2-million operating budget for Nats'ejee K'eh, it resulted in a bed rate of approximately \$522 per day per client. In contrast, the department's current contracts for treatment range from \$180 per day to \$452 per day.

The Standing Committee on Social Development in the last Legislative Assembly toured the four treatment centres. I was a member of that committee. We discovered the details of programming offered, and we met Northerners who were in the programs. In this small sample, NWT residents were most concerned about aftercare and about having choices for treatment.

About 70 percent of Northerners complete their programs. Looking to the next step, they wanted to know where they would live when they came back to the northern communities they came from and what services were available to support their sobriety. Our report and recommendations focused on the need for housing and aftercare.

The department has started to bridge this gap in services. First, the department invested in community-based, on-the-land, mobile, family-based treatment and recovery. This pot of funding is now worth \$1.8 million a year. I encourage Indigenous governments and organizations to apply for funding and create a program that is specific to the needs of their people. Funding is still available for this fiscal year. This program responds to the Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Action

Plan that promises more community-based solutions for wellness and addiction recovery.

Second, the department has strengthened community counselling options. Under a new approach, there is no wait list for counselling. People can get an appointment the same day.

Third, the department is looking to work with communities to set up addictions peer support programs like Alcoholics Anonymous or Wellbriety to support people in maintaining their sobriety.

Fourth, there are telephone supports through the NWT Help Line and the Strongest Families Institute.

Fifth, there are several cell phone apps and online options that will soon be made available to assist people who want to find solutions in their own home. We are providing a range of options so that we can meet people's needs wherever they are.

We are also looking at prevention. Work has started on an alcohol strategy. The goal of the strategy is to create an all-of-government approach to addressing alcohol-related harm, such as reducing our high level of hospitalizations that occur primarily as a result of alcohol. There will be widespread public consultations over the next two years to hear from NWT residents about what needs to be in that alcohol strategy. We are taking steps to develop a model for managed alcohol to decrease the harms related to binge drinking. The lessons learned in controlled distribution of alcohol through the pandemic are informing this work. The department is working on a medical detox model that can be delivered in the NWT.

I recognize that addictions and recovery is an issue in almost every family and every community. It robs people of their health and potential. It is a disease that results in too many deaths. I want to change the story, and I know that the Member for Monfwi does, as well. I am convinced that the path forward is to provide NWT residents with a wide variety of supports, to meet them where they are in their healing journey and to assist them in continuing on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 382-19(2):
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral questions asked by the Member for Monfwi on October 20, 2020, regarding Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations.

I acknowledge the Member's reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action. Recommendation number 21 calls on the federal

government to make funding a healing center in the NWT and Nunavut a priority. We are interested in the work that is going to take place in Nunavut to create a healing center that is distinct from an addictions treatment centre. The department is constantly reviewing best practices in healing and addictions treatment, and if evidence points towards the need for a northern addictions facility, we will present that evidence to Members and invite discussion. However, as things stand today, this government has no mandate commitment, plan, or budget to create a northern treatment addictions center. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Colleagues, I'm sure you are eager to get into oral questions, but we will return after a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. We will now continue oral questions. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 406-19(2):

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
CALL TO ACTION REGARDING TREATMENT
CENTRES

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I spoke about the addiction treatment centre. We understand that there is a new treatment centre happening in Nunavut. [Translation ends] [Microphone turned off]... be that way. I refer again to the funding partnership the territory has secured with Ottawa. It's for \$75 million treatment centre in Iqaluit. It comes in the wake of Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations. Mr. Speaker, what has our government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, done to follow up on that call to action number 20 of the TRC. Number 20 called for new treatment centres, more specifically for Nunavut and Northwest Territories. Where is our new addiction treatment centre? Masi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because it's on addictions, I'll transfer it to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for Monfwi for his question. I think one of the first things to sort out is what is a healing centre and what is an addictions treatment centre. I'm not confident that they are the same thing. Not everybody who needs healing is an addict who needs to go through the process of detox and a 28-day program and the aftercare and so on. I think the discussion needs to be broader. What is it that we want this centre to do? The Truth and Reconciliation Commission sees it specifically as a healing centre and commits the federal money for that purpose. We're very interested in seeing what happens in Nunavut with their healing centre, what kind of lessons we can learn and apply here in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. LAFFERTY: Since truth and reconciliation, 94 recommendations came out. More specifically on number 20 and 21, it's been well over five years. This government should have been prepared. When the first TRC came out what were the plans in place? I'd like to know from either the Premier or Minister of Health and Social Services what partnerships has this government explored with the federal government to follow up on the call to action number 20? What have we learned from our neighbour Nunavut's very successful federal engagement in pursuant of their new treatment centre for their territory?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I'd like to defer this to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that Nunavut, with a more homogeneous population, put together a proposal and requested federal funding. That's not the stage that I understand that we're at here. I'm not aware that this government ever says no to federal money, but I've never seen a proposal for this healing centre. I'm not clear where things are at. I want to say that there is no reason that the GNWT alone needs to take the lead on this. Indigenous governments and Indigenous government organizations could band together to create a proposal and work with the GNWT on that or not work with the GNWT on that. It's not only up to the GNWT to make this happen. There has to be engagement and leadership from Indigenous governments. Thank you.

MR. LAFFERTY: Minister alluded to a proposal. She's waiting on the proposal. We need to be proactive as the GNWT to engage with the federal government, similar to Nunavut. Nunavut's been proactive, and here we are. Are we going to be missing out on almost \$75 million from the federal government? I'm dismayed. I'm disappointed that

we're at this stage after almost five years. TRC recommendation came out and here we are still talking. We should be putting those into actions. I have a question on the Nunavut's ability to, I guess, secure the funding. How is it that Nunavut was able to secure \$50 million in federal funding for an addiction treatment centre and we weren't? Without delay we should be approaching Ottawa for the same funding.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I have no detailed information about how Nunavut created a plan to get the federal government to provide money for a healing centre in Nunavut. I certainly could find that out. I want to reiterate that it does not have to be up to the GNWT. Indigenous governments and Indigenous government organizations could band together to write a proposal for federal funding for a healing centre and to have some focus around what kind of services they want in that centre and where the centre will be located.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. When we ask questions to Ministers or Premiers, I guess the longer the answers, the more questions it creates for us, so I have some more questions here. Mr. Speaker, there are best practices already in place with Nunavut, over five years now. Obviously, our territorial government should be working very closely with Nunavut to gather that information. I am very surprised and shocked that our current Department of Health and Social Services does not have that information at hand. Passing on the buck does not sit well with me. We are representing the GNWT here, so I have a question to either the Premier or the Minister. Would the Premier or Minister provide us with an itemized response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action, including progress made on each, especially on calls to action numbers 20 and 21? Masi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: What's truly surprising and shocking is that this issue did not come out during our mandate priority setting exercise, not a word about an addictions or healing centre at that time. The TRC recommendations are directed to the federal government. I understand that there is a role for all of us to play in telling the government what it is we want them to fund, so that is certainly work that could take place. Just to remind the Member for Monfwi, I have been the health Minister for eight weeks, and I have learned a tremendous amount. I have not had the opportunity yet to learn about the Nunavut healing centre. I am prepared to do that and return to him with information. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 407-19(2):
SELF-ISOLATION EXEMPTIONS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement alluded to the fact that the leadership of my community are puzzled by the fact that the Chief Public Health Officer has carte blanche, that is full discretionary power, to approve self-isolation plans of medical patients in order to return to their respective communities without any consultations or approvals with local leadership prior to CPHO granting the approval. I believe this process is also done for contractors who come from out of territory to conduct work in the territories, as the leadership have never ever been contacted. Can the Minister of health or the Premier provide an explanation as to why the approval process does not include prior consultation with local leadership, considering we are in a pandemic? Mahsi.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, the Chief Public Health Officer has the authority to accept or deny applications for self-isolation. She has mandated, of course, that people isolate in the four hub communities, and there have been questions about exceptions so that people can go to their home community to isolate. I realize that that is the case in Fort Providence most recently. There is not a process that respects the privacy legislation, that allows the CPHO to contact the leadership and say: so and so wants to isolate; how do you feel about that? Rather, the advice that is given is that the individual himself or herself contact the community leadership, discuss their plan with the leadership, and achieve their buy-in as a way to ensure that the community is comfortable with them being there. The alternative is that they will of course isolate in the hub communities. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: There are grave concerns from my leadership that the virus could spread into our communities without a proven way to test each person for the coronavirus. There are confirmed cases in the Northwest Territories from people who have travelled out of territory. For the benefit of medical travel patients, which could mean a shorter stay at the isolation centre, and for the comfort level and certainty for local leadership, can the coronavirus testing be conducted on the travellers upon arrival to the NWT?

HON. JULIE GREEN: It is my understanding that the only travellers or essential workers who get immediate tests are people who are going into a healthcare setting, that other people do not receive

those tests. That is primarily a function of our capacity, that, if we do not have people who are symptomatic, we do not really have a good test for them at this point. There is work going on to provide that kind of testing, which is not really testing; it's screening. That is coming down the pipe, but it does not exist now. The gold-star approach would be that everybody who comes into the NWT is screened to see if they have COVID, but unfortunately, we don't have the capacity to do that at this point. Right now, our goal is in the region of 500 tests a week. There are about 1,200 people a week who come into the NWT, so that is the gap we are looking at.

MR. BONNETROUGE: The chief and council of my community are upset that a nurse from the South is allowed to self-isolate at the local health centre where the residents of the community go for healthcare issues. I have also received another complaint of a social services employee returning from a visit to the east coast and is currently back on the job at the health centre. This is the health centre where all our people go who are the most vulnerable. There most likely was not any requirement for COVID testing. This again provokes the notion as to whether we are playing Russian roulette with the lives of the residents of Fort Providence. Can the Minister provide an explanation as to the arrangement for the nurse in question?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I would like to assure the Member for Deh Cho that we are not playing Russian roulette with the lives of anyone in the NWT, including the people who live in Fort Providence. It's my understanding that healthcare workers are in the exempt list, which means that they have very specific procedures to follow. They have to have a COVID test. They have to wear a mask. They are not allowed to socialize after work or leave the place in which they are staying. There are efforts to bridge the gap between providing the medical service required and keeping the population safe from this person who has recently arrived. I do not have specific information on the Fort Providence nurse, but I could certainly obtain that and share it with the Member for Deh Cho.

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

QUESTION 408-19(2):
USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES WORKPLACES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With my Member's statement today, this was no way, shape, or form about "us against them." It's about equity. Our Indigenous public servants are being told to answer phones, while working for the GNWT, in

English and French. This has been in effect since 2015, when it was rolled out, a language completely foreign to them, at the same time not allowing for active offers in their own languages. Why are we as a government forcing Indigenous public servants to answer phones in a language that is not theirs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify something right off the bat, if an Indigenous employee or any employee wants to make an active offer in any one of our Indigenous languages, they are not only allowed to, I encourage them to. I think we need more of that. There is no policy saying that people cannot make active offers in their own languages. In case there is any question within the departments, the Minister is telling them right now that it is allowed and that it is encouraged.

---Applause

The reason that these active offers are being made is that Section 11(1) of the Official Languages Act requires service in English and French, and active offers will let citizens know that they can receive that service. It is required in head and central offices, as well as in Hay River, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith, where the majority of the francophone population is. When you go to an office, there is often signage. When you call somewhere, you can't see that there is signage, and so that's why that active offer is made in French. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you to the Minister for that. I am aware of the training and the videos that went along with it, and there was never any part of saying that you could do it in another language. Will the Minister review whatever policy or whatever could be put in place to make sure that our Indigenous public service who answer phones in French and English be removed or be informed that, if they want, they don't have to, they can answer in one of their own languages, for instance?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Just to be clear, an Indigenous language can be added onto the English and French. We still need the English and French as part of the active service. It was my understanding that, during this active offer training, employees were encouraged to answer in any Indigenous language they are able to speak. I will look into that, and I will ensure that that is actually happening because the Member has different experiences or a different understanding of that. I will double check and I will get back to the Member.

The official languages guidelines are currently being updated by the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat in ECE. I believe they were last updated in 1997, and so this is part of the Indigenous Languages Action Plan. Through that update, we are going to ensure that these aren't questions anymore, that everyone knows these, because that's the direction we want to move in.

MS. SEMMLER: I get what the Minister is saying, but if I wanted to answer the phone as an Indigenous person in my government office and say, "Hello, drin gwiinzii" or "uvlaami," why would I have to say it in French if I'm saying it in two different languages? If a French person needs a service in my community, if a Muslim person, a Somalian person needs language, there is the translation service provided. They can request it. What I'm asking is: why do we have to make Indigenous people have to say it in French? What's wrong with saying it in their own language? It's another language. It's giving an active offer, saying we can provide service in another language.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: There is nothing wrong with saying it in an Indigenous language, but the fact is that GNWT is a public government and Canada is a bilingual nation. Until Indigenous governments take over certain services and service delivery, those are the laws that we have to follow.

I don't think that answering in one language denigrates or reduces the value of another language. I was talking with my spouse about this the other day. She was saying her granny spoke many languages, and when I think back, my grandpa spoke many languages. He was from Fort Chipewyan. He spoke English, French, Chipewyan, Cree. I don't think there is anything wrong with offering service in a number of different languages. I think it's something that we can all strive for as opposed to resist.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I'm saying is that our policies have no teeth. Our Indigenous languages have no teeth. To say it's important, we have to add the French in. We don't have to add the Inuktitut in. We don't have to add the Chipewyan in. We don't have to add all these other ones, but we have to add the French in. This is what I'm saying: why? I get it that, but again, it's not an "us against them." If we're saying it in whatever, we're saying hello, if somebody needs a service, but why? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: The direction we're moving in is that, if you are answering a phone in a government office in a region where there is a number of Chipewyan speakers, then my hope is

that, in the coming years, there will be a requirement to answer in that Indigenous language. Wherever there are sufficient numbers of speakers, I hope that there will be a requirement to answer in that language the same way there is with French in those four communities, where there is a significant number of French speakers.

We are definitely moving in the direction that the Member is talking about. ECE has the French Language Secretariat and the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat, and those two groups work very well together. The French language in the territory is strong. There is a number of French speakers, both natural-born French speakers and people who come through the immersion program. In response to that, the GNWT has really developed a robust French-language service regime in the territory. That is what we aspire to have, or that's how we want the Indigenous languages to be delivered in the future, as well. The two languages are working together. There is no "us against them." I know the Member points it out, but I just wanted to point it out myself because it's often seen as "us against them." It's a red herring. It seems to be taking money away, funds away, something away from Indigenous languages when we deliver services in French, but that's not the case. The case is to expand all languages, all official languages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 409-19(2):
ADDICTIONS AFTERCARE SUPPORT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Does the department collect and compile statistics on relapse and recovery? If so, where are these available to the public, and how are they being incorporated into departmental work? Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the department does collect is that people have finished their program. They don't go back to them to determine whether they have relapsed in their program. I will mention, however, that there is a survey that will go out early next year to people who visited the treatment centres to determine what has worked for them and what hasn't worked for them and try and build some best practices out of those responses. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: When can the public expect the department to create a comprehensive relapse

prevention program, and will the Minister commit to providing Members with a plan for the new supports she mentioned earlier, including key performance indicators and timelines?

HON. JULIE GREEN: At this point, we don't have a relapse prevention plan, and I'm not aware that there is work being contemplated for this. A person can relapse for a lot of different reasons. They are not necessarily programmatic, that something was missing in their treatment or after-care. There are a lot of different factors that push people into addiction and pull them out of it. What we're doing is a range of supports that is providing people with after-care, with a way to hold onto their sobriety, but we don't have a relapse prevention plan that is called that.

MS. NOKLEBY: What is the Department of Health and Social Services doing to reduce wait times for people who are seeking detoxification in order to enter treatment?

HON. JULIE GREEN: What we recognize is that we need a model that is more widely applicable in the NWT outside of the hospitals, to assist people with medical detox. We are working now, the department is working now, on creating a model that will make detox more readily and widely available in the NWT. For some people, of course, that's all they need. They go on without formal treatment, and they are able to achieve sobriety. Of course, for other people, that's a beginning step in a continuum of supports that would allow them to achieve sobriety.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's great to hear, that they are developing a model. It would be nice to have a time frame that went along with that. My last question is: will the Minister commit to developing sustainable on-the-land and residential detoxification and treatment centres for addictions and mental health in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I always appreciate the opportunity to plug our on-the-land healing fund. It is \$1.8 million annually. It is a very flexible program. People can use it for on-the-land, individuals, after-care, family-based treatment. It is allocated to Indigenous organizations. It is easy to get, and it is very much a community-based program where people can decide on their priorities and how they want them implemented, whether they want to hire staff and so on and so forth. This is an offer to all communities, all Indigenous governments in the NWT, and I encourage them to apply for it. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 410-19(2):
ADDICTIONS AND AFTER-CARE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister agree that on-the-land programs could be used for a form of after-care in the smaller communities and regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware that Salt River First Nation had a very successful mobile treatment program with the Poundmaker's Lodge a couple of years ago, and I think that that was really a model for the rest of the NWT about creating a partnership with a southern addictions treatment centre and bringing it North, and bringing it directly to the people. I think there's a lot of potential in that, and certainly, I encourage people to explore that option for their communities if they think that would be useful. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Would the Minister agree that some of the monies for the on-the-land programs could be used to hire and coordinate a program for after-care once the client returns home?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Absolutely. That is possible. One of the contemplated uses of the on-the-land healing fund is, in fact, after-care and family-based after-care. The Indigenous governments decide on the program. It is a community-based program, and they apply for the money to implement it in their communities according to their own needs. Certainly, the money could be spent on after-care.

MS. MARTSELOS: Would the Minister agree, considering past problems, that external delivery of addiction services is more favourable for the client on the basis of anonymity, privacy, and the success rate is much higher than it was in the past?

HON. JULIE GREEN: As I've said, Mr. Speaker, in my return to oral question, Nats'ejee K'eh worked at a 38-percent capacity in the last three years it was opened, and we've been able to double the number of people who get residential treatment for the same money over the last six years.

What we understand is: the hitch at Nats'ejee K'eh and other northern treatment centres is confidentiality. I think we all know that everybody knows everybody, and they don't necessarily want to restart their sober lives in the NWT. We find that having options provides for a more responsive time to get in rather than longer wait times, which was the case at Nats'ejee K'eh. We also have gender-specific and co-ed programs, and Nats'ejee K'eh

only had gender-specific programs. We also have locations in different parts of Alberta and B.C. and one in Toronto so people can choose where they want to go.

Finally, some of the locations are locations in which Indigenous values are driving, the values driving care such as Poundmaker's and Thorpe. We believe that what we have on offer now presents a wide range of options for residents of the NWT.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree and consider three standalone facilities for aftercare to be built, one in the South Slave, one in the central region, and one in the Beaufort Delta, to help clients who do not want to go back to the communities upon return for recovery centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: What I heard when I was on the Standing Committee for Social Development and we toured the treatment centres in the South is that people were most concerned with housing, in particular. They wanted to not return to overcrowded housing, housing over which they had no control of their environment. They were living on a couch and that kind of thing. What they really wanted was a house of their own. Not necessarily even a house but an apartment of their own. That seems to be one of the key factors in making after-care work, and there is, in fact, some language in the mandate about trying this approach to see if, in fact, it will assist people to return North, first of all, and to maintain their sobriety.

Then, of course, the other thing we're doing is this survey next year, early next year, to find out what's working for people and what isn't. We certainly will make MLAs aware of that work so that they can consult their constituents. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 411-19(2):
BORDER CAMP SERVICES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier and I differ on types of camps that should be at the border. She comes from a mining background, and I'm from the other side of the tracks, which is oil and gas. We are used to something fairly comfortable.

I've been getting complaints and concerns about the accommodation at the border, and partly because it is a tent-type facility similar to a weather haven facility. I understand the camp will be there for the rest of the winter. Just to alleviate some of

the concerns by the people that are staying there because they're talking about possibly quitting and not going back, I just want to make sure that we address it before we get too far into it.

The first question for the Premier: my understanding from local service providers that they were never made aware that those services were to be contracted out, camp services. When I hear concerns about questionable hiring processes and now the contracting-out services, it makes me wonder who's in charge. I ask the Minister: was the camp infrastructure for Highway No. 1 put out to tender? If not, why, considering I made you aware of this well in advance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will start with the first part of that because I heard two questions in that one. Who's in charge? Definitely, the buck stops here is what people have told me. I'm in charge of it. However, as the Minister responsible for the secretariat, at no time do I micromanage. My direction to departments is not which contractor to hire or which person to hire. My direction to departments has been: make sure the money stays in the North that you're contracting with Northern companies, especially during the time of COVID-19 and our economy in a slump. My other direction to departments isn't about whether you hire one individual or another; it's: make sure you're hiring affirmative-action candidates is my direction. I just want to clarify that that's -- after that, then, I trust my deputy minister, associate deputy minister in this case, would heed my directions and move appropriately.

With the other question in the same question which was: was the camp infrastructure put out to tender? In this case, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't. There are allocations within our financial act that says that, if procurement is under a certain amount, you don't have to go through that process. I think that's just recently been changed, though, if I remember right. This time, time was limited. We approached a number of northern companies that could provide the service. We also asked for other companies' names that we thought could provide it.

In the end, Mr. Speaker, though, we did contract with a northern company to provide the services for the camp, and because the camp actually -- at this point, when we first put the camp facilities in, we did realize that we were one unit short. In that case, we did contracts with a South Slave company who had agreed to put that camp in place. Two northern companies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I thank the Premier for that answer, and I am glad that she is looking to companies out of Hay River because there are a lot of camp shacks sitting in Hay River, a lot of equipment sitting there that could do the job. The other issue that I have is with respect to camp services. You have water delivery, sewer pump-outs. You need diesel and propane delivery. You need snow clearing, fueling of generators and heaters, communication. I am asking the Premier: was or will these services be tendered out, as well?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: A lot of those services actually were needed throughout the summer. We have been operating at the border in that area since COVID-19 came to the North, so a lot of those actually are services that are currently provided by South Slave companies. We recently just put out requests for quotes for snow removal, camp cleaning, and garbage removal. Again, we have asked those from South Slave companies, so more than just northern companies, from regional based companies.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: We are dealing with electrical, fuel, and propane equipment. Some of these components require tradespeople when things go sideways. Are those persons, whether it be staff or contractors, qualified to provide the camp maintenance service if there are even camp maintenance services available? My understanding is that we are expecting those monitoring the border to provide some or all of those functions. This just does not make sense to me, so I am just asking the Premier what the department is doing to ensure that those services are provided in a safe manner and that we have got qualified people.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At no time, actually, should border personnel be providing services such as camp maintenance, especially if we are talking about things like electrical and things like that. Those are trades that need to have skilled personnel. Now, I do know that sometimes people will go above and beyond and kind of help out with things as needed. It's not a requirement, Mr. Speaker, and, in fact, it's not even promoted. If it is a skilled trade, no one who does not have that trade certification should be doing it. At this point, all of the camp maintenance is being provided by South Slave companies.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: For camps to be established in the NWT, in most instances, there are inspections and permitting required. I would ask the Premier: were the fire marshal, WSCC, health, electrical, and gas inspectors provided advance notice that the camp at the border was to be installed? For the safety of the employees, has the process for installation of camps been followed, or is it not required in this instance? As well, I would ask the Premier: if these shelters that they have

out there are not sufficient, will the Premier consider replacing them with self-contained modular units?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The MLA is getting a lot of questions in these four questions. What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that, when we put out a contract, we do not go to the fire marshal, WSCC, health, gas inspectors, et cetera; we expect the contractors to do that. Otherwise, we would never get any projects off the ground. Any contractor who applies on things is expected to have those in place. If there is a complaint or an issue that is concerning, let me know, and we will check into it because all contractors should be following the legislation and the regulations. If not, that is a more serious issue than camp borders. What I can say, though, as well, is: I made a commitment to the MLA, and I am upholding that, is that right after session is finished, I think it's mid-November, I have committed to going down and seeing those camps myself, recognizing that I am a diamond-driller's daughter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 412-19(2):
FIRE HALL IN DETAH

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This goes back to my Member's statement on the fire hall in Detah. With the firefighting, it's such a dangerous job. All these guys, all these men and women, put themselves in harm's way. Shout out to all the firefighters in the territories. Hard job, very hard job. Now, with this news of the Ingraham Trail, they are going to be cut off for the services here in April this year. I imagine that it might cause some alarm for the residents. When we are here as MLAs, we have got to try to think out of the box to try to find solutions for our people, and I think this might be a good way. If the Detah hall expanded, it might be a good way to serve the residents of the Ingraham Trail. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, and my first question is, Mr. Speaker: will the Minister commit to have MACA explore increased capacity at the Detah fire centre, including additional funding for equipment, vehicles, and training? Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear the Member's concern about the fire services provided. Right now, MACA is in conversation with YKDFN in looking at fire services to be provided. I will keep the Member informed. Also, as those conversations progress, we are looking at

alternative solutions, as well, and we are open to doing things differently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NORN: Thank you for the response from Minister. My next question is: will the Minister consider contracting out firefighting services for Ingraham Trail to Detah since the City of Yellowknife stated they will no longer provide services?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: This situation right now is quite complex, and I have expressed previously that we do have similar situations like this throughout the Northwest Territories where we have built-up areas outside of the municipal boundary and outside of the community built-up area, as well. However, it does not stop the department from exploring alternative ideas and solutions. Right now, as we progress with the communication with the YKDFN, right now, I cannot commit to offering further services, but I would like to look at the enhancement that is currently offered in Detah and looking at what we can do to provide adequate equipment and services for that community to respond to fires within that area.

MR. NORN: Thank you for that response. I understand. It's still early in discussion phases right now. Like I said, it is early on, and this idea is in its infancy right now, so let's see where this goes. I am hoping we could move forward and have something positive come out of it. My last question, Mr. Speaker is: what issues will need to be resolved to get this idea moving forward, and will the Minister commit to meeting with the YKDFN to discuss this idea further?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Municipal and Community Affairs weighs very heavily on the communication and the relationships we have at the community level and also with the Indigenous groups. Absolutely, I will keep the Member informed and looking at what will progress out of the meetings coming forward and looking at solutions to providing fire services.

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

QUESTION 413-19(2):
HOW CORE NEED INCOME THRESHOLD IS
USED FOR HOUSING

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I am wondering if the Minister can explain how the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation calculates the core need income threshold, otherwise known as CNIT, and what programs use the CNIT to determine eligibility? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Housing Corporation does have a silly acronym, CNIT, but it is the core income need threshold for the Northwest Territories. It is determined by zones throughout the territory and looking at the specific needs for household incomes, as well, based on household income and also looking at the power, the water, the heat, and basically the utilities and the insurances for the core income threshold. I will be able to provide the Member with documentation just to further explain how we come up with the calculations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: NWT residents often identify barriers they experience in qualifying for NWT Housing Corporation's funding for home ownership, repair, or market rental program as being related to CNIT. In some cases, due to the income targets under CNIT, seniors or people with disabilities do not meet eligibility requirements, even though they desperately require the funding supports that the GNWT does have. Will the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation conduct a review of the current CNIT to create a modern way of prioritizing Northerners for housing in the Northwest Territories?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Housing Corporation had last looked at the core need income threshold in 2015. We are currently looking at reviewing the core need income threshold for the Northwest Territories and also for the seniors, as well, we do have \$1 thousand dollars deduction of the calculated grant. As I said previously, I will provide further documentation for the Member just to further elaborate and explain how we work with the CNIT program throughout the Northwest Territories because it does vary depending on jurisdiction.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you to the Minister for further documentation and also the willingness to review that. When it comes to public housing, Yellowknife is considered a zone A community. This means that a person who makes a base salary of an MLA can live in public housing for \$890 a month, that a manager with the GNWT is eligible for public housing for \$1295 a month, and a Minister would pay a rent of \$1625 per month. This is all found in the public housing brochure. It's valuable to remember that Yellowknife also currently has more people on its housing list than the total number of housing units available in the entire city. Given the highest income identified in the NWT Housing Corporation's rent scale is \$8,334 and up, I'm wondering if there is a maximum eligible income for public housing in Yellowknife.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes. Looking at the core need for the Yellowknife area and also looking at the minimum and the maximum, the minimum of core need income threshold is \$20,000, the max is \$100,000. I do hear the Member speaking about we do have high income earners in public housing. Right now, the Housing Corporation has a number of 248 clients that we are looking at to work with throughout the Northwest Territories and transferring them into home ownership. The Housing Corporation, as of right now, we are looking our single-family dwellings in the smaller communities, they are up for sale and we are working with our clients to provide programming for home ownership.

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

QUESTION 414-19(2):
STANTON TERRITORIAL STERILIZATION OF
EQUIPMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. The problem with the sterilization equipment at Stanton Territorial Hospital is about to enter its fourth month, and it appears we are tinkering away with settings and hoping to find a solution. I have to ask the basic question: why can't we fix this problem? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that question. This is such a difficult issue because people are in pain waiting for this sterilization equipment to go back up to full functioning. It's very difficult to say to them, "We don't know when it's going to be fixed." What I can tell you is what you already know from your statement, Member for Frame Lake. These are complex issues. There are a number of different factors. There is the water quality, water testing for mineralization. The instruments themselves, Stanton has had specialist repair people come up from the South to assist with trying to figure out what's wrong with the machines, and unfortunately, none of this has yet resulted in a full return to sterilization and a full surgical load. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. She alluded to the fact that patients are left in ill-health and misery. We just don't have a way of scheduling surgeries yet. Can the Minister tell me how many surgeries are on hold and what other measures can be taken? For example, can we not ship sterilization equipment into the Northwest Territories or other options to get people to surgeries they need?

HON. JULIE GREEN: It's not as if there are no surgeries taking place, it's just that some surgeries which require larger instruments are not taking place. As a matter of fact, since July, 200 surgeries have been completed, and of the 124 surgeries that were cancelled at the end of July, about 23 of those have been completed. There is a need, of course, to address this big backlog. Some of the things we're looking at is whether it would be possible for people to go to the Inuvik Regional Hospital and have surgery performed there. We had been considering sending patients to Alberta, but unfortunately, that is no longer an option because surgeries for Albertans are also being cancelled for a variety of reasons, including a surge of COVID cases.

The department has looked at the possibility of having the surgical instruments reprocessed somewhere else. They actually are going to perform an experiment in the coming week by sending surgical equipment to the Foothills Hospital in Calgary to see whether the sterilization works in that facility so that they can identify whether the problem is with the instruments themselves or whether there still remains a problem with the sterilization machine.

MR. O'REILLY: A big part of the problem here is the uncertainty for patients that are waiting. Not only have their surgeries been cancelled but there doesn't seem to be a solution anywhere in the future. Will the Minister see that regular public updates are issued? The last one, I think, was October 5th, three weeks ago. It doesn't even seem like there is a regular schedule, so can the Minister commit to a regularly scheduled update of the NTHSSA website and some way of actually notifying individual patients about what's going on?

HON. JULIE GREEN: There will be a letter going to all of the patients awaiting surgery at Stanton this week so that they can have an update on what's happening there directly from Stanton. In the meantime, if they are having pain management issues, and I know that's very common with leg, hip surgeries, then they should continue to be in touch with their healthcare provider to have appropriate treatment for that and that also can be done virtually if people are housebound. We want to expand the capacity, obviously, and we need to tell people when this is going to be resolved. Unfortunately, there is no specific date. All I can say is that they are working on it very diligently and we can certainly commit to updating the website every two weeks to tell people what has been tried in the prior to weeks and what the results are.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that commitment to update the website every couple of weeks. I think that way people will at least have somewhere where they can get information about what's happening. The Minister herself talked about how COVID is surging in Alberta and that might cause some difficulties in terms of sending patients there. The other concern that I've heard expressed is, of course, the impending drastic cuts that may be made by the Alberta provincial government to their healthcare system as publicly announced by their Premier. What can the Minister tell us about these impending cuts, and how that might affect our ability to get surgeries and perhaps other healthcare in Alberta? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I'm not sure if I can answer that question. We don't have any inside information. We have heard, of course, about the privatization being contemplated in Alberta. We've heard about the possibility of wildcat strikes. We've heard about the surge in COVID cases. I'm going to say those are factors which will mean that there are fewer surgeries available to Northerners rather than more. Those are really issues that are beyond our control. They have been helpful in helping us to validate the sterilization in their own machines, but as for sending people there, that seems like a more difficult proposition. To be perfectly honest, those people I know who are waiting for hip replacements and other major surgery are not very keen to go to Edmonton for surgery at this point. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 415-19(2):
ZOOBOTICS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my election campaign, I naively thought I would have a hope of getting the NWT SPCA some funding. I am now seeing that that is an impossible task. Instead of asking MACA about this for the tenth time, I am going to take another run at it today through a public health lens. My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Speaker, is: what is public health's role in monitoring health risks caused by animals? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member not leaving me out in the questions today. He was able to teach me a new word today, which is "zoonotics." Zoonotics is where viruses and other pathogens can be transmitted from animals or insects to humans, so

rabies would be an example of a zoonotic. Public health has a role in monitoring and responding to those risks when they are present in the population, particularly in investigating human illness that may be a result of a jump from an animal to a person, so the focus here is on the person rather than the animal. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Today is actually an appropriate day to talk about zoonotics as the first dog in Canada tested positive for COVID-19 today, so there is a bit of an overlap. One of my main concerns in this area and one of the great works that the NWT SPCA does is making sure dogs are vaccinated for rabies and making sure rabies does not then transfer to the human population. Presently, that is not being done in all of the communities. Can the Minister of health put together a plan to make sure we are having rabies vaccines in all of our communities?

HON. JULIE GREEN: It's my understanding that there is a lay vaccination program in the NWT that ensures rabies vaccines for animals are available to communities who do not have a local or resident veterinarian to administer the vaccines themselves. The big challenge here is getting people to administer the vaccine, especially where there aren't veterinarians or other technicians who can do this themselves. I know that there has been some work between Health and Social Services and my colleague at ENR to identify and train individuals to administer those vaccines. I do not have information about how many of those people and in which communities they exist, but that is something I could certainly provide to the Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, that is actually the heart of the issue. We presently provide the vaccines, and they are free. Communities can use them. It's difficult to get someone to actually deliver those vaccines, and that is where the NWT SPCA really fills that gap. Another way that has been done is that multiple jurisdictions have hired or contracted a public health veterinarian. I believe we only have three veterinarians operating in the territory right now. Is this an option that public health has reviewed?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am not aware that the department is looking at hiring a public veterinarian. We would certainly be working with ENR in the event that they are looking at hiring a public veterinarian so that we can work together on making sure that zoonotics do not proliferate in the NWT.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, ENR has a wildlife veterinarian. They do

lots of great work. It's essential work to making sure the population and health of our wildlife is there. I now learn that public health has a bit of a role in zoonotics and MACA seemingly has some of a role but seems to deny it consistently. My question for the Minister of health is: is it possible to work with those departments, see if there are some gaps here, and possibly create a funding pool to address them?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am certainly willing to have that conversation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. 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. Honourable Premier.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 199-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP FOR ORAL QUESTION 242-19(2):
ENFORCEMENT OF CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICER'S ORDERS IN APARTMENT
BUILDINGS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, "Follow-up for Oral Question 242-19(2), Enforcement of Chief Public Health Officer's Orders in Apartment Buildings." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 200-19(2):
NORTHERN EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SERVICES
(NEBS) PENSION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT FOR
THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019 AND
INCLUDING UPDATED INFORMATION TO JUNE
2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 201-19(2):
NWT CARBON TAX REPORT 2019-2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table to following two documents: "Northern Employees Benefit Services (NEBS) Pension Plan Annual Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2019 and including updated information to June 2020" and "NWT Carbon Tax Report 2019-2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 202-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP FOR ORAL QUESTION 363-19(2):

POLICING IN HAY RIVER AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, "Follow-up for Oral Question 363-19(2), Policing in Hay River and the Northwest Territories." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 203-19(2):
LETTER DATED OCTOBER 23, 2020 FROM
ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERING
COMPANIES TO MLA FRAME LAKE ON
STATEMENTS REGARDING COMPANIES
SELECTED BY THE GNWT FOR THE LOCKHART
ALL-SEASON ROAD

TABLED DOCUMENT 204-19(2):
YELLOWKNIVES DENE FIRST NATION PRESS
RELEASE DATED AUGUST 1, 2020 TITLED
"YELLOWKNIVES DENE FIRST NATION
RETRACT SUPPORT FOR THE SLAVE
GEOLOGICAL PROVINCE CORRIDOR UNTIL
THE GNWT TAKES THE ACTION NECESSARY
TO ENSURE THAT NORTHERNERS BENEFIT
FROM THE PROJECT"

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following two documents: "Letter dated October 23, 2020, from Association of Consulting Engineering Companies to MLA Frame Lake on Statements Regarding Companies Selected by the GNWT for the Lockhart All-Season Road;" and the second document, Mr. Speaker, is a press release, "Yellowknives Dene First Nation Press Release dated August 1, 2020, titled 'Yellowknives Dene First Nation retract support for the Slave Geological Province Corridor until the GNWT takes the action necessary to ensure that Northerners benefit from the project.'" Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 205-19(2):
2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE
OF THE INFORMATION AND PRIVACY
COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, pursuant to Section 68 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I wish to table the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Earlier today, I recognized the presence in the gallery of Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Thank you for joining us this

afternoon, Ms. Keenan-Bengts, for this, the last tabling of your annual report. As you embark on your retirement, best of wishes on behalf of all Members of this Assembly. Mahsi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 15:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT
ACT, 2020

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, October 29, 2020, I will move that Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 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; Tabled Document 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; Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2020; Committee Report 4-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report; and Committee Report 5-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to deal with wishes to deal with Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2022, and deal with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will call committee back to order. We have agreed to resume consideration of Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2020-2021, with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Minister, do you wish to bring any witnesses in?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Deputy Minister Erin Kelly and Director of Finance and Capital Planning Jessica St. Arnaud.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments, so if committee agrees, we will proceed to the details contained in the tabled document.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental totals and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning at page 16, with information items on page 17. Members, do we have any comments? Seeing no comments, I will call the activity. Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management, infrastructure investments, \$399,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We will now turn to environmental protection and waste management, on page 18, with information items on page 19. Committee, do we have any comments under this activity? Seeing none, I will now call the activity. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental protection and waste management, infrastructure investments, \$399,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We will now turn to forest management on page 21 with information items on page 22. Are there any comments? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Minister and his staff this summer. We had a tour of the forestry facility there. During the

tour, there was a commitment there to have a couple of forestry vehicles on there. I don't see anything on this listing. I just wanted to see where that commitment stands? Marsi cho.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, MLA Norn was correct. We did have the opportunity to meet with him in Fort Resolution. The two trucks that we were talking about, one was already there. The other one is being processed this year. It's under \$50,000, so we're purchasing it through O and M. It will be done this fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I'm very pleased to hear that. I'm very happy to see the Minister's staff follow through on that commitment and get it done. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any other comments for this section? Seeing none, I will now call the activity. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, infrastructure investments, \$679,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We will now turn to wildlife and fish on page 23 with information items on page 24. Are there any comments under this activity? Seeing none, I will call the activity. Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, infrastructure investments, \$682,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the department summary found on page 15. Environment and Natural Resources, 2021-2022 Capital Estimates, \$2,159,000. Does committee agree? Just one second. Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 42-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 181-19(2): CAPITAL
ESTIMATES 2020-2021 - ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES - DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 15),
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that the committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the department of Environment and

Natural Resources 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 in favour? All opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the departmental summary has been deferred. Thank you to the Minister and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Mr. Norn, what is the will of the committee?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? 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, please? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, committee has been considering Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2020-2021, and I would like to report progress with one motion passed. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we 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 Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Members' Statements</p> <p>4. Returns to Oral Questions</p> <p>5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery</p> <p>6. Acknowledgements</p> <p>7. Oral Questions</p> <p>8. Written Questions</p> <p>9. Returns to Written Questions</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Oral Question 358-19(2), Long-Term Care Facility</p> <p>10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address</p> <p>11. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills</p> <p>12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees</p> <p>13. Petitions</p> <p>14. Tabling of Documents</p> <p>15. Notices of Motion</p> <p>16. Motions</p> <p>17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills</p> <p>18. First Reading of Bills</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Bill 12, an Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Bill 13, an Act to amend the Interpretation Act</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Bill 14, an Act to Amend the Securities Act</p> <p>19. Second Reading of Bills</p> <p>20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(20): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Tabled Document 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</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- Tabled Document 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</p> | <p>- Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2022</p> <p>21. Report of Committee of the Whole</p> <p>22. Third Reading of Bills</p> <p>23. Orders of the Day</p> <p>MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>---ADJOURNMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The House adjourned at 5:08 p.m.</p> |
|--|---|