



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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

**Day 47**

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

**HANSARD**

**Monday, November 2, 2020**

Pages 1563 - 1592

**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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

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(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

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*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

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*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the Covid-19 Secretariat*

**Hon. Julie Green**

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*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

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(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**

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**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*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, November 2, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms. Lesa Semmler):**

Welcome. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Madam Premier.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 86-19(2):  
BENEFITS OF THE COVID-19 COORDINATING  
SECRETARIAT**

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Madam Speaker, as COVID-19 approached at the beginning of this year, our government was preparing our institutions to respond to the threat of a generation. Before a case even reached our borders, we pulled together a team from across our public service to stand up for our emergency response. As the threat grew, so too did our response.

We declared a public health emergency; we restricted travel; we required self-isolation planning; and we put restrictions on businesses and people as the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in our territory. We stepped up contact centres like ProtectNWT and 811 to process more than 21,000 self-isolation plans and get people the information they needed; placed border staff at airports and highways and enforcement officers across the regions; and we established safe spaces for isolation in communities with enhanced medical care.

Madam Speaker, our initial measures paid off. We were able to keep this virus under control and bring stability to our territory. Achieving this stability means we are able to keep looking forward, even as many across the country look at tightening up. Now that we know more about COVID-19 and its effects on the Northwest Territories, we can build a stronger response that better serves communities, residents, and businesses. Madam Speaker, this is what the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat will do.

It will bring together the pandemic services thousands of residents have counted on since March under one roof and bring in the leadership and investment required to allow us to better prepare for the second wave. We know the majority of residents, businesses, and communities want these services, and they want them to work well. The dedicated team at the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat will be able to deliver more seamless services for residents and businesses.

Madam Speaker, these services are necessary. COVID-19 is not going to go away any time soon. We need the services to continue to operate so departments can better focus on their normal daily functions and the priorities of this Assembly. Rising to a challenge like this pandemic means making real investments. Every jurisdiction across the world has done it. Our territory is no different. We know that these investments in isolation requirements, border controls, and enforcement work, not just from our own experience but from the experiences of fellow successful jurisdictions like Nunavut, Atlantic Canada, and Yukon, who are all investing in similar services to keep their jurisdictions safe. Madam Speaker, we must also balance the need for these services with fiscal responsibility and bringing the delivery of our pandemic response under one structure will make controlling costs easier.

The work to find savings has already begun. We are currently reviewing the territory's approach to isolation costs and considering equitable and fair ways to reduce the financial burden that makes up over half of the costs of our pandemic services.

Madam Speaker, Indigenous governments and communities continue to play an important role in our efforts to protect the health and safety of residents. We will continue to engage with Indigenous governments and community leadership as well as business stakeholders as we consider important changes to self-isolation requirements and other secretariat functions. We know isolation in designated hubs has been tough on people. We have heard of the mental and social harms, and we are in a better position to resolve them. Now more than ever, we need to be talking about our mental health and well-being. If you know someone who is having a hard time, a difficult time, reach out. If you

are struggling, please reach out for help. You are not alone.

Madam Speaker, with strong territorial pandemic response plans, we have built the resilience and capacity we need to respond to cases across our communities. With expanded rapid-testing capacity, enhanced surveillance of wastewater, and improved contact tracing, we are able to consider new ways to mitigate risk for communities while allowing people to return home sooner.

Madam Speaker, what this secretariat will not do is take away from the territory's investments in our health system. It will instead support these efforts and the work of Chief Public Health Officer by taking on pandemic services which in the past have divided the attention of health officials as everyone worked to rise to the early challenges of COVID-19. Investments like those in new testing devices, wastewater surveillance, nurses and laboratory expertise, and strong pandemic planning will continue, and our government will continue to get our health system the resources to respond to mental health and medical needs for all of our residents as we move forward.

Madam Speaker, recently, it was announced we have several active cases, the first cases the NWT has seen since the spring. With the arrival of a second wave in Canada, we must do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19 now more than ever. That includes treating individuals who test positive, either presumptive or confirmed, with respect, empathy, and kindness. Even with taking every precaution, people may still get COVID-19, and we need to be diligent in our own precautions and support our friends, families, and neighbours. We must be ready, and we must stay ready. The guidance, advice, and orders of public health leadership, the expertise on our front lines, the operational support of the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat, and the work of each resident to abide by the Chief Public Health Officer recommendations will work together to keep residents as safe as possible.

So far, the spread of COVID-19 has been managed, not because we are lucky, but because we took action. We elected to invest in the health and safety of our territory, and the establishment of the secretariat allows us to still focus on containing COVID-19, as well as committing to economic and social recovery and to delivering on our mandate. When considering our way forward in this pandemic, I ask all Members to support our actions because investing in health, safety, and stability is always the right choice. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 87-19(2):  
CONTINUED HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS  
RESPONSE TO COVID-19

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Madam Speaker, supporting vulnerable residents in need of housing or facing homelessness continues to be an essential part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' response to COVID-19. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is working diligently to meet the needs of our residents as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to physically distance remains with us and continues to significantly impact our interactions with each other and has highlighted the need for all of us to work together, think innovatively, and simply be kind to others.

Madam Speaker, as the pandemic unfolded last spring, the Housing Corporation enhanced its Transitional Rent Supplement Program by streamlining the process and simplifying participants' requirements. Prior to the pandemic, this program served approximately 40 participants. Now, that number has expanded up to 150 households. This program has now been extended through November to continue to support our residents.

We recognize the impacts of COVID-19 have been felt across our territory and country. Among the many unfortunate realities of the pandemic is that a sudden loss of income could lead some individuals to being at risk of experiencing homelessness. In light of this reality, we increased the budget for the Homelessness Assistance Fund from \$125,000 to \$300,000. This program supports people with financial assistance to find private rental market housing. We understand the economic uncertainty caused by COVID-19 can be extremely stressful, and we are working to ensure that the application processed can be done as quickly as possible.

Madam Speaker, the GNWT remains committed to ensuring that our residents are able to access appropriate housing and shelter to self-isolate effectively, as needed. The GNWT has committed \$5 million to help our most vulnerable residents to be able to effectively self-isolate. This includes \$1.4 million to support the self-isolation needs of individuals at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. The funding also included \$3.6 million to bring online 108 units that were mostly in need of renovations in order to meet core housing needs. At present, these units are not required by the emergency management organization. They are in the process of being re-allocated by the Housing Corporation to rental programs, such as public

housing, market rentals, affordable rental, or to support homeownership. At this time, 36 of these newly renovated units have been allocated and are serving as safe, affordable, and appropriate homes for Northwest Territories residents. As more units continue to be re-allocated, we expect to see a decrease in waiting lists in many communities, which should help in preparing us for a second wave of COVID-19.

Madam Speaker, we must continue to work with our community partners to access buildings to serve as self-isolation centres for our most vulnerable residents, as necessary. In Yellowknife, we have leased the Aspen Apartment complex from the Government of Canada in order to provide 32 units for vulnerable residents to self-isolate. Also in Yellowknife, we have supported Spruce Bough, the former Arnica Inn, which provides up to 40 supportive housing units and have assisted the Salvation Army to utilize more of its space. In Hay River, along with the Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, we opened a new emergency overnight shelter and in Inuvik we used Aurora College student housing over the summer months to provide temporary housing.

As the Northwest Territories begins to recover from COVID-19, the Housing Corporation will be an important economic contributor to economic recovery. We will be working with communities all across the NWT to ensure the construction, renovation, and repair work that needs to be done is done in a safe and considerate manner that provides the greatest benefit to the local communities and their residents.

Madam Speaker, many residents across the Northwest Territories who are homeless or at risk of being homeless require housing stability and person-centred support. We know that addressing housing stability is critical to the success and overall well-being of our residents, and it is an issue that this government takes seriously. As we move into the anticipated second wave, we need to remember to look after one another, provide supports, and continue to listen to the advice provided by the public health officials, keeping all of our residents safe throughout this pandemic. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 88-19(2):  
PROCUREMENT REVIEW

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Speaker, one of our government's guiding principles is to ensure that the expenditure of public funds maximizes economic benefits to Northerners and supports northern business. This is consistent with

our long-standing commitment to support Northwest Territories businesses and grow a strong, diversified economy.

We put that commitment into practice through the Business Incentive and Manufactured Products Policies, which help ensure that government purchases are made from, or through, Northwest Territories-owned businesses wherever possible, and to leverage this investment back into our economy. Similarly, our Negotiated Contracts Policy exists to increase the capacity of northern and Indigenous-owned businesses, supporting them to be more competitive in the northern business environment. We have committed in our mandate to work with Northwest Territories businesses to strengthen GNWT procurement policies and practices. By the end of November, we will formally begin this important conversation.

Madam Speaker, reaching consensus on the subject of preferential procurement is going to require that we work together, be open-minded and flexible, and adopt a whole-of-government and territory-wide mindset. Leaders from across levels of government and from businesses will be asked for their input on where and how to strike a balance between supporting Indigenous and Northwest Territories businesses and widely accepted principles of responsible public procurement, including transparency, fairness, and realizing competitive value for public dollars spent.

There are many difficult and contentious questions to face. For example, under what circumstances should the GNWT pay more for goods and services if they are provided by a northern business? How much more, and how do we define a Northwest Territories business? Should the objective of our policies be to level the playing field between Northwest Territories businesses and those in other jurisdictions? Is it to attract jobs and investment to the Northwest Territories? Is it to help minimize the cost of living in our territory? Likely, the answer will be "yes" to more than one question, so the challenge will be finding a way to balance these sometimes-competing objectives.

What should an Indigenous procurement policy look like? How do we achieve a measured level of participation and benefit to Northwest Territories Indigenous governments and businesses? Through interviews, written submissions, targeted engagement opportunities, and online surveys, we will give every opportunity for Northwest Territories leaders, Indigenous governments, business interests, and communities to share their perspectives and ideas on how to answer these many questions and help advance the collective interests of our territory.

Madam Speaker, our mandate states that government procurement and contracting is a source of economic activity throughout the Northwest Territories, and residents and businesses should benefit as much as possible. At the end of the day, we want more Northwest Territories residents working and advancing their careers and more businesses thriving and growing in our territory. It is time to revisit the policies we have to support these goals and face these sometimes complex and competing questions.

While the GNWT mandate commits to the completion of this review in 2022, I have asked the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Finance to do their very best to have this review completed by the end of next summer. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 89-19(2): WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the spring of 1999, a small community in southern Ontario called Walkerton made national news because of the deaths and sickness that were linked to contamination in the municipality's drinking water supply. This incident served as a wake-up call for all municipalities and governments across Canada to take stock of the state of drinking water supplies in communities across the nation. Here in the Northwest Territories, three levels of government, including the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and community governments, are jointly responsible for ensuring that drinking water is safe for human consumption.

I would like to update the Members on the efforts to upgrade NWT water treatment plants to meet the requirements of the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality. The GNWT formed an interdepartmental committee called the NWT Drinking Water Committee. This committee focuses on water-related issues and provides a forum for communication, cooperation, consultation, and information exchange, as well as to provide a link to other governmental and non-governmental agencies with interests in drinking water. The committee set a goal early on to see each community with a modern water treatment plant that would meet the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to announce that, as of October 5, 2020, this goal has been achieved. When Wekweeti's new water plant was approved for use, all communities in the NWT that operate a water treatment plant are now

capable of meeting the filtration requirements of the national guidelines.

Since 2001, partnerships between the federal government, the GNWT, and community governments have resulted in:

- 23 upgraded water treatment systems;
- 16 communities have constructed new modern water treatment plants; and
- an additional seven have gone through mid-life retrofits or upgrades to meet the standards.

Community governments have been successfully utilizing federal infrastructure programs over the years, such as the Build Canada Plan, Small Communities Fund, Clean Water and Wastewater Fund, and Gas Tax Agreement to supplement their community public infrastructure funding from the GNWT to build these water treatment plants.

Success can also be seen in community governments' investment in their staff. All 30 NWT water plants are now operated by local residents, and 23 of the plants have certified local operators. MACA is actively working with the remaining seven to upgrade the certification of their operators and provide more oversight and support while these operators are training.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the accomplishments we have made to date, and all NWT residents can be confident that their drinking water is safe. Our work is not done. MACA continues to work with community governments to assess their systems, plan for upgrades, and continue to support operators with ongoing training. Our interdepartmental team will continue to support our communities. The GNWT is committed to providing a coordinated approach that supports water systems including intake, treatment, and distribution. We will continue to ensure that safe drinking water for all NWT residents is a priority. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ILLICIT DRUG USE

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. Today, I want to talk about the adverse impact and influence which illicit drug trade is still having within our communities amid the ongoing global pandemic. Madam Speaker, another common theme that I've noticed in my constituency is the increase of crime,



violent crime, and hard drug use within our communities. During the early stages of the pandemic, the federal government distributed CERB funding. I believe this was a mistake as many of our residents used these new funds to feed their addictions to new levels. All we've seen is many of our bootleggers, drug dealers, and even our liquor stores profit immensely from this influx of money. I know now the federal government had tightened up their rules surrounding allocations of money for those out of work during the pandemic, but there still needs to be clear rules about what these monies are meant for.

Madam Speaker, while there have been some minor wins this year in terms of successful drug busts executed across the country, the issue of illicit drugs plaguing our communities has remained unchanged. I know the bulk of our attention and focus on COVID-19 this year. However, we must remain vigilant against other harmful threats to our people, as well. Pandemic or not, people are still selling, getting addicted to, and dying from illegal drugs. Dying. We in this House need to get ahead of this.

Madam Speaker, according to the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse and Addiction, "people use substances report a loss of social connection and supports, as well as an increase in isolation, fear, and anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to the general population, they are more vulnerable to the health impacts of COVID-19 and the hardships of physical distancing."

Madam Speaker, they say it takes a village or a community to raise a child. In my opinion, it's going to take a village or a community to combat this huge problem of drugs in our communities. We cannot solely rely on our law enforcement community to tackle these by themselves. We need to work with the leadership at the local level to start fighting back at the distribution of drugs in our communities. We need to send a clear message to the drugs traffickers out there that their actions will not go unpunished. With that, Madam Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Marci cho.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION  
OF PRIVACY ACT IMPLEMENTATION**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. Today, I am going to return to the issue I first raised in the winter session regarding the implementation of amendments to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. As I pointed out then, a lot of good work and cooperation went into the new

legislation with excellent changes introduced as a result of extensive consultation with GNWT departments, public bodies, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the general public. Improvements included the reduction of mandatory exemptions, the power of the Information and Privacy Commissioner was also increased to allow the issuance of binding orders, and the legislation will apply to municipal governments as suggested over many years.

Eight months on from my last statement and questions and 15 months after the passage of the amendments, we are still waiting for the legislation to be brought into force. These changes are supposed to also include fee reductions, training, identification of classes of records that do not require an ATIPP application, and many more. At the passage of the bill in June 2019 and as result of my questions, the then Minister of Justice committed to: reduce the initial fee for general information requests from \$25 to \$10; provide 10 hours of free processing for general requests; photocopy charges were to be dropped to 10 cents per page; and the personal information requests information free pages were to be increased from 100 to 200.

These basic and simple adjustments have not yet been made. It's not clear why the delays continue. We have to pin our hopes and fears on the new Minister of Justice to finally bring this legislation into force. I'll have questions for the Minister of Justice later today on when he will bring this long ordeal to an end and finally bring the new and better Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act into force. Mahsi, Madame la Presidente.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY**

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm going to sound like a bit of a broken record here. However, I feel that my concerns are falling on deaf ears as I review the infrastructure plan for the upcoming year. Earlier in this sitting, I spoke about the need for funds to rehabilitate the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the ITH, as it is commonly referred to, will mark three years of being open to the public. The first year saw an unexpected boon to local tourism seeing an unprecedented number of visitors camping and biking this scenic ribbon of connectivity that finally links southern Canada to our third ocean, the Arctic. In July, Madam Speaker, you will recall that you and I had the opportunity to drive the ITH up to Tuktoyaktuk, and I have to say that what I saw was shocking,

considering the relatively young age of the highway. In some places, the highway sits flush with the surrounding environment, the gravel fill having migrated onto the neighbouring tundra, giving one the impression of a flattened pancake. In other places, drainage channels mark erosion in the embankments, particularly concerning in the areas surrounding bridges and culverts. The pullouts are pull-offs, and there appears to be none of the scenic viewpoints I recall there once being an RFP issued for.

Most concerning though to someone of my background, geological engineering, are the areas of ponded or standing water on the sides of the highway. Speaking to any northern engineer or geologist and we know that ponded water is the kiss of death for permafrost, a key component for the stability of the ITH. Madam Speaker, why did we go to all the expense of creating an entire highway constructed of fill in order to protect the permafrost if we were going to skimp on materials and allow its degradation only three years after the project was completed?

When I spoke earlier in this session, the Minister was glad I was advocating for infrastructure in her region, but this is not just a regional issue. It's one that affects all parts of the Northwest Territories. This is about our connections, our corridors, our means of mobilizing within our territory. Every year, as the climate changes, we will see less and less reliability on our frozen infrastructure and increasing need to build and maintain permanent highways. This makes it even more imperative that we protect and maintain our existing assets better as every year that we don't the costs will only rise exponentially, and, Madam Speaker, that is not something we can afford. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

**MS. CLEVELAND:** [English translation not available] ...flourishing in the conditions created by the pandemic. Women, girls, and LGBTQ2SIA+ people face a heightened risk of home-based violence with COVID isolation measures. In Canada, more than 70 percent of domestic violence murders happen after the victim has ended the relationship. Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women. Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incidence of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. Two-thirds of Canadians know at least one woman who has experienced sexual abuse

and the NWT is second to Nunavut for the highest rates of family violence in the country.

Various pandemic-related stressors have contributed to the increase in family violence, including job loss and reduced income, food insecurity, fears about contracting the virus, exacerbated mental illness, and disrupted family routines, services, and resources. Isolation puts those surviving the violence in prolonged contact with their abusers and others are no longer around to see the signs of violence. Isolating also means that people aren't leaving the house as much which creates indirect barriers to access services from shelters and other community supports.

Before 2020, the Canadian Department of Justice estimated that Canadians spent \$7.4 billion each year in the aftermath of spousal violence. COVID is widening the cracks and making it easier for women to fall through. Poverty in Canada is already gendered. The disproportionate gendered impacts of COVID could have long-term and far-reaching consequences. If we are to restore momentum in our efforts to bring about gender equality in Canada, social and economic recovery efforts must take a feminist approach and, more so in the North, an Indigenous feminist approach. [English translation not available] Merci, Madam la Presidente.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL SKILLED TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's good to see you in the big chair today. I hope you can keep this unruly bunch in line. Madam Speaker, the first week of November is National Skilled Trades and Technology Week, and I would like to congratulate all of our new journeypersons and top-mark earners. My colleagues and I have spoken at length about the need to increase the amount of tradespeople in the North, and I know it's a shared priority both for the Minister and all my colleagues in this House.

However, the numbers are not just low in the Northwest Territories. There's a trade shortage across Canada, Madam Speaker. As caucus, we got to tour the Aurora College trade shop in Fort Smith, and I believe our transformation to a polytechnic gives us a unique opportunity to build on many of the existing successes in our trades programs. The reality is: the trades don't attract as many people as they used to, and even people in the system, many apprentices, are looking to other career options these days, Madam Speaker.

COVID has given us an opportunity. It has changed the way we deliver our education system, and it must change the way we deliver our trades training. We have a chance to re-imagine what trades training looks like. Are there no journeypersons in your community? Why don't we get a mobile trades program where we fly instructors out to provide six months' training programs in each region, or why don't we develop a distance mentorship program and put much more of our trades programming online?

Madam Speaker, if our young people don't see why the trades are valuable, we need to make sure that our high school curriculum focuses on northern problems. There are many climate-aware students, and as we work on our GNWT good building practices, possibly a northern building code, building, retrofits, there's an entire world of northern specialization in the trades that we need to speak.

I believe, Madam Speaker, we need to look at developing northern-specific trade curriculum. Right now, we use the Alberta curriculum, and we largely just copy and paste it. As a result of it, some of the very unique building features of the North and some of the things we need to prioritize such as adapting to climate change are not front and centre in our trades programs. I believe, in the transformation to a polytechnic, we can build northern curriculum which will inspire our students to take them but will also attract other tradespeople who want to come here and become northern building specialists.

Madam Speaker, we are still struggling to attract and retain women in the trades. We must prioritize hiring female instructors to provide a lasting impression on young apprentices. We must expand trades education to address the root social issues that are keeping women out.

Madam Speaker, we are struggling to get many of our apprentices to school, but I believe with a new look and the tools of online learning, we can increase the people entering the trades and our number of journey person's graduating. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SMALL BUSINESSES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It appears that, when we now talk about our economy and small businesses in today's environment, we must preface it with the term "COVID-19." Madam Speaker, believe it or not, not all businesses are being treated equally in this harsh economic environment. Government tends to favour larger businesses over small, and maybe

there is good reason for that. It is just as important to think of our small businesses where, in Canada, approximately 60 percent have experienced a revenue drop of 20 percent or more. Small businesses, statistically, have laid off a larger percentage of staff than larger businesses. Small businesses, on a greater average than large businesses, have sought credit from financial institutions just to cover basic operating costs.

Madam Speaker, when operating in the North, generating revenue and cash flow for any business, big or small, is problematic at the best of times. It is our small businesses, not only in Yellowknife but in all communities, that are feeling the economic realities of COVID-19. This impact, along with bureaucratic opposition to applying government policies that are meant to support our small Northern businesses in the best of times, is only working to smother any chance they have at survival.

Madam Speaker, I routinely have the opportunity to talk to business owners, not only in Hay River but in Yellowknife and throughout the NWT. A common theme that arises from those discussions is the question why this government is not doing more to listen to and address the immediate concerns of small businesses? Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that our small businesses need work, and they need it now. They need to generate revenue, and this government has plenty of work on the books to keep all our small businesses working in all our communities. We as politicians have to realize that, and we have to make the bureaucracy realize it, as well. We need to take a can-do attitude.

Madam Speaker, we talk about reviewing and revising our procurement and business incentive policies to better support our businesses. I would suggest that while we work towards that end, let us apply what we have in place to address current needs. NWT small businesses need this government to work and support them if they are expected to survive, and we have tools to make that happen. Those tools just need to be sprinkled with some magical political will. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON SMALL  
COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week, I talked about longer term impacts on this COVID-19 pandemic is doing to our small communities. Restrictions on social activities such as community feasts, sporting events, and extracurricular activities can negatively impact the

mental health of our citizens. I want to say again that the Minister and the Chief Public Health Officer of the Department of Health and Social Services are doing good work keeping COVID-19 out of our communities. The restrictions are necessary, and they are doing their best to communicate this to the public, keeping fears to a minimum, but things could be much worse, Madam Speaker.

As the pandemic wears on, the government must do all it can to ease negative impact on our residents that I'm worried about, such as people on medical travel. Some of these folks have treatment for serious conditions, health conditions, such as cancer, that requires repeat trips to the south. Self-isolating was once an inconvenience, but now, I'm glad the government is making possible for travel to self-isolate to the four major hub communities. However, repeated self-isolation through no fault of their own can expressly be stressful. This is the situation many of the people on medical travel are facing. They are already dealing with the impact of serious illness on themselves and their families, and now, they have to add this to their burden.

On Tuesday, the Minister of Health and Social Services quoted the understanding that only travellers and essential workers can get immediate testing available to people who are going to a healthcare setting. Other people are not to receive these tests. I wonder if the Minister can consider immediate tests available to those requiring repeated medical travel so that they can be reunited with their families at the shortest amount of time. I also wonder if the Minister would consider prioritizing people with rapid testing when it becomes available to allow them to reduce a two-week self-isolation period. I urge this government to make special arrangements for the small group of residents who are already dealing with stressful and serious illnesses. I will have questions for the Minister of Health at the appropriate time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SOLIDARITY WITH NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ  
FISHERS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Speaker, over the last two months, there has been escalating tensions in the province of Nova Scotia between the Mi'kmaq First Nation and the non-Indigenous fishermen. The issue at hand is about the rights of Indigenous people. The Mi'kmaq are exercising their constitutionally affirmed right to fish for a moderate livelihood. However, the Mi'kmaq are being met with serious resistance, violence, and hate from non-Indigenous fishermen who are terrorizing the

Mi'kmaq to intimidate and suppress their Indigenous rights.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I stand today in this House to declare my solidarity with the Mi'kmaq nation inserting their Indigenous rights. I also strongly confirm and denounce the ongoing violence penetrated against the Mi'kmaq. The level of violence and intimidation being done toward the Mi'kmaq is extremely concerning given widespread reports of non-Indigenous fishermen engaging in several criminal activities, including intentionally ramming and shooting flares at the Mi'kmaq boats, the destruction of property, the cutting of traps, and various illegal protests hindering Mi'kmaq fishermen activities.

Madam Speaker, as a former Chief, I know from experience what it's like to fight and defend Indigenous rights. I did so on a regular basis at Salt River because it's a constant struggle to have Indigenous rights recognized and affirmed by the courts and by governments alike.

Madam Speaker, regardless of where disputes like these take place, I will always stand with the Indigenous people who are fighting for and asserting their rights. To me, it doesn't matter where any First Nation is located because we are all fighting the same struggle. Thus, I believe it is extremely important that fellow First Nation leaders and organizations vocalize their support and stand in solidarity with any rights-based conflicts, wherever they may be.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I urge both the federal government and the provincial Government of Nova Scotia to take immediate action and safeguard the inherent rights of First Nations in this conflict. I also encourage our northern organizations and leaders to vocalize their support and solidarity in the rights-based conflict. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
EXTENDING CELL PHONE COVERAGE

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Back in December 2019, I had enquired with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs regarding extending the cellphone range as there are current limitations that restrict our duty to provide for the safety and well-being of our travellers using the highways or waterways. Madam Speaker, there are many residents who traverse well beyond municipal boundaries. There are hunters and trappers out on the land year-round. There are fishermen plying the rivers and lakes, eking out a living setting and checking nets. There are a vast number of travellers out on our highway

systems up and down the whole Northwest Territories.

When 911 rolled out back in November 2019, many residents were optimistically looking forward to the possibility when extended cellphone range would be well beyond the community boundaries. 911 is only available within the community boundaries or slightly beyond. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs indicated at the time, "The GNWT has highlighted increased cellular service along the major roads and highways as a priority to the CRTC," the Canadian Radio and Television Commission. The Finance Minister stated this past Friday, after enquiries from the MLA from Monfwi, "The department wanted to move this forward quickly to ensure the protection and safety across all roadways." Madam Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
RETIREMENT OF ROSE MARY GILL

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Rosemary Gill retired June 8, 2020, after spending her working life in education, management, and career development, mostly in northern Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, and finally the Northwest Territories. Rosemary taught elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education and has worked in management and career development for provincial and territorial as well as First Nations governments.

Rosemary was born in Wrigley to Elizabeth and Albert Horesay. Her father moved the family to Fort Simpson to work for John Goodall when she was a year old and spent her formative years in the Deh Cho. She attended Thomas Simpson Secondary School, Sir John Franklin High School, Aurora College, University of Alberta, as well as completing an after-degree program, Aboriginal governance, at the University of Victoria.

Rosemary and her husband, Lyall, decided to give back to their community, thus moved home in 2000 to work for Lidlii Kue First Nation as the executive director and general manager for Nogha Enterprises. After two years later, Lyall was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in 2004. Rosemary then left abruptly, eventually ending up in the Yukon, working for Ta'an Kwach'an Council as their executive director. She decided to retire in 2009, spent a wonderful summer with her grandchildren but, without a retirement plan, was at loose ends and was soon enticed to help out a

friend who was elected chief for his First Nation in northern B.C.

Rosemary returned home in 2011 and went to work for Education, Culture and Employment as a career development officer before moving to Aurora College as the program head for the Deh Cho region in 2011. It was in this capacity that she was seconded with full support of the GNWT to Dehcho First Nations as the senior advisor to the grand chief in 2019, a position she held until her retirement.

Rosemary stated, "My career success in a lifetime of interesting employment opportunities can be tied directly to the education I've taken advantage of." She firmly believes that education is the one factor that will mean success in life for our youth. We can no longer be complacent about the disparity between the graduation rates in the NWT compared to the rest of Canada. Creative solutions and best practices are needed to make a difference. We must place a higher value on education, as parents and members of our community, working as a team to ensure a positive experience for our students. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Our education system needs to expand capacity to accommodate not only preparing our youth for academic post-secondary education but to make investments to meet the demands of the trades and technology fields. A solid grounding in literacy, numeracy, and technology will serve one well, no matter the path one takes in life.

Rosemary plans to stay close to home during the pandemic, gardening, reading, and working on her house, but once it's safe to travel, she will see some of the places she's only read and is curious about. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
RETIREMENT OF LYDA FULLER

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, mentor, and collaborator, Lyda Fuller. Ms. Fuller is retiring at the end of this month, after a 35-year career with the YWCA, 23 of those years in Yellowknife. Ms. Fuller is originally from Baltimore, Maryland. After she finished her master's degree at Johns Hopkins University, she worked with vulnerable populations there. On a camping trip to Ontario with a friend, she met her future husband, Ron, and eventually married him and moved to the YWCA in St.

Thomas to work as director of community development. While there, she spearheaded program and community development initiatives that led to improved services for women in various Elgin County communities.

Madam Speaker, in 1991, Ms. Fuller and her husband moved to Regina, where she became the executive director of the YWCA there. She provided leadership to the agency through a difficult period, after large losses threatened its viability. During her six years there, she added significantly to the agency's assets and extended its community involvement.

Ms. Fuller and her husband arrived in Yellowknife in 1997, at a time of significant change for the YWCA. The agency was moving out of Northern United Place into Rockhill, with both a change of focus and expanded service options, including the Alison McAteer House family violence shelter and after-school program, which is the largest licensed childcare offering in the NWT and a transitional housing program for families.

Madam Speaker, these have been eventful years for Ms. Fuller and the YWCA, from the high of opening Lynn's Place, which offers second-stage housing to women who have experienced violence, to the low of seeing the Rockhill Apartments burn down two years ago. The agency has not only survived but thrived under Ms. Fuller's leadership, for which she was awarded an Order of the NWT last year. Hawa Dumbuya-Sesay is now taking over as executive director, and I wish her every success.

Most of all, Ms. Fuller has been a champion for women who have experienced intimate-partner violence. She has expanded and improved the range of supports for women throughout the territory and has collaborated on important research on this issue. Madam Speaker, I wish Ms. Fuller a long and happy retirement, with her keen interest in the night sky and fossils. I would like to thank her for her service to the North. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5 recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my CA, Tommy Lafferty. He is here with us, passing through from Lutselk'e. He is originally from Behchoko. I want to say thank you. Marsi.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 445-19(2): SELF-ISOLATION FOR MEDICAL TRAVEL

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, I was speaking about mental health in regard to the self-isolation plans for the travelling for the medical travel. Does the Minister acknowledge the added burden that the self-isolation requirements place on people who have repeated medical travel needs? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the question, Member for Nunakput. I recognize that this is a terrible time to be facing a serious illness where it's necessary to travel outside of your community and outside of the territory on a regular basis for treatment, and I certainly do empathize with the people who are doing that and recognize that, in fact, this travel is a burden. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Has the Minister considered making special arrangements with those who frequently travel for medical travel such as cancer, that small group of people, making it easier for them so that, when they're done their medical travel, they'll come back to the territory, do their test, once a test is available, for probably three days before they're allowed to go back home? Is that possible to happen with that group of people?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** It's my understanding that the Chief Public Health Officer looks at these cases on a case-by-case basis. There is no blanket exemption policy in place for people who have regular medical travel. Having said that, I recognize that this is a hardship, and I encourage the medical travellers to be in touch with ProtectNWT to see whether they can obtain an exemption for more than one trip so that they have some certainty going forward about where they're going to stay.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I think we could make that change this year, with the Assembly ourselves, with this Minister, to go forward and try to make it easier for our people who we represent, especially in the small communities. The burdens of having to fly all the way to Edmonton, you are looking at a week there, then another coming back, two weeks, so you're almost gone for a month for a one-day checkup. With the Chief Public Health Officer, the Minister is the boss of that department. That being said, can she make that change, that positive change, once it's available? Just say yes.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I am a bossy person, but I am not the boss of the CPHO. I can't tell her what to do. I can make a suggestion, and she can weigh it and decide whether she wants to go along with it. She is a very compassionate person, and I am sure that she has looked at requests like this before. If the Member has specific constituents in mind who need this service, I would encourage them to contact ProtectNWT and seek that exemption.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. What time does the Minister anticipate rapid testing be available to the territory on a go-forward basis? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** There is a testing unit called Panbio that will be in place in every health centre by the end of October. It will provide rapid testing in the sense that it can be used at point of care and generate a result right then and there. It is a very simple-to-use machine; it is not only available to highly trained medical professionals. The thing is that, if somebody is not symptomatic, these machines are not necessarily the things that they need most. There is sort of a sequence of events. There can be a screening test: do you have COVID now? However, there need to be follow-up tests through the isolation period, which in any case is going to be 14 days. There is no change to that. The short answer is: rapid testing is coming your way. It says in my notes the end of October, so it should be there now. I will check to make sure that's the case. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 446-19(2):  
SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is important that the Premier accept some responsibility, good or bad, for how we are managing our small business support during these tough economic times. Therefore, I will direct my questions to the Premier. She can answer them, or she can direct them to the Minister who she thinks can best provide the answer. We have a long list of projects that need to be undertaken, so the first question I will ask the Premier is: how is this government ensuring that all of our small businesses are receiving work that will help them stay afloat during these tough and uncertain economic times? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. That would be best deferred to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the Member's statement earlier on actually identified that this, indeed, in large part, does involve the procurement of resources and procurement of projects through the Government of the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned in my own Minister's statement today, we acknowledge that there certainly has been a lot of discussion around ensuring that the procurement processes we have are indeed providing best benefits to the people of the Northwest Territories and the businesses of the Northwest Territories.

Again, and I know the Member acknowledged it, there is the review that is intended to happen, but we are also looking at some interim measures that we can employ that might more quickly make some changes, which may or may not ultimately find their way into what gets recommended, but that might provide some more immediate relief, or at least demonstrate more immediate action that, again, might make a difference for some of the businesses.

In addition to that, there certainly is an ongoing infrastructure plan that has already been approved under the current fiscal, and that is, of course, advancing notwithstanding COVID. There has been a lot of work that has happened on that. Then, of course, there are quite a number of programs, a variety of programs, that have been instituted to help northern businesses in terms of the rural relief fund, the program money that has come through, as well as a variety of other COVID-related relief tools. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. I have talked to small-business owners who are not receiving any work in their community or region. This is partly due to the number of bidders and outside influence from southern contractors. One area where we can assist them is in those M and Is or projects required by the NWT Housing Corporation and Infrastructure. If we find a business that has been left out, will the Premier commit to talking with the Minister of housing and the Minister of Infrastructure to find a solution to this inequity and make sure that our small businesses are working?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I think I'm going to speak perhaps with my Department of Finance hat on, as well as with ITI. Really, I suppose it's a whole-of-government response that is going to be

required in light of the question, and certainly, to the extent that Procurement Shared Services, which now falls under Finance, is responsible for managing and supporting those contracts. Indeed as far as Procurement Shared Services goes, for all of its client departments, it has not only the Department of Infrastructure, but all client departments. I'm sure they will do their very best to work with the client departments and ensure that work is moving forward, and moving forward in a way that is conscious of the needs of our business community.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Considering that we have programs such as BIP, the manufacturing policy, sole-sourcing, and negotiated contracts, can the Premier commit to talking with and directing the appropriate Minister to make sure we are exploiting those programs for the immediate benefit of our small businesses?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** In some ways, it's a simple yes in that that is the goal of the Department of Finance through Procurement Shared Services, to ensure that we are providing value not only, obviously, to the people of the Northwest Territories in the expenditure of public funds, but value to the business community. It really is an easy answer, in that sense, but how we do it is where it becomes more complicated. As I have indicated, we are fast-tracking efforts to have procurement review but also looking at some immediate measures that we can bring into place, hopefully before the next sitting, again, on an interim basis, to see what we can do to have some immediate change.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If we're saddled with COVID-19 restrictions for another year or more, can the Premier confirm what is the long-term strategy to assist our small northern businesses so they do not fail? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The longer-term strategy for small businesses, I'll refer, again, to the fact that we had fast-tracked the procurement review. To that extent, I want to be very clear that it's my intention that that review engages those small businesses directly, engages the chambers, engages Indigenous governments, Indigenous development corporations, really looks broadly at what it is that we need to do to support the business community in all of its facets here in the Northwest Territories. Again, ensuring that we have interim measures in place before January, but also then is engaging for COVID related specifically is entities such as the Business Advisory Council to see what sorts of relief measures and recovery

measures specific to COVID we can also bring into place.

I believe later this week I'll be meeting again with the Tourism Association, so going on an industry specific basis, as well, to ensure that not only broadly are we looking at what we can do for business community but what we can do for individual industries. On that note, also going back to my federal counterparts, whether it's through agriculture, whether it's for the department of fishery, whether it's for filming, all of those different tables are all looking at what can all of the governments across Canada do to support those small businesses. Small business is a huge issue here in the Northwest Territories; it's a huge issue for all of Canada. Small businesses support Canadian economy, so I'm not alone in the challenge that the Member is bringing to me. I ensure that we'll continue to do our best to fight that challenge going forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 447-19(2):  
EXTENDING CELLPHONE COVERAGE

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My question to the MACA Minister is related to the cellphone range extension beyond the communities. Has the Minister engaged the CRTC in any way on this important initiative? Mahsi.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. MACA has and will continue to support the ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders, the Department of Finance, who are actively involved with CRTC proceedings, and to look to extend broadband across the Northwest Territories, the federal funding program that may be aimed at supporting development and within communities who can choose to build the necessary infrastructure. Just to clarify that the cellphone coverage and looking at cellphone outside of the municipal boundary along the highways, I will be speaking with my colleague, the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. The Minister had indicated extending the cellphone range was a priority for the GNWT. Can the Minister share the action plan to address this very important safety initiative?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** As a government, we did identify our priorities, and looking at the cellphone coverage, I know, is a huge safety concern



throughout the territory. We do have constructed highways. We do have winter roads that would need this service. As of right now, I would have to follow up with my colleagues and looking at what is provided along the highways is the satellite phones, the OnStar, and the inReach, but I do understand that not all vehicles are equipped with these devices. I will have to get back to the Member.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi to the Minister for that one. 911 service is a lifeline to many who are in life-threatening accidents within communities but more importantly to accidents beyond community boundaries and beyond the current cellphone range within the vicinity of a community. Will the Minister commit to providing this Assembly and the residents of the Northwest Territories an action plan showing all milestones to the development of cellular service extensions?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I will have to consult with my colleagues. Looking at an action plan, I would like to provide the Member with the current status of how we are working with 911 throughout the Northwest Territories. I do understand we do have isolated communities, that I'm not too sure if they are able to access the program effectively because we do have broadband issues in the Northwest Territories, especially in the High Arctic. I will follow up with the Member.

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

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I don't believe the CRTC provides funding for these types of initiatives, but rather rulings regarding current regulations. Will the Minister commit to looking at all possible cellular extension options besides monopolies and find funding sources? Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** For the municipal communities we do provide a capital funding to each of the communities depending on what it is that they would like to put forward in regard to infrastructure projects. At this time, I would have to explore what available federal funding would be available to the smaller communities should they want to extend cellular service and construct towers within their municipal boundaries. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 448-19(2):  
INUUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. I was really pleased to hear that they are engaging a

consultant to look at the ITH and what is needed there. However, I'm aware that there are repairs that could be done sooner ahead of that report. Will the Minister work to commit to convince her Cabinet colleagues to find money for rehabilitation work on the ITH ahead of awaiting on the consultant's report? Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the Member is aware, there is no mechanism to avoid the need for analysis, the development of a business case, and cost estimates prior to seeking funding. We would not be applying due diligence that the residents of the Northwest Territories expect by ignoring the required process to fund a capital project. Once I have acquired documentation, yes, I will engage with my Cabinet colleagues. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** The Minister is speaking my language. I'm glad to hear things around due diligence and proper analysis. However, road building is rock science, not rocket science. I don't know how much more analysis we need to know that we should put some more gravel down on the ITH. If the Minister is not successful with her Cabinet colleagues, will the Minister find money from within the department to increase the budget for work on the ITH this year?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** I have limited ability to be able to move money within the department as there are financial admin act rules that must be followed.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Will the Minister commit to sitting down with me and going through the plans that she has for next year for the ITH so that I can be sure that everything that I think needs to be taken care of does?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Absolutely.

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

QUESTION 449-19(2):  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION  
OF PRIVACY ACT IMPLEMENTATION

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. My question is for the Minister of Justice. We have one of the best access to information and protection of privacy laws in the world, but it's still not implemented. Can the Minister provide an update on the status of implementation of the new legislation, including reduction of fees, identification of classes of records that do not require an ATIPP

application, and other reductions in costs for applicants? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The ATIPP Act, yes, we were hoping that implementation would be speedier, but there have been significant staffing challenges. We are hoping to bring the act into force in spring of 2021. Recently, we did bring Section 61.1 into force to allow for the access and privacy into force to allow for the access and privacy staff to act as ATIPP coordinators for other public bodies. The staff within the Department of Justice are currently examining the fees, and we hope to have the regulations in place to have those reductions that the Member was speaking of by December.

We have not yet had a chance to turn our minds to the classes of records that could be exempt. I sat with the Member in committee room A for endless hours discussing the ATIPP Act, and I think this is a valuable part of it. If we have classes of records that do not need to go through ATIPP, that frees up a lot of people's time. Saying that, I will note that the requests, the number of requests, have remained relatively steady, but it is the complexity of requests that has increased. That alone, this change alone, I do not think is going to alleviate all of the problems. However, I do see it being a significant change and look forward to making it. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that early Christmas present. A major change that was introduced in the amendments was extending the legislation to include records held by municipalities. In the spring of this year, the then Minister of Justice told me that a working group was formed with representatives of communities to ensure that they were going to be part of the process to develop those regulations. Can the Minister tell us what is going on now in terms of the application of ATIPP to community governments, and when will this actually happen?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The working group was formed. There was Justice, MACA, LGANT, and the NWTAC. They met in April, but like many other things, the next meeting was delayed. We hope to have that meeting prior to Christmas. That is when the working group will be looking at what resources are required, what is a realistic timeline to make this happen. Then, we can have a plan going forward. I don't want to put this onto the municipalities when they are not ready. It would be a disaster. It wouldn't be good for anyone.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yes. As a former city councillor here, we do not want to implement this on top of municipalities without ensuring that they actually

have adequate resources. One of the other major elements of this review of ATIPP was looking at ways to improve training and development of resource materials for all the different departments. Can the Minister provide a timeline for when this training is going to be completed and new support materials developed?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The department is working on the materials. I do not have a timeline for training, but the departments that need training are receiving training upon request. Just recently, departmental staff trained with the Department of Infrastructure on how to process these requests. It's an ongoing process.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. Yes. One of the hallmarks of developing this new legislation was the strong consultation and input with stakeholders and even Members on this side of the House. It was, I think, a good way of bringing forward legislation, and the Minister even spoke about that himself. Can the Minister, though, tell me when we can expect to see draft regulations to finally realize the potential of this legislation, and will he commit to share those regulations with standing committee for their review and comment? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** As I stated, we expect spring 2021 for the act to be brought in. We will need the regulations by then. As the Member knows, the Department of Justice is creating a policy for the republication of regulations, and these are the exact types of regulations that I imagine would be shared and open for input. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 450-19(2):  
ILLICIT DRUG USE

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. Just going back to my Member's statement on illicit drugs, I wanted to specifically target those hard drugs, such as crack cocaine, cocaine, and fentanyl. I actually looked up some weight measurements for what a pinch of salt is. When you pick a pinch of salt and you are cooking with it, there are about 60 milligrams there. That is how heavy that is. To put things in perspective, I looked up the lethal dose for fentanyl, and that is 2 to 3 milligrams. That is not very much. These are the kinds of drugs that are killing our people. There is an opioid crisis going on in western Canada now, and we need to really start addressing this issue. Going back to my questions, my first question to the

Minister of Justice, Madam Speaker, is: can the Minister share with us if his department is aware of any increase in the amount of drug-related crimes in the NWT since COVID-19 began compared to pre-COVID times? Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The RCMP monitor the calls they get and what type of calls they get. Unfortunately, I do not have the data right now to compare the pandemic times to the pre-pandemic time, but when I have that data, I am as interested as the Member to see what it says. Anecdotally, we have all heard that there has been an increase in illicit drug use across Canada. I think, last time I checked, there was just over \$100 million in surpayments that made its way into the territory. Just that amount of money, I would assume that there would be an uptick in all sorts of different sales, including illicit drugs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**MR. NORN:** In my notes here, I have "Madam Speaker" underlined quite clearly so I don't make that mistake. Thank you to the Minister for that response. Like I said, we have got to get ahead of this. I agree with surpayments. I think his department, as well, needs to look at ways to make sure that the money gets to where it's needed because there are a lot of these payments that are meant for food, rent, and make sure we get those out to those areas and not get out to the bootleggers and out to these other drug dealers. That is what we want to see. My second question, Madam Speaker, is: can the Minister tell us what sort of antidrug initiatives are currently in place by the Department of Justice within the NWT?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The antidrug initiatives are across government. It's not just the Department of Justice, of course. There are things with the department of education, things that are taught in school. Health has proactive antidrug campaigns. In terms of the Department of Justice, we're part of the opioid task force along with the RCMP. We work closely to try to avoid, and we have been lucky so far, the type of opioid crisis that we have seen in the South. We are also partners in the GNWT's alcohol strategy. We have seen a lot of drug seizures over the last number of months. Every time you turn on the news, it seems like there is a significant drug seizure.

I just want to point out that we see those, and yet, they still keep coming. It's an enormous market. If we do not stop people from buying, they are just going to keep coming, no matter how many seizures you have. It's a demand issue. The RCMP are also working to work more within the community, so training and having better

collaboration with communities. If they can become part of the community, you get that inside intelligence, and you are not just the RCMP officer; you are part of the community. There is also, of course, the gun and gangs strategy that is being funded by the federal government, and that is an ongoing program that, unfortunately, is relevant now, with organized crime in the territory.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you again for that response. It's good to hear there are some initiatives in place. There are so many of our people with addictions who are susceptible, and we still have to keep fighting for them. My other question is: can the Minister explain whether or not there have been any changes regarding antidrug procedures, protocols, or initiatives within the NWT since the COVID-19 pandemic has begun?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Changes, not really changes over the past six months. However, as I mentioned, the gun and gangs strategy is under development, and I think that lessons learned during the pandemic will inform that.

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

QUESTION 451-19(2):  
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND COVID-19

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If we are to restore momentum in our efforts to bring about gender equality in Canada, social, economic, and recovery efforts must take a feminist approach and, more so in the North, an Indigenous feminist approach. How does the Premier intend to ensure that economic and social recovery takes an Indigenous feminist approach in the Northwest Territories, and what will that look like in terms of changes on the ground? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. When I hear that economic recovery has to take a feminist approach and it has to take an Indigenous feminist approach, as well, basically, that is saying to me that one size doesn't fit all. There is lots of research that says that once size doesn't fit all when we talk about many things in life. What does that look like? I think that the Department of Finance was one of the first ones to come out of the gate and say that they were starting to do a gender-based analysis of all of their work, and I think that that should go across all departments. Like I said, one size does not fit all, and we do need to look, whenever we do our programs, at how that impacts on the most marginalized of our societies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Recognizing COVID's negative impacts on mental health and family dynamics, has this government put any special measures in place to assist women who are experiencing family violence during the middle of the pandemic?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I would like to defer that to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is an item where there are a number of different things happening that are specific to women in the North and the response under COVID. There certainly has been funding that has been under specific pots of the relief funding that we received from the federal government that is required to go toward supporting vulnerable populations. That would be particularly people fleeing relationships of violence, certainly, the majority of which do tend to be women. There has also been funding that has been directed toward supporting women who would be more vulnerable, for example, by the provision of cell phones for women who would be in relationships that put them at particular risk, in a context where they would have less access to outside sources during the course of the pandemic in a lockdown. Staff who are involved with status of women are continuing to engage because we are actively doing the work around preparing for the national inquiry in our action plan. That has also been continuing to happen throughout the course of the pandemic, and that gives a further opportunity to speak to women in the context of the pandemic, as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** We have long heard of the efforts of the NWT to introduce third-party reporting of sexual assaults. What is the status of this work within the Northwest Territories, and what changes can we expect to see this fiscal year?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I would like to defer that to the Minister of Justice.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Sexual assault is underreported in the territory, and I'm sure really around the world. Many survivors don't feel that the justice system will help them, or there could be other reasons why they don't want to come forward to the police. As such, there are some jurisdictions that have a third-party reporting system whereby the victim can go to that third party and they will let the police know anonymously what happened. That person can then access the

support services until such time as they are ready to report this. The GNWT has been looking into this. There were some meetings in 2019 and as recently as this August, and we are finalizing what that third-party reporting could look like. We have been in talks with the organization. I don't have a timeline on when we're going to see something roll out, but we are quite far along. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the then Minister of Justice informed this House that the Aurora Research Institute was contacted to identify best practices to prevent and reduce family violence. Domestic violence deaths almost never occur without warning. In most cases, there have been repeated instances of violence and indicators of risk, as well as opportunities for agencies and individuals to intervene before an incident that ultimately results in death. What can the people of the Northwest Territories expect to see as a result of the work done by the Aurora Institute? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The GNWT Interdepartmental Working Group on Family Violence commissioned the Aurora Research Institute to provide an evidence-based report for the GNWT to use as a guide to shape the actions and the investment of the GNWT in responding to the crisis of family violence. The results of this report show that we need an integrated, community-based approach to appropriately support families and prevent violence. They identified five main themes: education interventions; cultural integration; the justice response; the clinical response; and system transformation. This will require a change to our system, and we started this change by creating a territorial director of family violence to coordinate this work. I look forward to working with our partners in responding to this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 452-19(2):  
2030 ENERGY STRATEGY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our 2030 Energy Strategy is one of the key documents in making sure that our government is a leader in climate change. Specifically, one of my favourite sections is Section 4 of that strategy, which commits us to increasing our share of renewable energy used for community heat to 40 percent by 2030, essentially getting more and more of our

homes and communities off diesel. Can I have an update on this section, Madam Speaker, from the Minister of Infrastructure?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, we're on track with the actions. In fact, I would say that we're doing very well. Of the 13 short-term actions in the strategy, we have successfully implemented 11, which is about 85 percent, and we still have a year left of our three-year plan. Currently, in the Northwest Territories, about 25 percent of heating is through renewable sources, such as firewood, wood pellets, and electric heat. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am glad to hear we're at 25 percent. That's pretty good, and we're on track to getting to 40 percent. I do note that the short-term goals the Minister refers to are to be completed by 2021, so that gives us one more year. Specifically, one of my favourite sections which I've brought up is the support the residual heat and biomass district heating section. Can I get an update on how that short-term goal is working and whether it will be completed by 2021?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** We have the enhanced energy alliance programs to support biomass heating. Notably, the introduction of the community wood stove program almost doubled funding to the Arctic Energy Alliance's Alternative Energy Technologies Program to support things like biomass heating. We also introduced \$8 million in application-based grant programs until 2024 to support larger-scale private and commercial biomass adoption through the Greenhouse Gas Grant Program for buildings and industry. Related to this, we also introduced smaller and community-scaled biomass heating through the Greenhouse Gas Grant fund for governments, which has over \$7 million available until 2024. We continue to support improving the biomass chain supply through the GNWT's adoption of wood pellet heating through buying biomass heat from Indigenous organizations; for example, the Nihtat Energy Limited, which is located in Inuvik. As well, we continue to see great progress in installing biomass heating in government buildings under the GNWT Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, notably with the recent 2.5 megawatts of biomass heating installed at the new Stanton Hospital.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am glad to hear all of those initiatives. I believe the money we invest through the Arctic Energy Alliance is some of the best dollars we have out there in regard to our response to climate change. I am also glad to hear that we're on track for some of the short-term goals in this section. However, the long-term goals set out in this

section are really how we're going to get and meet this target by 2030. Can I have an update of how those long-term goals are and a commitment that we are on track to meet this target?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The 2030 Energy Strategy will be reviewed periodically so we can assess what works and what doesn't. When we do the review, this will assess our progress and reassess targets if we need to. The GNWT will look to address longer-term goals as it renews its 2019-2022 energy action plan in 2023-2024. Of course, we'll be engaging with public members and committee in developing the next new energy action plan.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** I have no further questions, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

#### QUESTION 453-19(2):

#### TEMPORARY VARIATION OF STATUTORY TIME PERIODS

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. I have some questions for the Minister of Justice. Back in June, we made some extraordinary efforts to pass something called a temporary, variation of temporary time periods COVID-19 Pandemic Measures Act. What this piece of legislation does is: it allows Cabinet, by order, to extend or adjust a date, deadline, or other time period prescribed in any act that our government has in place. I'd like to confirm with the Minister of Justice whether we've actually ever used this legislation. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Each department is responsible for following the laws of the territory, and I haven't been keeping track of which departments have used this. It's not something that centrally comes to me. I can check to see. I can say from my own departments, neither Justice nor ECE has used this, although I know that there are plans at ECE to use this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. One of the sections, 2(2), says that an order will only come into force seven days after Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight actually gets a copy of that. I've never seen a copy of an order issued under this legislation, so I don't think it's ever been used. I'm just wondering if the Minister knows, we went to great lengths to pass

this legislation quickly, why it hasn't been used? Can the Minister explain why this legislation is yet to be used?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I can't speak for every department. I know that when this legislation was being contemplated, it was clear there were some deadlines that departments weren't going to meet, and I just referenced ECE as being one of them. We didn't want to be in violation of other statutes. That's the reason this was put forward. Like I said, it expires, I believe in December, so there's still some time. I know we'll get at least some use of it, but I can't speak for other departments as to why this was not used. Perhaps, they found other workarounds. There was a lot of attention put to other things during the time when this bill was put forward, and this was sort of a backstop. I think it's a good thing that we haven't had to use it. We found other ways to comply with our legislation without reverting to this, and I think it shows the departments were being proactive and staying on top of the things they actually needed to stay on top of and the worst-case scenario didn't happen in a lot of situations.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Why I'm raising this is: back on April 11<sup>th</sup>, just at the beginning of the pandemic, I contacted the then Minister of Justice by email suggesting that our government look at the possibility of an omnibus bill to make sure that we have the right kinds of things in place to properly deal with the pandemic. We've seen a few of these things roll out over the last few months now, but can the Minister of Justice tell us whether there's further changes, legislative changes, that are being contemplated to better allow us to respond to the pandemic?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** As the committee is aware, we are taking a lessons-learned approach, so we're looking at what have we learned over this last little while and moving forward. What do we need to do with the legislation? In some instances, it was clear. For example, with employment standards, there were some changes that were required in order to allow people to access federal benefits. Those ones are quite easy, but I don't have a comprehensive list of what changes departments have identified to date. That work is being undertaken right now, and at some point in the future, we will have that sort of lessons-learned that we can make the Members aware of.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that response. If this comprehensive review has been going on for months, can the Minister commit to share some of that information with this side of the House so we

have a better understanding of what legislative changes the Cabinet is looking at making to better allow us to respond to the pandemic? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wouldn't characterize what's been happening as a comprehensive review. That indicates that there are working groups and there's a lot going on. We are working through this pandemic, which is still ongoing. We haven't gone through an entire season yet. We haven't gone through an entire fiscal year. We haven't gone through an entire budgeting cycle, so there's still a lot to be learned. As we learn things, we're making note of them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 454-19(2):  
SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEED) POLICY

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Last week, I and a colleague questioned the Minister of ITI in regards to SEED funding. As I was thinking about different constituents in my riding who had spoken about their experience with SEED funding and the Minister's responses to questions about SEED funding, I was looking to see where the discrepancies were from what I was understanding. Where I think they are is that there's no market disruption clause, or it's been suspended rather, within the COVID stream of SEED funding. In the entrepreneurial stream of SEED funding, there still exists the market disruption clause. I'm wondering if the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment would be willing to suspend the entrepreneurial support of SEED funding market disruption clause for the fiscal year of 2020-2021 so that businesses that currently exist within the Northwest Territories are able to also use that stream of funding in order to pivot or evolve their businesses in the wake of a pandemic? Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWAZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I had noted last week, we are committed to doing an internal review of the SEED policy, and included within that will be the market disruption clause. The larger communities versus the smaller communities in different regional centres have different views on whether or not market disruption is beneficial or necessary, with those opinions going very strongly one way or another. In the middle of a pandemic is not an opportunity to wholesale change that, but that is why there is the COVID-related stream that doesn't have the market disruption clause in it so that for

those businesses that want to make use of those funds, to make those pivots that are in a COVID-related sense, that they do have that opportunity to do so. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I definitely have had this conversation with constituents of mine, and I understand where the polarization lies. That's why I'm asking for the Minister to consider existing businesses right now in the wake of a pandemic. It's not an opportunity for multiple other businesses right now in the middle of a pandemic to all of a sudden turn around and access this funding. It's targeted towards existing businesses who are already established within our communities who are having, basically, cash-flow issues in the middle of a pandemic to turn around and pivot their businesses. My concern with waiting for a review is that these businesses will already potentially be going out of business by the time the government is able to do their review and come out with recommendations. I'm wondering what timeline the Minister is working towards on these changes.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWAZONEK:** I am certainly not one to shy away from the fact that we need to react quickly to what's happening with COVID-19 and react quickly to what's happening in the business community. However, at the same time, I am also determined that we have to maintain our due diligence before making a policy change that is to a program that has been long-standing, so I am not going to take a position here on the floor today that we will significantly alter that program going forward.

The Member has certainly given me an interesting way of approaching business relief. There are a lot of programs that are out right now, perhaps even some that might solve the problems on an individual basis for different businesses. At the moment, Madam Speaker, the best that I can suggest is that the individual businesses, if they are not already contacting ITI to ensure that they are accessing every available source of funding, that they certainly continue to do that through the MLA. She has mentioned several examples. In turn, what I will do is go back and look to see whether or not, relying on due diligence, we can find another opportunity within the SEED policy to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support businesses.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** The SEED program also had a micro-business funding stream that is open to and is an exciting opportunity for artisans and crafters. What this program does is it provides people with up to \$5,000 in order to go out and purchase supplies that they might need in order to complete some projects. Especially with Christmas coming up, this might be of interest to our local artisans. However, some people do not have the equity

available to fulfill the equity requirement of 30 percent that is involved for people within the Yellowknife region, for example. Is ITI willing to set up a payment fund for artisans and crafters who may not be able to float the 30 percent equity required so that they are able to increase their production coming up to Christmastime or afterwards and be able to work together with the GNWT to access that funding?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWAZONEK:** Again, I am very confident the department is listening carefully to the ideas that are coming through on the floor. However, as far as coming up with new streams of funding, I can also say quite confidently that the Minister of Finance does not want me to make commitments around funding, short of using my due diligence to do that. I will go back. We will put some due diligence to it, see if there are some other options here. There certainly are funding options right now through COVID, and I realize it's not a perfect system. Nothing is. Everyone is doing the best they can with what they have in the context of COVID relief. The business development, the BDIC certainly has changed their loan programs to try to increase access to equity, make it easier to access that equity, which may well be the best and most expeditious way for businesses to access equity.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a very exciting time because, when we are faced with stuff like a pandemic, people start to get very creative out there. While it is nice for us to be the leader of the pack, sometimes we are not, and we get to look to what other provinces and territories are doing in order to respond to the pandemic. Right now, within the Government of Saskatchewan, they have given a million dollars to their Chamber of Commerce to support a "shop local" campaign. Then, if we look all the way over to the Atlantic provinces, PEI has done another "shop local" campaign where they have taken gift cards; they have sold them at \$40 to PEI residents, but they are actually worth \$50. That effort is supported by the Government of PEI. I am wondering if the Government of the Northwest Territories is looking at doing a similar initiative for a "shop local" campaign. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWAZONEK:** There is actually a Buy North campaign already that the department of ITI has been sponsoring. It's free for all businesses to participate in the program. It's being advertised around the Northwest Territories, though, given the question, it seems that perhaps the knowledge about the program needs to be looked at again. As for what might be done to increase or enhance the participation in the

program for businesses and what we can do, I will certainly go and see if there are some best practices from my colleagues in other parts of the country, that we can employ here in advance of the Christmas season. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 455-19(2):  
NORTHERN TRADES

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was glad to see the release of the Aurora College transformation to a polytech that had a strong focus on trades and technology. That document said many of the right things but did not go as far as saying some of the specifics I would like to see. Specifically, I would like to see us build an NWT trades curriculum built and designed for the North. My question is for the Minister responsible for Aurora College. Can we develop a northern-oriented trades curriculum? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The trades curriculum is based on nationally approved trades standards, so there is not a lot of wiggle room in there to develop our own if we want our journeypersons to be certified across Canada. We do have one trades program that is not national, that is unique to the territory. That is the housing maintainer program. That is one that is currently under review and being updated in a way the Member is referencing. I also want to point out that, with the transformation to a polytechnic university, there are opportunities for research and trades-related research, things like building methods for the North, the type of innovative things that the Member is talking about that would attract people from the rest of Canada, and hopefully around the world, to the polytechnic. That type of work, it is possible. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I look forward to that work. I find it's truly exciting. One of the other issues that we have seen is: it has been very difficult for apprentices to find journeypersons and journeypersons to find apprentices, such that, if you are in a community and you want to be an apprentice, you often have to leave. Four years away from home can be a long time. If you are a journeyperson in that community, it can be hard to find an apprentice. However, I think some of the steps we have taken with putting Aurora College online really can be used in the future to pair journeypersons and apprentices up together, even if they do not happen to be in the same location all the time. Is the Minister willing to re-examine some

of our apprenticeship things, processes, to increase that accessibility?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Absolutely, I am willing to re-examine that. I have heard from a lot of journeypersons and a lot of business owners over the years, and it is difficult to find journeypersons and apprentices. When you have an apprentice, it's hard to find someone to apprentice them. We do have the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy, and part of that strategy is focused on improving access. I am not sure about some sort of distance model that may be done virtually. I don't know if that would fly because we do have to have a certain level of supervision, but there are other innovative ways of doing this. It could include a journeyperson who maybe is not tied to a specific business, maybe a roaming sort of journeyperson. That is just one idea. I am looking forward to being able to implement some of those changes during the life of this Assembly because we do need to react to the situation here in the Northwest Territories.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yes. The idea of a roaming journeyperson is really an idea that excites me, and I recognize that some of the theory can be moved online. At the end of the day, there needs to be a practical, hands-on, in-person portion to getting any apprenticeship. Another area I would like to see the Minister focus on is: we employ a number of tradespeople in the NWT. I know they often try to get apprentice people, but I really think some more effort can be done in this area. Is the Minister of ECE willing to work with his colleagues in infrastructure, Housing Corporation, other departments that have journeypersons and mandate that they have to take on apprentices and work with them to make sure we are fulfilling that goal?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I am willing to work with them. There is already a lot of work going on between the Housing Corporation and ECE to try to figure out how can we leverage the journeypersons who work at the Housing Corporation with the LHOs across the territory. That type of work is ongoing. I'm not sure about mandating. I think that we could probably get there by cooperating. We can use a carrot instead of a stick in this situation.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. One of the other ways that we presently attract apprentices and encourage our journeypersons to take on apprentices is there is a subsidy for the first couple of years of any apprenticeship. That allows or encourages a tradesperson to take on an apprentice. However, I have heard from a number of constituents that, as that subsidy expires and it's



not for their entire term, they struggle to keep on those apprentices. Then sometimes, people do not finish their ticket. Is the Minister willing to look into increasing the amount and length that we subsidize apprentices for? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Absolutely. I will look into that. The last time that subsidy program was updated was 2018, and that was done in consultation with the ATOC Board. We heard people around the territory, and we tried to think about how we can take this pot of money that we have, that would only cover about a quarter of what we would need it to if we wanted to fund everyone. The decision was made to spread it out over the early years. That being said, I am aware that there is a desire to change that and possibly expand it, so I am more than happy to look into that and hopefully expand this program in the future. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Members, the time for oral questions has concluded. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 217-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 2, 2020-2021

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021." Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 21-19(2):  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON RECONCILIATION AND INDIGENOUS  
AFFAIRS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move the motion for the establishment of a special committee on reconciliation and Indigenous affairs.

WHEREAS the Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly agreed upon a priority to settle and implement treaty, land, resources, and self-government agreements;

AND WHEREAS the Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly also agreed upon a priority to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

AND WHEREAS the Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly believe that a special committee could seek and encourage discussions and recommendations on the opportunities and challenges in meeting these priorities;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, pursuant to Rule 92(1), the Legislative Assembly hereby establish a Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs;

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be named to the special committee:

- Ms. Lesa Semmler, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes;
- Mr. Steve Norn, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh;
- Mr. Rylund Johnson, the Member for Yellowknife North;
- The honourable R. J. Simpson, the Member for Hay River North; and
- The honourable Caroline Wawzonek, the Member for Yellowknife south;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is an ex-officio non-voting Member of the committee:

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs be established by the terms of reference identified as Tabled Document 211-19(2);

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs table its final report no later than the first day of the final sitting of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to move this motion. Throughout Assemblies, special committees are established, and they really do show the priorities of that group. I believe this committee has lots of work to do in this area, and I believe a committee comprised both of

Regular Members and Cabinet can truly move this forward as a priority of this House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 17:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CORRECTIONS ACT

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 17 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 18:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 18 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 19:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik

Boot Lake, that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 19 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 16:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Hay River North, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time. The bill reduces the small business tax rate from 4 percent to 2 percent effective January 1, 2020. It also makes retroactive amendments to harmonize the Northwest Territories tax regime with the federal system. Those amendments do two things: ensure that split income received by a senior is factored into the determination of their Territorial Age Credit; and allow more pension credit for veterans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. I wish to speak to this bill. The main purpose, as I can see, is to reduce the small business tax rate from 4 percent to 2 percent, and I'm sure the Minister of Finance will explain at some point that this is to bring our small business tax rates in line with some of the other jurisdictions in Canada. I am not opposed in principle to reducing taxes, but I think we need to look at the issue of tax fairness. This will result in our government losing some revenue, and I'd like to know how much. I think the public deserves to know that, as well.

I am mindful that the Minister of Finance gave a fiscal update about a week-and-a-half ago that, really, we're not in good shape, Madam Speaker, in terms of our finances, and this bill is not going to help that in any way. I would have much preferred an approach that would have been revenue-neutral so, if we're going to reduce taxes, then we have to find a way to replace that lost revenue.

I am on record supporting tax fairness rather than tax reductions, and I have suggested in the past many times that we need to look at ways to increase our revenues, and I think one of the ways

that we need to look at increasing our revenues is by adding another tax bracket onto our personal income tax rates. We only have four; we're one of the few jurisdictions left in Canada that only has four income tax brackets. Alberta went to five in 2016. British Columbia went to five in 2014. New Brunswick went to six in 2015. Newfoundland and Labrador went to five in 2015. Nova Scotia went to five in 2010. Ontario went to five in 2014. Yukon went to five in 2015. Even the federal government went to five in 2016.

I'm all about tax fairness, Madam Speaker, and I think we need to find a way to replace this revenue. There is an opportunity to do so by looking at increasing our personal income tax brackets by adding one. I think it's only fair that we all find ways to contribute, especially during the pandemic. One way to do that is to add another high-income tax bracket to replace the lost revenue from this reduction in small business tax. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To the principle of the bill. Member for Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to second this bill. There was a time in this Assembly when the idea of reducing taxes on small business couldn't even be discussed. Not this current Assembly, but the previous one I was in. We heard today that small businesses have been hit hard by the pandemic, disproportionately perhaps. This is a way that we can help support them. Revenues are important. Revenues in the GNWT, of course, are important. However, I've had small businesses say to me that, "If I could have a bit of a tax break, I would be able to hire that apprentice." We need to think beyond just the GNWT and what our needs are. We need to think about the people and the businesses of the territory. I look forward to the debates on this going forward. Again, I'm happy to be part of this, and I think it's a great move for the territory. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. To the principle of the bill. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just would like to rise in support of this bill. I am sure my colleague, Mr. Simpson, is happy to see that this bill will pass first reading today and we will, ultimately, I believe, lower the small business tax rate. I really think the backbone of our NWT economy in recovery must be our small business. As we enter into a world and compete in a world where capital increasingly gets held in the hands of large businesses, I think we as government have to do everything we can to support our small businesses. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 16 has had second reading and is referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly for review. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020; 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; 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; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-investment Fund; 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 the Long-term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2020, with Member for Hay River South in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the will of the committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Committee wishes to consider the following documents: 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; 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; and then Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Committee, we agreed to consider Committee Report 4-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Our report was read into the record, so I do not have any substantive comments to add. I would like to thank the committee for their work on this report. Individual members may have comments on this report and its recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 4-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report. Seeing no comments. Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 47-19(2):  
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 – REMOVING  
BARRIERS TO ALIGNMENT BETWEEN  
BUILDING CODES AND STANDARDS AND THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee 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. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. The motion is in order. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to see you in that seat today. I'd just like to speak in support of this motion. The GNWT Department of Infrastructure on our good building practices has done a lot of great work in including disability and accessibility standards. However, that work we're very much leaders on has not made it into the private sector. Presently, there is a gap in this area. There is the national building code. Builders go out, they build something, and they think it's compliant with human rights law, and it's not. That can cause

a lot of frustration for people who are building buildings to find out they followed a code, and it can actually end them up in human rights court.

The GNWT has done this work in the Department of Infrastructure, but we have not really translated it into the private sector. Some of that work is beginning. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has the fire prevention sections of the building code but not the rest of it. I really do believe we need a northern building code and a building standards act, and part of that work needs to make sure that contractors know that following the national building code doesn't always mean your building is accessible. There is work being done at the national level; there is work being done by GNWT. We have to put it all together and make sure that contractors know where those line up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 48-19(2):  
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 – ENHANCED  
DIGITAL ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Chair, I move this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories enhance digital access and inclusion for people living with disabilities in the Northwest Territories 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. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 49-19(2):  
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 –  
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO  
RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of 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?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of 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. Committee, we have agreed to consider 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. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Chair, our report was read into the record, so I do not have any substantive comments to add. I would like to thank the committee for their work on the report. Individual Members may have comments on the report and its recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. I will now open the floor to general comments on 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. Seeing no comments, Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 50-19(2):  
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 – BRINGING INTO  
FORCE AMENDED SECTIONS OF ACCESS TO  
INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY  
ACT,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide an update on the work being done to bring into force the amended sections of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, including a schedule indicating when the changes will take effect. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 51-19(2):  
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 – CENTRALIZING  
THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF  
THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND  
PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories investigate and explore options for centralizing the management and administration of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act on behalf

of the Government of the Northwest Territories departments; and further, the standing committee recommends that government share the results of this review for committee input. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to bring some context to these motions as, both, our Information and Privacy Commissioner put a lot of work into these. I would like to thank her for many years of service. Our new Information and Privacy Commissioner has a big task, as well as the Department of Justice, in bringing this act online. I really do believe we have one of the best ATIPP acts in the country. However, it is not presently in force, and there is a lot of work to do. What this motion speaks to specifically is, typically, ATIPP coordinators have been located individually in all departments. I, myself, have done some of that ATIPP work, and it often gets put on the side of your desk. It really is work that requires expertise and specialization. It's fundamental to a government to make sure we respond to information requests. It's fundamental we make sure that we are an open and transparent government. Therefore, this recommendation is to centralize all of those positions into one shop within the government, properly fund them, and make sure they can implement our information and privacy legislation and truly have that expertise so that we can be a leader in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to support this motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I, too, support this motion. I had cause to use the access to information process in the last Assembly as an MLA because Ministers would not share documents sometimes, believe it or not. There was some interesting material that was sometimes exempted or redacted and differences in the way that different departments approached this. I think having people consistently work together from different departments to offer better consistency and responses to applicants is a good idea, and I support this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 52-19(2):  
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 – INCLUSION OF  
"ACCESS BY DESIGN" PRINCIPLES,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories update committee on work to develop a standard approach to including "access by design" principles into the design of communications, programs, policies, and legislation; and further, the committee requests details on how the Government of the Northwest Territories will formalize and share this standard approach with the Government of the Northwest Territories staff. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we are recommending here is the wording "access by design" because that is the wording the GNWT uses. This is really about open and transparent government. It's about proactive disclosure. I would like to thank my colleague from Frame Lake. He asked a number of questions of the Minister of Justice today about proactive disclosure. This recommendation has long come from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, largely with a lens that this ultimately saves us time and resources, saves our media headache; it saves people in departments hassles. I don't know how often I send emails to Ministers simply to find information, to find policies, to find things that should already be proactively disclosed. There is an abundance of emails and information requests flying around government for information that should be publicly available.

The federal government has done a lot of great work on their document management system. Ours is known as DIIMS. Many sections of that are simply open to the public already. I think there is no reason we can't put our working documents, we can't put our policies, we can't put our templates out there. Additionally, this goes to really how we publish information. Quite often, as this government, we release information, and there is not the underlying data set. I all the time request Excel spreadsheets, and it's as if it's an impossible ask to get what actually went into a graphic. We

have a long way to go to be an open and transparent government. This motion is really speaking to that. Once again, I encourage this Cabinet to be a leader in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 53-19(2):  
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 – ENDING USE OF  
FAX MACHINES IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES SECTOR,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee 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. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Martselos. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am embarrassed that I have to sit here and support a motion to end fax machines in the use of the health and social services sector in 2020. I do not even know how to use a fax machine, Mr. Chair. I recognize that there are some complications here. One is getting Alberta's records and our records to be able to share digitally. We need to do that. I recognize one of the other issues is that sometimes the Internet is not all that reliable in our communities, so we rely on fax machines. I guess that ties to a larger problem, of making sure that all of our communities have access to high-speed Internet such that, when we actually update our medical records system, everyone can have access to it. However, I have had constituents on medical travel print out giant folders and have to walk in with CDs or have to request faxes to Alberta hospitals that get lost. The way right now we are sharing health records both within the territory and out-of-territory needs a serious look, and I think this use of

fax machines continually is just a representation of a lack of making process on this issue and really making sure we have bought and paid for the proper software such that medical records can be safely shared both within the territory and out-of-territory. I am happy to see this motion, but perhaps in the life of this government, we can stop using fax machines to send health records. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

Mrs. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-19(2):  
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 – GOVERNMENT  
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mrs. Martselos. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of 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?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of 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. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020. I will ask the Minister of Justice to introduce the bill. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here today to present Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020. The purpose of Bill 15 is to amend various statutes of the Northwest Territories for which minor changes are proposed or errors or inconsistencies have been identified. Each amendment included in the bill had to meet the following criteria:

- a) it must not be controversial;
- b) it must not involve the spending of public funds;
- c) it must not prejudicially affect rights;
- d) it must not create a new offence or subject a new class of persons to an existing offence.

Departments responsible for the various statutes being amended have reviewed and approved the changes. The amendments proposed in Bill 15 are minor, uncontroversial, or non-substantive and many consist of technical corrections to a statute. The amendments are of such a nature that the preparation and legislative consideration of individual bills to correct each statute would be time-consuming for the government and the Legislative Assembly.

I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have regarding the bill. I have a witness I would like to bring in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Would you like to bring in witnesses into the Chamber?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witness.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'd like to introduce Mr. Mike Reddy, the director of legislation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 15. Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Can we proceed to a clause by clause review of the bill?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Clauses 1 through 15 inclusive approved

Committee, to the bill as a whole, does the committee agree that Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020, is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020, is now ready for third reading. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Our thanks to your witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness from the Chamber. Mr. Norn, what is the will of committee?

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Norn. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is the report of the Committee of the Whole? Member for Hay River South.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering 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; 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; and Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020, and would like to report progress with eight motions carried, that Committee Report 4-19(2) and Committee Report 5-19(2) are concluded, and that Bill 15 is ready for third reading. Madam Speaker, I move that report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, November 3, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act
19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act
- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act
- Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

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

- Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund
- 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 2021-2022
- Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021

#### 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

#### 22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020

#### 23. Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This House will stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 3, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

