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**HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 3, 2021**

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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

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

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

(Sahtu)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

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

**Hon. Julie Green**

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

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(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**

(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Steve Norn**

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

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

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 3, 2021****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):** Members, welcome back to the Legislative Assembly. It is a new year. I know many residents celebrated the end of 2020 as it was such a long and difficult year. However, while 2021 has brought us a vaccine and a light at the end of the COVID tunnel, we are not through this yet. I want to thank all those involved in the vaccine rollout. I also want to thank those residents who have taken the vaccine. Saying yes to the vaccine is saying yes to protecting our elders, families, and friends.

Members, our Legislative Assembly remains closed to members of the public. We sit in a modified Chamber to ensure appropriate physical distancing between us. However, we continue to broadcast and live stream our proceedings. This means people can still see the work we do each day.

In this session, we have expanded interpretation to include French, Tlicho, North Slavey, South Slavey, Chipewyan, and Inuvialuktun. We are using both in-person and remote interpreters. Members, please speak slowly and clearly to help the interpreters do their work.

As Members are aware, the Honourable Paul Delorey, a former Speaker of this Assembly, passed away on January 1, 2021. Paul leaves a legacy of service to this Assembly; to Hay River; to his favourite sport, curling; and to his family, his wife, four children, and his grandchildren. As Speaker, Paul started the tradition of the Mace tour. He would travel with the Mace into small and remote communities. This allowed residents to see the Mace up close and talk about our unique form of consensus government. I look forward to continuing the Mace tour when it is safe to do so.

I was honoured to travel to Hay River with the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms to attend Paul's service. In his honour, we brought the Mace. It was proudly displayed in front of Paul's remains in the Catholic Church where he worshipped faithfully. On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, current

and past, I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Davida, their children, grandchildren, and large and loving family.

Paul was a fair and objective Speaker. He worked hard to maintain civility and decorum in this House. He did this by setting an example with his own actions and behaviour. The best way for us to honour his memory is to do the same.

I know many others have lost loved ones since we were last together. This includes the recent passing of Martin Vaneltsi-Kaye in Fort McPherson. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the families and communities who have lost loved ones.

Members, I wish to advise you that I have received the following message from the Honourable Margaret Thom, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2021-2022;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022

during the Second Session of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 99-19(2):  
SESSIONAL STATEMENT - FEBRUARY 2021

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome everyone back to the Chamber for the resumption of the second session of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. We have a lot of work to do ahead of us over the next two months,

and I look forward to working in close collaboration and partnership with both sides of this House. We all have the best interests of the Northwest Territories and its people in mind and, as we make progress on the priorities of this Legislative Assembly, it will be for the benefit of current and future generations of NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, the last year has been one of the most challenging times the Northwest Territories and its residents have ever experienced. When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March last year, we turned our attention to what remains today as the most important priority of this government: protecting the health and well-being of our residents and communities. The rising number of cases across southern Canada and the rest of the world has forced millions back into lockdown situations to flatten the curve and protect the integrity of their healthcare systems. Watching this happen, it is hard not to feel fortunate that we have been able to keep the number of cases in the NWT low.

Over the last year, we have learned a lot about how to manage a public health crisis of this magnitude. We established pandemic services and initiated a health response as quickly as we could, and it paid off. As we began to better understand how to protect our residents from the threat of COVID-19, we moved our pandemic services under one roof. The COVID-19 secretariat has been able to improve our services and find ways to lower the costs for taxpayers. This has happened all while supporting the health orders in place and protecting the health and well-being of our territory.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' successful containment of the public health risk puts us in a position where we can begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. A big part of our success as a territory rests with the residents. We have continued to follow the advice of the Chief Public Health Officer and have been diligent in following the public health orders and recommendations. The pandemic has put us to the test like nothing we have ever faced in our lifetime. It has threatened our health, impacted our economic well-being, and disconnected us from the support networks we all rely on. We rose to the occasion and have all played a part in our collective success. On behalf of all Cabinet, I thank you.

Mr. Speaker, a vaccine is here. In the final days of 2020, a FedEx cargo plane landed at the Yellowknife Airport carrying the first doses of the Moderna vaccine. The Department of Health and Social Services, territorial health authorities, and all the Government of the Northwest Territories departments worked long hours to develop a vaccination strategy that would ensure we were able to vaccinate seniors, healthcare workers, and those living in communities with limited healthcare

infrastructure first. We have always said we would protect the most vulnerable, and we have delivered. Since February 1<sup>st</sup>, we have been able to vaccinate over 12,000 residents and have the highest number of doses administered by province or territory in Canada.

I am proud of the work that has been done by the public service to protect our territory. They have heeded the call and put the lives of residents and the communities they live in before their own. Just last month, we had our first community outbreak, a scenario that we all hoped would never happen. It was all hands on deck to protect Fort Liard and limit the possibility of a serious outbreak of COVID-19. Healthcare professionals went into the community to do contact tracing and rapid testing. We worked closely with local leadership to ensure that they could support their residents. We went door-to-door to provide information in English and Dene Zhatie. We worked with local leadership to ensure residents had access to food and essentials. Our emergency response effort ensured we were able to protect the community.

While we are making progress in our vaccination efforts, it is important to remember that we all must continue to abide by the public health orders and recommendations put forward by the Chief Public Health Officer. It has been evidence-based decision-making that has put us in the position we are in today to begin to see a Northwest Territories post-pandemic. We are all feeling the growing fatigue of the pandemic. This has been a long and difficult year, but it has been our resilience that has got us to where we are today.

As the second wave has swept across southern Canada and the world, leading to restrictive measures and lockdowns, we believe we are in a good position to weather the storm because of our pandemic response. Mr. Speaker, managing the public health crisis is essential. Managing it well puts us in a better position to start to shift our attention to social and economic recovery and how we preserve business, especially those sectors hit hardest, like tourism and hospitality.

A coordinated response to the pandemic includes economic stability, and we recognize the importance of both maintaining the financial viability of our businesses and protecting the health of residents. The health and well-being of all communities and residents is best served by maintaining a stable economic environment. Our government has acted to mitigate the economic impacts of this crisis on our economy by investing in NWT industry and businesses.

The pandemic caused a steep economic decline in the Northwest Territories just as it did in other jurisdictions throughout Canada and around the

world. The Northwest Territories is recovering from this economic downturn. The Government of the Northwest Territories and federal government recognized the economic hardship dealt by the pandemic and worked quickly to provide much needed supports for residents and businesses. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the federal government as we design our recovery strategy. Our economic response has been supported greatly by the federal government. We have received over \$120 million in funding to cover the cost of our pandemic response, which includes economic injections for the airline industry, tourism, mining, and small businesses. The relationship we have been able to build with Canada has played a significant part in supporting residents and businesses through this unprecedented time.

We recognize that many of these NWT public health measures have placed an economic and financial burden on our residents. Until the health crisis is brought under control though, a full recovery of the NWT economy will be slow. Mr. Speaker, recovery is key. We need to ensure that people have jobs and our businesses are thriving. We must keep housing, food security, children's needs, health, and education, top of mind to improve the lives of all NWT residents. We need to manage the immediate risk of the COVID-19 pandemic while we continue to advance our long-term priorities, particularly when it comes to growing our economy, and ensuring a healthy, vibrant, and educated territory for years to come.

We have responded to the pandemic in a variety of ways, including efforts to mitigate the economic impacts of this crisis on our economy and to invest in the economic well-being of the Northwest Territories industry and businesses. We knew that, for our economy to recover, we would need our mines and supporting industries to be operating, small businesses to be open, and our people to be working.

Tourism is a critical part of the economy, and we are committed to ensuring its recovery. We need the jobs that tourism creates, the entrepreneurial opportunities it generates, the infrastructure that it supports, and the revenue that all of this provides to our economy. Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has changed how we as a government will need to support tourism in the coming years, and we are committed to ensuring that this important part of our economy begins to flourish once again.

One of our government's guiding principles is to ensure that the expenditure of public funds maximizes economic benefits to Northerners and supports northern businesses. This is consistent with our longstanding commitment to support Northwest Territories businesses and grow a strong, diversified economy. 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 NWT residents working and advancing their careers and more businesses thriving and growing in our territory. Mr. Speaker, we have committed in our mandate to work with businesses in the Northwest Territories to strengthen Government of the Northwest Territories procurement policies and practices, and we are moving ahead with a review of these policies to strike a balance between supporting Indigenous and territorial businesses and the principles of public procurement.

As we plot our social and economic recovery, the business community, NGOs, all levels of government, and residents will all play an important role in helping to identify needed actions and investments. By applying the invaluable experience and insight into our decision making, I am confident that we can move forward and emerge from this crisis to revitalize, strengthen, and grow our economy and social fabric into the future. We will continue to focus on our economic and social recovery, how we preserve business, and ensure as much of this investment stays in the Northwest Territories as possible.

Mr. Speaker, infrastructure projects will play a significant role in our economic recovery. The Legislative Assembly sees this need, and that is why a \$451 million capital budget was approved for 2021-2022. Injecting money into the economy will provide business and employment opportunities for residents while delivering the crucial infrastructure the territory needs to provide important programs and services. This is one of the largest capital investments in the history of the territory and creating jobs and business opportunities will help us grow the economy and ensure a more prosperous future.

Mr. Speaker, the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has set an ambitious mandate, and because of the unexpected shift in priority to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have even less time to complete it. Advancing the mandate requires teamwork and collaborative partnerships to create the meaningful change that we are all seeking. Every Member of this Legislative Assembly plays an important role in our collective success. I have the full faith in Cabinet, Regular Members, along with our dedicated public service to meet our mandate commitments and work together for Northwest Territories residents.

Mr. Speaker, a fundamental part of our success as a government and the future prosperity of our territory depends on a productive and collaborative partnership with Indigenous, community, and

municipal governments. The decisions we make as a government must reflect our commitment to reconciliation and the affirmation and advancement of Indigenous rights and self-determination. We must continue to foster constructive and respectful government-to-government relationships with Indigenous partners and to seek ways to advance reconciliation, recognize, and affirm Indigenous rights, and support expanded program and service delivery. We are leaders in reconciliation, and this will continue to be one of our most important priorities as a government.

The last year has laid bare the gaps in our society, and the impact that COVID-19 has dramatically revealed the inequities and vulnerabilities of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, these are our realities, and we will need to keep these top of mind as we work to close the gap between northern and southern Canada that existed long before COVID-19. We must work toward resilient people and a resilient economy, and we will continue to pursue infrastructure and economic development opportunities that provide sustainable benefits. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to finding ways to make things better for our residents. In order to achieve this, we need to build a strong partnership with Canada to take real action on those areas where Northerners have said that more needs to be done.

We need a strong investment partner in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and one very concrete way the federal government can support economic recovery is by investing in our infrastructure needs. By investing in large-scale infrastructure projects, we can help bridge the substantial infrastructure gap that exists here in the Northwest Territories as well as kick-start the territory's economic recovery. This is an ambitious request but one that will benefit the North and ensure that we have a future where our residents live in a more prosperous territory. It is about giving the economy the boost that it needs and planning for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we all want a brighter future for Northwest Territories residents. It is why we are here today, to have a positive impact and ensure future generations can achieve success. This is no easy task, and we have a lot of work to do, but I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the House to achieve this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-19(2):  
NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on

Thursday, February 4, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH WATER LEVELS IN TALSTON AND SLAVE RIVER BASIN

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say welcome back to all of my colleagues, and happy belated new year's to my constituents and everybody else listening right now. I really hope that we have a meaningful and productive sitting this session.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to lead up with an event that frightened me and many of my constituents recently. This is the report of flooding in the Taltson River and Slave River areas. Just to lead this out, there was a phrase that my great-grandmother told me, and I want to have that in our thoughts when I say this. She told me that [English translation not available] and the direct translation is "Our land is changing. Our climate is changing." Our land is always changing. In this generation, you may see it, and maybe in your kids' generation. We are still going to see changes, and I think this happening in my constituency is a real concern.

With that, Mr. Speaker, imagine going home today and finding your home flooded in a frozen block of ice. This is what some of my constituents had to deal with recently. For those who live in larger communities, one would simply call up their insurance providers and be held up at a hotel until the problem was dealt with and paid for. My constituents don't have this luxury. I imagine our ancestors would be hurting if they saw this.

Mr. Speaker, by all accounts, thankfully, nobody was harmed in this event, but some of the animals were. However, I want everyone to know of the emotional impact that these losses have caused. I want to bring awareness to the rest of the North that a lot of hard work is now gone because of this environmental event. I really feel for those folks who were affected. They expect their government to assist them in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, as a whole, the fur industry is nowhere near what it was 30 or 40 years ago. It used to really help out family incomes, and many of our trappers now do not solely depend on this way of life anymore. Nowadays, many of our trappers have other jobs and trap as a way to supplement their incomes. Another thing to think of is that this also affects trading and Metis rights to hunt. They

can still use these areas, per se, but what are they going back to right now in these areas?

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I have ended up with more questions than answers around this issue, but it has led me to some larger questions. Was this man-made? Was this natural? Was it a combination of both?

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, colleagues. Furthermore, another point I wanted to bring up was another question that came about when I did my research on this: How does the Transboundary Water Agreement play into this issue? This is a matter that I will delve into in another statement. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources at the appropriate time. Marsi cho.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In December, Health Canada authorized the use of two separate COVID-19 vaccines for human consumption. Both vaccines were developed by private companies, named Pfizer and Moderna. Following Health Canada's approval, the Government of the Northwest Territories received its first shipment of the Moderna vaccine on December 28<sup>th</sup>, and by December 31<sup>st</sup>, NWT residents began receiving their first of two doses.

Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, there have been over 12,000 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine administered across the Northwest Territories. I am happy to share with everyone that, as of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, I have received my first dose of the vaccine. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I know there are segments of the general public who remain hesitant about having the COVID-19 vaccine, which is concerning. I hope that my experience of taking the vaccine can help others to feel more willing to also take the vaccine.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of the healthcare workers across the NWT; to Minister Green; to Dr. Kandola, the Chief Public Health Officer; and to Premier Cochrane for all of their tireless work during this pandemic. Also, specifically, I would like to thank the Fort Smith frontline workers for administering the vaccine to my community.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I have an important message for all of the NWT residents regarding recovered COVID-19 patients and any cases that occur here in the future. It is extremely important that we do not discriminate against our fellow residents if they have contracted COVID-19. We must be understanding, compassionate, supportive, and remain in solidarity regardless of how people contracted the disease, just as we have done for the residents of Fort Liard. We must stick together and continue to look out for each other during these uncertain times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LIABILITIES FOR EKATI MINE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The ongoing saga of creditor protection for the owners of the Ekati Mine seems to have drawn to a close last Friday without so much as a peep from our government. On that date, the mine appears to have been sold to a group of lenders who will own and operate the mine. That's good news. The new owners are called Arctic Canadian Diamond Company Limited, or ACDC.

I could never get a consolidated list of all of the outstanding amounts owed to this government at any point during the proceeding despite repeated requests. I was given partial lists, told that some of the amounts, such as royalties or taxes, could not be disclosed to me as a Regular MLA, even in confidence, or that amounts were still being determined. That is not a good reflection of our consensus government conventions or publicly stated commitments to openness and transparency.

In addition to what was likely over \$15 million in outstanding accounts owed to the GNWT, this government also holds very significant amounts of financial security to hopefully ensure that the property is properly remediated. The \$282 million in financial security covers environmental management and reclamation liabilities found in the water licence, land use permits, and an environmental agreement. Most of it is held in a new and untested form of security called a surety bond, backed by insurance companies.

GNWT had the ability and legal obligation to review the viability and stability of the new owners and the form of financial security as part of the sale of the property. The assignment of the licence, permits, and agreement to the new owner requires the consent of this government. This was an opportunity to ensure that the public interest was truly served, the polluter-pays principle was applied,

and the securities are truly irrevocable, unconditional, and easily cashed.

I will have questions later today for the Premier as this matter cuts across several portfolios. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
60<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF TED AND  
MARY ROSE LANDRY

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this time to recognize a respected elderly couple on their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Huge congratulations and happy trails to Ted and Mary Rose Landry of Fort Providence.

Ted and Mary Rose Landry travelled by dog team with their family to get married in the Roman Catholic Church on December 27, 1960. At that time, they were living at Willowlake on the Horn Plateau with their children, alongside other families.

Ted Landry trapped, hunted, and fished for his family. It was a rich and fulfilling lifestyle where he provided the best food for his children and for other residents. His wife, Mary Rose, as well as sought out by everyone for her dried-meat- and dried-fish-making skills. They have passed on their traditional and cultural skills to their children and grandchildren.

Ted Landry was very involved in politics through his involvement with the Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, the Deh Cho First Nations, and the Dene Nation. Now, at 89 years of age, he still has lots to offer and still provides support where needed. Ted is also part of the Elders Council and uses knowledge from his ancestors for the betterment of the Dene people.

Ted and Mary Rose are blessed with eight children and numerous grandchildren, approximately 20. Ted and Mary Rose recently were blessed with a great grandchild born in December 2020. A plaque commemorating their lifelong commitment to each other will be presented to them at a later date. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
EMERGE STRONGER PLAN

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, before 2020, our territory's GDP was already struggling and ours was the only Canadian jurisdiction predicted to have a negative 2020 GDP. The NWT needed a fulsome economic recovery plan before the pandemic, and

the pandemic and the unprecedented year that was 2020 heightened that need.

In July 2020, in response to the pandemic concerns fielded by the business community, the GNWT and the 17-member Business Advisory Council agreed to a two-fold mandate: first, to provide advice to the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment on mitigating the short-term economic impacts of the pandemic on NWT businesses and to recommend longer-term actions required to support business recovery; second, to provide advice and make recommendations to the Cabinet to develop and implement the Emerging Stronger Plan to support the NWT economic and social recovery.

Mr. Speaker, last month, Northern Media reported that the Business Advisory Council felt ITI had been a good partner, but News North reported that the Business Advisory Council had lost faith in our Premier and felt the Cabinet had no focus on the economy. In the same month, a prominent council member resigned and the Business Advisory Council then advised the public that it would no longer meet on a regular basis. In November 2020, the Business Advisory Council fulfilled the first part of its mandate by publishing a key challenges summary that highlighted 12 concise points, divided by high priority, medium-term, and long-term priorities. It spoke to gaps in federal and territorial funding, Indigenous economy equity, and the NWT's lack of childcare.

The GNWT has managed to keep COVID under control, but our territory has not been immune to the social and economic impacts of the pandemic. It is deeply concerning to hear about the state of the Business Advisory Council and its perception of Cabinet. Our success depends on our collective ability to plan for a brighter tomorrow. I would like to know what the GNWT's position is on the work done to date on the Emerging Stronger Plan and what concrete steps Cabinet intends to take to ensure the NWT economy and our local businesses come through this pandemic as unscathed as possible. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION OF RESIDENT  
NORTHERNERS

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we return to the Assembly for this first sitting of a brand new year, I am inspired to look forward to a brighter future for the Northwest Territories after such a challenging year. One of the bright pieces, the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, is the promise of better education for all. When I look at

the issues surrounding our territory, I see that the solution is already in front of us: our people.

If we can create a workforce born in the North, raised in the North, and educated in the North, nothing will stop us from creating solutions to our problems that are practical and attainable, northern solutions created by northern people.

However, so much needs to be done before an NWT student ever steps foot in a post-secondary institution. We need to address how we support our children and our families first. We need to ensure that people have enough food to eat and adequate shelter before we ever hope to educate them. We need to stop punishing people for poverty, calling it neglect and taking their children away. We need to ensure any student graduating with a Northwest Territories diploma can apply to any school they want and not be sent back for upgrading first.

In the North, a lot of money and opportunity is lost to the South due to the education and experience required in key industries that are needed for northern operations. Currently, much of the northern-based industry relies on a southern-educated workforce. Often, these Southerners return home to rejoin their families, taking their pension and their nest eggs with them. Currently, we tend to aim very low for our people when it comes to participation in the economic sector, regulating them to secondary roles or manual labour.

By educating resident Northerners in key northern industries as well as in social and health services, we are less likely to have such a transient population as the requirement for southern recruitment will decline. It is this requirement that leads to such a high turnover of staff within departments, causing numerous disruptions to the level of service provided to residents as well as additional costs from an HR perspective.

I'm very excited about the prospect of a uniquely northern university in the NWT. There is a lot of work to be done, including the proper engagement of all stakeholders as well as breaking down the barriers for northern students. I look forward to the day when my engineering colleagues can provide co-op programs to local techs and our children can be educated by teachers who grew up not only in the classroom but also on the land. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMERGING WISELY PLAN

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I was lucky that I was able to spend the holidays with my family, not something that everybody in my community or even in the NWT could say. There were many families who had to remain separated this year. To make it worse, with COVID, we had none of our regular community social gatherings to occupy our time and help us through the dark months that we go through.

Growing up and living in Inuvik almost my entire life, you know it's a reality that we have many people who are educators and medical staff, just to name a few, who have made the North their home. They use their time off to reconnect with families outside the NWT. This year, in order to keep the NWT safe, many families were unable to do this, and it has been difficult for many. It has even been difficult for residents who were born and raised here as they are unable to leave or see their families who have left the territory or for those who wish to return home to reconnect with their family.

Our NWT Emerging Wisely Plan was developed and released with phases, and we have been stuck in the second phase and unable to move into the third phase as the rest of Canada and the US are still currently in the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our vaccine roll-out started off, but now we find ourselves with another delay, due to shortage of vaccines. The Minister has continued to assure the public we should be able to still have 75 percent of our adult population vaccinated by the end of March, but, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that we are going to see families planning to leave the NWT, those who are vital to the education of our children, to the healthcare of our loved ones, and more businesses close if we remain in phase 2 within the NWT into the spring and summer. I will have questions for the Minister of health. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMERGE STRONGER PLAN

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank God for the federal government. I heard earlier today the Premier say that we have received over \$120 million from the federal government in COVID support. I think that number would also be dwarfed by the amount of money we have seen the federal government dish out and serve through EI and through CanNor. There is no doubt that the federal government has kept our economy running. However, Mr. Speaker, early on in this pandemic, we heard talks of an Emerge Stronger Plan, a plan of what the GNWT was going to do to recover from

this economic crisis. In fact, our newly instituted Business Advisory Council stated they are going to cease its regular meetings because they do not feel that economic recovery was a focus of this current Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this Cabinet has been handed a free pass to do whatever it wants. During times of crisis, we have seen many policies fly through, and I do not believe there is the coordination to oppose them. This is a time of political opportunity, and I encourage this Cabinet to seize it, Mr. Speaker, so what are they going to do? Perhaps we realize it's time for a basic income and that many of our residents who have been stuck on income assistance for decades are in a welfare trap. Perhaps we're going to release a universal daycare plan for the next year, recognizing that, in getting women into the workforce, the number one barrier is childcare.

I don't know what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have a plan. There is a lot of debate about what can be in a plan. Maybe it is tax incentives. Maybe it's deferring BDIC and WSCC payments. There are a number of recommendations from our Chambers of Commerce, our Business Advisory Council, but the fact that we do not have a plan is a problem and it is undebatable that we should.

Mr. Speaker, the Business Advisory Council, before it ceased operations, conducted a strategic planning session. In that were many great ideas about building a green economy, about creating a school of mining. There are lots of ways to go. There are tough decisions to be made, but those decisions have to be made. When will this Cabinet present its plan for economic recovery and what is going to be in it? Because, absent that plan, we will continue to be funded and controlled by the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POWER OUTAGES IN WHATI

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation] I would like to speak today. In our community, right now, I have to say that we have a generator. Some days, the generator would not be able to be running. If that's the case, it shuts down and everything freezes. Just recently in Whati, right now, I'd like to speak about what happened in Whati. [End of translation]

[Microphone turned off]... in the Northwest Territories hangs on a very thin wire when it comes to the security of the electrical supply. They are

maybe one diesel generator away from freezing in the dark. That's because they don't have a hydro transmission line for a backup. In fact, if a generator goes, there is no backup at all. Such was the case in my constituency last month, and I want this government to do something before a tragedy really strikes.

Mr. Speaker, I am referring to Whati, where the Power Corporation has been spinning its wheels for more than a decade now, where the Power Corporation has been waffling back and forth between a mini hydro, there has been discussion for the longest time, and now it talks about a transmission line. Whether the corporation can't get its act in gear is another option. In this case, in Whati, the result is a 20-hour, Mr. Speaker, a 20-hour rotating power outage between January 13<sup>th</sup> and January 14<sup>th</sup>. That's a level 3 emergency alert, the Power Corporation's highest state of emergency. Imagine if it was minus 50 or minus 60 below. Good thing it was only around minus 10, minus 15, minus 20, but imagine the danger to Whati's elders, the most vulnerable citizens. It could have been a lot worse.

As we witnessed yesterday, there was a power outage in Yellowknife. It only lasted 10, 15 minutes, but in my community of Whati it lasted over 20 hours, so we have to deal with these important matters in the communities, especially the most isolated communities. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation at the appropriate time. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES ON PASSING OF NUNAKPUT CONSTITUENTS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Passing of the constituents in my riding of Nunakput. Elizabeth Kuptana passed away. She was a respected elder, recognized, and she received an award for 20 years of service as an Inuvialuktun teacher. She also ran and coordinated many youth language camps, mainly during the summer, at Greens Island, a.k.a. Egg Island. She was a positive influence and advocate of her lifestyle and a traditional cultural leader.

Sadie Ruben passed away in December at a young age. Sadie was a very energetic and family-oriented person who, through her efforts to improve conditions for her family, moved several times from the community. On her final return home, her home was opened up to many people, including those who were struggling with a place to sleep. She took great care every day to make sure her elder father,

Marcus Ruben, Sr., and her uncle David Ruben, the oldest residents, were fed and her personal care given, besides her housecleaning, to help the elders.

Our respect goes out today to the families who all lost loved ones in the Beaufort-Delta in the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of people hurting, and we just have to keep moving forward and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

The respect today that I have for former Speaker Paul Delorey, Mr. Speaker. He passed away in January. A former colleague of mine, a mentor. He always said that, when he was first elected, my uncle Vince Steen took him under his wing, and so, when I was elected, he thought he'd do the same for me, and he was a big part of my early career as an MLA in this House and sitting on the board of management. We did a lot of good things together, and my thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Davida, and the family back in Hay River. I know you went to his funeral. I thank you for that, to represent us.

Also, while mentioning my uncle Vince, former MLA for Nunakput, today is the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing. My thoughts and prayers are with my auntie Betty and the family back home in Tuktoyaktuk, and thoughts and prayers to people who lost loved ones in our territory in the last few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT LIARD COVID-19 OUTBREAK RESPONSE

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak about the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially to the community of Fort Liard. As I've heard numerous times, now more than ever we need to come together to support each other. I am proud to say that the community of Fort Liard, local government and residents, the GNWT, and the residents across the NWT have done this with so much class. The response to the COVID crisis has made a positive impact within their community and shows the true spirit of all Northerners.

Being respectful of time and realizing that I cannot do justice to thank everybody in one Member's statement, I will be doing two. The first one highlights some of the amazing things being done by the hamlet, stores, and residents of the community. Here are some of the highlights from the community. As soon as they were aware of the first confirmed case, they kicked in the MO team leadership, RCMP, health centre, and the COVID personnel to start working on things that needed to

be done. The hamlet council provided relief for all the residents for the December community services, providing gift cards for groceries for those in need and doing a draw for all residents who got their vaccines, 12 in total, six \$100 Visas to each store, most stores being open to provide services to the residents and working on ways to help people.

The hamlet hired a person to assist in the delivery of items for individuals who are currently isolating. The mayor went door-to-door, checking in on residents and seeing if there were any concerns that she should be aware of or if they needed any help, and provided the rapid response team and the vaccine team with a place to stay, feeding them during their time in the community. The local radio, 95.1, provided updates and information on what was happening in both Slavey and English. This was a big help in getting the information out to our elders.

The residents understand the importance of following the recommendations set out by the Chief Public Health Officer. There are many things that I have heard, and all I can say is thank God for the community of Fort Liard working together to help each other in these trying times. Please be safe and follow the rules as we continue to take on this COVID pandemic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR GEORGE CLEARY

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this time to recognize a distinguished Sahtu leader, Mr. George Cleary, who passed away on September 3, 2020, at the age of 65. Mr. Cleary had a long list of accomplishments that are worth noting. He went to elementary and junior high school in Deline, and then to high school in Inuvik, graduated, and also completed the teacher education program in Fort Smith. Once he completed the program, he went off to receive his Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

He worked as a teacher and a principal for the Ehtseo Ayha School in Deline. He was also a former chief of the Deline Band, president of the Sahtu Dene Council, vice president for the Dene Nation, chief negotiator for the Sahtu Dene and Metis land claim agreement, advisor to Deline Self-Government Agreement, and the director of Indian and Inuit Services for the federal government.

I would like to highlight his work again on two momentous undertakings of his time. Mr. Cleary worked as a director of intergovernmental relations

for Deline in its final push to reach and ratify a self-government agreement. He also played a key role in overseeing and ensuring a final Sahtu land claim agreement that was not only successful but also fair to the Sahtu people.

Mr. George Cleary was inducted into the Northwest Territories Education Hall of Fame in 2014 for making a lasting, positive impression in the field of education. He loved hunting, fishing, camping, taking youth on-the-land, hockey, reading and writing. He is survived by his wife, Doreen Cleary, and his children, Taylor, Brent, and Holly.

Mr. Speaker, his accomplishments to the Northwest Territories and to the people of the Sahtu deserve our greatest attention and gratitude for Mr. Cleary's lifelong dedication for looking out for the welfare of our children, our communities, and not only when he was alive but for generations to come. I would like to express my gratitude to the light and the impact of Mr. George Cleary he had on the Northwest Territories, and also paving the road for future leaders. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Mr. Cleary, in my past role as Chief, I had the pleasure of working with him as he worked for one of the federal government departments, and he was always great to work with, so accommodating to the communities. We owe him a lot in our communities, as well, as he worked closely with all our bands. Mahsi.

Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Deh Cho.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituency assistant for the Deh Cho and lives in Fort Providence, Karalyn Menicho, who is up in the gallery today. She is here for her constituency assistant's orientation. Karalyn states that she is very pleased with the support and the kindness from the Legislative Assembly staff during her time here. Karalyn is also expecting her second child in March. Colleagues, please help me extend a warm welcome to Karalyn while she's here. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] This month is February, and it is Aboriginal language month. I would like to recognize all the interpreters in the House. They have been interpreting for us, but for my language, I have two interpreters, Mary Rose (Maro) Sundberg and

Harriet Paul. Her name is Paul. They have been here for many years. We know it is a difficult job as an interpreter, and I respect every one of these interpreters here. Masi. [Translation ends]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Range Lake.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a minute to recognize guests in the House and the media. We often talk about the importance of businesses and residents and NGOs and the government in the COVID-19 pandemic, and we don't give enough recognition to the media. A huge thank you to the media for all the work they do to support us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome all the visitors in the gallery with us today. It is always good to have people with us in the House. I know we are not open to the public right now, but it is always good to have media and constituency assistants.

Before we move on, colleagues, I am not sure if my mother is watching today, but she is here in Yellowknife, and it is her birthday, so I would just like to wish her a happy birthday.

--Applause

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 486-19(2):  
POWER OUTAGES IN WHATI

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When I made my Member's statement, I talked about the generator and the Power Corporation. The people in Whati, this is their message. It is their words I am relaying to the government, so that is what I want to talk about. [Translation ends]

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Whati lost two of its three generators. They quit working in the community. It took 20 hours for the power to go back on. When power goes out, maybe it's an accident, but if two goes out, it's neglect. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation. Can the Minister for the Power Corporation tell this House how old Whati generators are and also tell us an average recommended replacement age for these generators in the community? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off by apologizing to the community of Whati for the outage. The customers in the Northwest Territories experienced three times more power outages than the Canadian average. Severe weather events were a huge driver of customer outages due to high winds, falling trees, heavy rain and lightning, so I just want to start off by that. I heard two questions in that, Mr. Speaker, so let me try and answer one of them. It has been known for years that the NTPC power generating infrastructure, including the Whati, is aging and its impact on reliability. The recent outages in Whati were mostly related to some of the transmission issues, although these issues were with the generators at the same time. One of the transmission issues had to do with one of the sections of the power line that were slapping together with high winds due to causing lines to trip offline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** [Translation] When we stand here in front of the House, we ask these questions so we can prevent some of these things that is happened. The second question is: [Translation ends] When can a community expect to be connected to the power grid, the transmission line that the Minister is referring to, so you can have a reliable power source supply? Urgency for fast tracking on this power grid is necessary, so when can we see that happening.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The plant in Whati is not scheduled to be replaced in the next five years, although one of the generators will be placed in the next year. I am sure the Member will be happy to hear that. We are working with the generators, which will improve some of the reliability on the plant. We will also be installing some additional mid-line spacers on the affected section of the power line within the next couple of weeks as soon as we can get the bucket truck in and the crew into the community.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I believe urgency is a must here. The next five years, that is a long time waiting for the community of Whati. They could have a power outage the next day or next week, another 20 hours or 30 hours. It could not be prevented by this department. Part of it is nature. My question to the Minister is: Could this particular project be expedited instead of waiting five years? I know there is a generator that is coming, but the community is wishing and hoping and praying for a transmission line to come into the community ASAP.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The Whati transmission line is expected to displace 500 litres of diesel usage

per year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1.4 kilotons annually once constructed, which is an important part of our 2030 strategy. Where I am going with this is: Once we have an agreement on the way forward, we can do the necessary costing and technical work to be able to look at putting in a funding application to Canada. I understand that the Member is concerned about some of the timing. Once we get all of our work done, we are hoping to be able to do this by the end of this year.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] If we have to wait for the federal government to respond, it will take years and years and years. Right now, I will have to say, speaking for Whati, we want it here right now. [Translation ends] Even the paperwork alone takes years, and the proposal, submission, and approval can take years, as well. The community of Whati doesn't have the patience for that. They already lost patience when they had 20 hours of power outage. We need to take action now, Mr. Speaker.

My next question is: What special measures has the Minister taken to ensure that a power outage never happens again in Whati or even in other isolated communities in my riding? For instance, will the Minister commit to a comprehensive infrastructure audit to search out maintenance problems, issues, and recommend priority repairs where necessary, Mr. Speaker? Masi.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** I can't promise no more outages in any of the communities in the Northwest Territories. There may be additional outages. When winds are high, I mentioned earlier that severe winds are huge drivers in terms of some of the outages in our communities. We look at some of our federal funding, to be able to prioritize some of this. I understand that the Member is concerned about the communities and the number of outages that have happened. That is something that we are looking at. I am hoping to replace the generator by the end of the year and am looking at federal funding to be able to look at some infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 487-19(2):  
SALE OF THE EKATI MINE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Premier on the sale of the Ekati Mine and whether Cabinet protected the public interest. Can the Premier tell us whether GNWT has agreed to any concessions, debt write-offs, or weakened financial security as part of the

sale of the Ekati Mine and assignment of environmental approvals or agreements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that that is a question best placed with the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, there have been no concessions or debt write-offs. All outstanding payments are not being forgiven, and indeed, we continue to hold all of the securities as we did prior to the sale. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, I could never get a fully consolidated list of outstanding amounts owed to this government for taxes, royalties, fees, or any other liabilities or accounts receivable from the Ekati Mine. I need to ensure that these issues are part of our diligent review of this major asset transfer. Can the Minister or the Premier commit to finally providing consolidated lists, in confidence if necessary, with details on how each category was treated as part of the sale of the property?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** A consolidated list was provided back in August, and in fact, I believe it may have been tabled in this House, detailing the outstanding payments that were known at the time aside from royalties. Royalties are governed by a separate regulatory regime and are not made public independent of collective royalties. However, I can also update that, as of January, another list was sent, I believe, in this case, to committee, if not at least to the MLA directly, and it does detail property taxes, fuel taxes, various boiler registrations, some airport lease payments, mining survey costs, environmental fees, other miscellaneous fees and costs. We can certainly resend that, though.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, I have both lists in front of me, and there are a lot of things that are not on the list, which she is not going to disclose because she doesn't think we can, because we're country bumpkins or something on this side of the House, but merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for repeating all of that. Although this government was a creditor for the Ekati Mine during the proceeding, many businesses and even the union pension fund were in shortfall positions. Can the Premier tell us whether these NWT businesses and

the union will be able to recover liabilities or accounts receivable?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** To the extent that there may have been ongoing negotiations with the private parties or private entities, I am not privy, nor is the government privy, to their specific negotiations. I certainly can say that, with respect to the outstanding payments that the GNWT is owed, that those payments or any payments owing do have to be made in order for the matter to proceed. Indeed, that includes a full transfer of the securities.

Mr. Speaker, we are very alive to the fact that there is a number of NWT businesses which are owed money, of course, in this process. It is a process that is monitored by the court. Throughout that proceeding, we have continued to advocate in those proceedings and publicly to the courts about the importance of the Ekati Mine to the Northwest Territories economy and the importance and its impact on businesses here.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I am not sure it was really an answer. I mentioned that most of the financial security held by this government from environmental management and reclamation obligations are in the form of surety bonds backed by insurance companies rather than safer, irrevocable letters of credit issued by Canadian chartered banks. Can the Premier tell us whether this government used the sale of the property and our right to consent or not to the assignment of the water licence, land-use permits, and environmental agreement to convert these surety bonds to more secure, irrevocable letters of credit? If not, why not? I gave all of this to the Premier ahead of time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I believe this question would best be directed to the Minister of ENR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Securities have been transferred dominion to the new company in the same amount and with the same insurance companies and banks. With the cash required for the purchase, it would have been a detriment to ask the company to replace the securities with irrevocable letters of credit or cash in closing. Sureties are an acceptable form of security and our due diligence on the Ekati sale included an assessment of the financial health

of the surety providers. There is an agreement in place for the company to replace the securities with cash over time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 488-19(2):  
COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, according to the information that we received, the Moderna vaccine should be administered 28 days apart but can be extended up to 42 days, if necessary. If a vaccine shortage continues, has the department begun a communication plan of what to do if residents cannot get their second vaccine within the 42 recommended days? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. It is my understanding that we are still going to be able to vaccinate everyone by the end of March, but the composition of the shipments is going to change with less vaccine in February and more in March. At this time, we believe that everyone will be vaccinated within the 42-day limit, and if that is not the case, we will certainly communicate that. Thank you.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Can the Minister confirm if the NWT would consider the following as having been achieved: a robust rapid testing strategy has been implemented; community spread remains limited; and a strong system of contact tracing remains in place, and all active cases of COVID-19 can have their contacts effectively traced? If not, can the Minister please explain.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I am proud to tell the Member that we have achieved all of those milestones.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I understand the last requirement of moving from phase 2 is a second surge of infection in Canada and the United States has come and gone, with new cases falling over time and the epidemiological curve has demonstrably flattened. This has not been met. With our border controls in place and a 14-day mandatory isolation in place, will the Minister be looking into moving into phase 3 once we have completed implementing our vaccine plan and our most vulnerable population has been vaccinated?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** What the Chief Public Health Officer has said is that, with the number of cases active in the South at this time and with the low rates of vaccination forecasted in this House relative to the entire population, it's more likely that

there will be a relaxation of measures within the Northwest Territories rather than opening our borders. Specifically, she has talked about increasing gathering sizes. Those things are possible once the vaccination has been widely distributed in the Northwest Territories. I think it's worth pointing out that many of the items that were to occur in phase 3 have, in fact, occurred in phase 2 because people have asked her to move up the different activities, based on the good containment of our cases.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify that: So with the vaccine, if we do get the vaccine and we are at 75 percent vaccinated, the Minister will commit to negotiating a lot more opening up this summer? Because I feel that, like I said in my Member's statement, we are really going to lose some of our vital, important staff, especially outside of Yellowknife. It is come to Inuvik. You came to Inuvik. The Premier came to Inuvik. There is nothing open there. There is nothing going on there. There is no social life. There is nothing that is keeping people. Even the youth are having mental health issues because it's harder and harder to socialize. So I am really happy to hear that from the Minister. I am just hoping that they can get the vaccine and get it going, and we can get opening up a little bit more inside the territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** I recognize that people are really feeling COVID fatigue in the dark and the cold and that they are really looking forward to getting together with other members of their communities and their families, both within the NWT and outside of the NWT, and so I think the Chief Public Health Officer is aware of that, too. Ultimately, the decision about what phase we are in is up to her. She is the one who we have tasked with the public health assessment, and so I cannot make a commitment. However, I can certainly tell you that she has set some thresholds for enabling more gathering in the NWT and for opening the borders, and so let's see how the vaccine goes and take it a step at a time. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 489-19(2):  
HIGH WATER LEVELS IN TALTSON AND SLAVE  
RIVER BASIN

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In line with my Member's statement, I worked with the Minister responsible for ECE, Minister Archie, and ENR Minister Thompson, and I want to thank them for all the information they gave me. So far, I am going

back to the Taltson. From my understanding then, BC is denying responsibility, and that is fine. I was given a lot of raw data, and it could be interpreted a lot of different ways. My question now is for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Can he give us an update on what, if any, preliminary findings are on the cause of the high water levels? Marsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Member for the question. He has been doing his due diligence. He has been phoning me throughout as this has been coming out there. Again, I thank him for that. I know he is very passionate about it, and he is working for his residents.

ENR has received data both from Water Survey of Canada and NWT Power Corporation, and we are assessing the situation. The Taltson River has experienced high water levels since the summer. High snowfall and rainfall, including two very large rainfall events in mid and late August 2020, have caused the high water levels. Available data on the Tazin and the Abitau Rivers, which flow to the Tazin Lake, indicates a very large flow event in mid to late August 2020 with slow recession. Water levels in the Tazin Lake have been high enough to cause flow over the existing weir since July 2019, which is extremely rare.

This has increased the area flow out to the Taltson River by about 20 percent. ENR issued a public service announcement on November 19, 2020, because of the high water and possibility of unusual freezing this winter and the fall. ENR has received data from NTPC and has confirmed that the facility has been in compliance with their water licence, including over summer and fall of 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you for the response from the Minister. With that information, I will likely have some more questions in the form of a written question later on. I guess for my next question: Can the department provide scientific data from a neutral third party to provide an assessment of the overflow and flooding? Because I think it's important that we get information not just from a GNWT source but from an outside source to have a more unbiased look at what is happening.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The GNWT uses data from the hydrometric gauges operated by Water Survey of Canada. The Water Survey of Canada hydrometric stations are part of the national network of stations that have been operating following standardization methodology over their

100 years. Gauges in the Taltson River basin have been operating since 1962. ENR assessment includes an analysis of Water Survey of Canada data and data provided by NTPC.

**MR. NORN:** Again, probably some more questions will be coming in the form of a written statement for those responses. I thank you for those responses. I am going to switch gears a little bit here. I want to think about some of the land users, the hunters and trappers in the area. Some of the images that we have seen in the media with the ice in the cabins, that is really impactful. Again, my heart goes out to them. I want to see if I can get a commitment from the Minister. Can the Minister report back to the House here with timelines on the loss of wildlife, i.e., beavers and muskrats and the lot, in the area?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Officials from ENR have done a field assessment of the flooding and have confirmed that there is some impact on the beavers, martens, and their habitats. Loss of beavers and martens due to flooding occurs periodically, and it's a natural part of the ecosystem. This will release nutrients into the environment and provide a source of food for scavengers, including insects, fish, birds, and other mammals. It is not possible to get an accurate count of the number of muskrats and beavers affected, but this event is not expected to have a large or long-term impact on their population. As such, ENR is not planning any further assessment of the impact on the beavers and martens at this time.

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

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. That's interesting. You're not going to hear the last of that from me, so I'm going to be probing a little more on that. My last question, and this is probably the most important. I had mentioned before, hunting and trapping 30 or 40 years ago helped to put food on tables for a lot of my constituents and a lot of people around the North. Historically, it used to be. Now, it supplements a lot of income, and there is still a loss of income here that happened as a result of this event. My last question is: Can the Minister advise on what financial supports are available for the impacted hunters and trappers? Specifically, I'm looking for relief for lost income, lost or damaged equipment, and damaged cabins. Marsi cho.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I can guarantee the Member will be knocking on my door, asking me more questions, so I greatly appreciate that as we try to educate each other and the public. ENR's hunters and trappers disaster compensation program can assist the traditional harvesters who suffer losses or damage to their equipment or assets because of natural disasters, including floods. The program is available to the NWT

harvesters who possess a general hunting license and/or are a land claim beneficiary actively engaged in renewable resource harvesting activities and whose harvesting provides at least 25 percent of their gross annual income. ENR staff have been working directly with impacted trappers on accessing financial support presently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 490-19(2):  
TRADES PROGRAMS AT AURORA COLLEGE

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECE. If the Minister could provide the current enrolment numbers for the different trades programs at Aurora College and break that out by campus? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will just note that the Member, in her statement earlier, she was telling it like it is. She laid out the state of education well, and some of the things we have to do and the challenges we face, and I agree that we do have to have more northern-born trained persons who can do the work that we bring people up from the South for.

Right now, schools across North America have taken a hit, whether it's JK-to-12 or post-secondary, and the North is no exception. There has been, as most people know, no face-to-face or rather limited face-to-face instruction. Despite that, though, I'm happy to say that, in the fall intake, we had 24 apprentices at Aurora College. They were at the Thebacha campus, where the vast majority of apprenticeship training takes place, given the beautiful facilities there. In Electrical Level 1, there were three students; Electrical Level 2, there were seven students; Carpentry Level 1, there were seven students; Carpentry Level 3, five students; and Plumbing Level 1, two students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** The Minister somewhat touched on my next question, which is to ask about the effects of COVID on the enrolment in the trades programs, and if the Minister could provide any of the costs associated with either adapting the programs to the distance learning or for having to take more in-person COVID containment methods. I guess what I'm asking, and you may have already answered this, is: Do we have empty classrooms in these campuses?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Before the pandemic, there were some empty classrooms, and that's really why we were embarking on this transformation. We want to make the college the first choice for students not just in the North, but from across Canada. The pandemic obviously emptied out some classes, and we weren't able to have lots of face-to-face. I'm happy to announce that, in the upcoming September session enrolment, we will have face-to-face programming resuming at Aurora College. There are some caveats around that, of course. This was all vetted through the Chief Public Health Officer, who has allowed this, but the classrooms may include up to 20 students participating in class learning, while still continuing to meet the requirements of the Chief Public Health Officer.

I know this is going to be exciting for those students who have had to rely on distance learning, which everyone knows is not ideal, so there is some progress on that end.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** I am really glad to hear that. As we all know, doing trades remotely would probably be quite difficult for students, so I'm glad to hear that we're going to be returning back. I look forward to further asking the Minister at a later date what some of those costs are, around the COVID response. My next question I just want to move on to is the new Blue Seal certification program that the department is rolling out. I have some understanding of that, but I would like to know if the Minister could speak a bit more to how that differs from the Red Seal program and maybe provide a bit of a timeline for its implementation and availability.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The Red Seal is governed under the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, and that is a common set of standards across Canada. So, if you are a Red Seal in one province, your skills are comparable to a Red Seal in another province. We don't quite have that yet with Blue Seal, but what Blue Seal is building on is the Red Seal. It is a program whereby people who have earned their Red Seal can take additional courses in business and earn a Blue Seal. This is to really build up the workforce and allow perhaps journeypersons who want to rise up to management in companies or help them become entrepreneurs. We have Blue Seal certificates available in Alberta, in Saskatchewan; the East Coast has a similar type of program. I think, a lot of times, all you need is that idea that, "Oh, I can get this certification. I just have to take these courses," and that might prompt people to go. So I think, for really no cost to us, it's a good way to help build up the workforce.

I can't really speak to timelines right now. The bill that would allow this is in front of committee, but I hope to see this happen in the near future.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before I ask my last question, I wanted to apologize to the translators. I know I've got to get back into speaking a lot slower. My last question has to do with, again, something really close to my heart. Could the Minister provide an update on any programming or initiatives they are implementing to increase the number of women in trades? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I appreciate the question. We need more people in general in trades, but especially women in trades. I think the number of women in trades is around 5 to 7 percent of the entire profession, which is quite low, obviously. The department has recognized this, and in addition to getting out and promoting trades to everyone, there is also a renewed focus on promoting it to women and young women in schools. What we are going to be rolling out in the new year is a new visual and media campaign to promote women in trades. There is going to be promotion via the radio, newspapers, and social media. There is development of materials for grade 9 to 12 high school students that the career and education advisors will share with students. There are new materials for career development officers to promote with residents, and there is going to be increased profile and promotion of girls in trades through the annual Take a Kid to Work Day. We really need to promote this for everyone, and I really appreciate the Member and all the Members who bring this up, because a number of Members have brought up the need for more women in trades. The more that we all promote this, I think, the more that we can help this cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 491-19(2):  
FIRE SERVICES FOR INGRAHAM TRAIL  
RESIDENTS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has become a bit of a tradition, a tradition I hope to put an end to, I open every session asking about the Ingraham Trail fire services, so my question for the Minister of MACA is: Can I have an update on whether there are plans to reinstate fire services to the Ingraham Trail for April 1<sup>st</sup>? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's comments and the advocacy that he has for the Ingraham Trail. I would like to advise the Member that conversations are still happening between the City of Yellowknife and the department and also with the people at Ingraham Trail, as well. There was a consultation that was just recently completed. I should be able to provide an update to the Member by the end of February.

Also, I wanted to include to the Member, as well, that with these conversations going on and going forward, it is a very unique and different service that we would be offering throughout the territory. We do have a lot of community built-up areas outside of the municipal boundary, so it is something that the department is looking at, but also at other areas throughout the Northwest Territories.

**MR. JOHNSON:** The problem with this issue is that, if services are going to end, my constituents want some time to perhaps set up their own volunteer service. If the city can't reach agreement with MACA, then, perhaps, the Dettah fire services can be upgraded and certified to provide services. However, this all takes time, and it's unlikely to be done by April 1<sup>st</sup>. As such, the best option here is to get some sort of interim agreement with the City of Yellowknife so that other options can be explored in time. Do we have a sense of how long that will take? I hear the Minister say she will have an update for me by next month, but my understanding is that this would be a bylaw amendment, and we have to deal with both our funding process and the city's approval process, which does not give us the time. I am asking: Do we have a sense of how quickly the city could do this, should they actually agree?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The contractual services that would be provided outside of municipal boundary is very unique for a municipality, but we are working with the city. The conversations are happening, and we are trying to come to an agreement prior to April 1<sup>st</sup>. I do hear the Member's concern about that specific date, as well, and as a department and working in conjunction with Ingraham Trail and with the City of Yellowknife, I am confident that we will reach something by that deadline.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am happy that the Minister is confident that we will reach that deadline. I do recognize that there is work to be done all across the territory. I know this is an issue with Hay River providing ambulance services outside of boundaries. I know there is a lot of work to do in this area, but I am hoping that we can buy the time such that we can find a territory-wide plan. I heard the Minister state that some consultation has begun with residents of the Ingraham Trail. I was not

aware of that. Could I just get an update on what communication efforts have been done and will be done to make sure that residents on the trail know whether or not they will be able to call for a fire truck?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Presently, the City of Yellowknife will be providing fire services up until April 1<sup>st</sup>. I will have to follow up with the Member and be very specific on the type of consultation that has been completed, who has been contacted, and looking at the results. I want to have a full recommendation and a follow-up by the end of February, but I will be able to provide the Member with the update of the conversations and consultations prior to that.

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

QUESTION 492-19(2):  
EMERGE STRONGER PLAN

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are in regards to the Emerging Stronger Plan, and they are for the Premier. I would like to start off by identifying which Minister is responsible for the Emerging Stronger Plan, and what role does Cabinet play in making decisions about the plan? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now, I am the Minister responsible for the Emerging Stronger Plan. We are working on it right now. What role does Cabinet have in making the plan? A lot.

I did hear the Member in her statement say that the business community has lost confidence in the Premier, and I am sorry to hear that. I heard that when we first said, "Lock down the borders," and I had to stand beside the CPHO and say that I support her orders. I heard it when we formed the secretariat, and I am hearing it now again.

I do want to say that there have been tough decisions. Members have said we have had tough choices to make. We have made tough choices, Mr. Speaker, and it has paid off. We are probably the only jurisdiction in Canada that hasn't had a death from COVID. We are probably one of the only jurisdictions in Canada that hasn't had to go into lockdown over Christmas.

What role does Cabinet have? People are thinking that we are only concerned about COVID. We are. The Minister of Health and myself are run ragged dealing with the health and safety of Members, but that's not the only work we are doing. I believe that

everything in this session that we will be presenting to Members on the mandate process and most of them are on track, ironically. We thought that there would be exceptions, but other things have happened.

The Minister of ITI has been working with the business advisory council. Because of that work and her work, that's why we got the money from the federal government for tourism and the airlines that was brought in. The Minister of ECE, having to look at distance ed, became a reality all of a sudden, and the support for students because of that work. The Minister of housing working on bringing in shelters and dealing with homes and stuff. The Minister of Infrastructure, the biggest capital budget in the history of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we haven't forgotten. The Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, I have been working with the Indigenous governments on a weekly basis, almost, right through this. We are talking about economic agreements. We are talking about the Indigenous government procurement policy.

The work has not stopped, Mr. Speaker, is what I am saying, and all of Cabinet has a strong role to play. Not only Cabinet; we will be talking to Members, as well. All of us have a role to play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I hear often from constituents that they are very happy with the state of the NWT as far as the safety and the health of our people. They are very excited to get vaccinated, and they're very enthusiastic about that. I encourage Cabinet to really share the successes that they have had and look forward to hearing more about that as we go through session, as well.

The fact of the matter is that, last year, residents were promised a plan, and so now they are looking for the plan and what the future of the NWT holds. What does it look like? How do we come back from this? How do we move into a polytechnic? How do we improve our education numbers? People are really looking to the government right now to identify what that plan is. I am wondering if the plan is to table the Emerging Stronger Plan over the course of this sitting, and if so, if that will be publicly done and if residents of the Northwest Territories will be able to see that?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** During the process of doing the draft Emerging Stronger Plan, one of the first things that we did was look across the jurisdictions across Canada to see what they had done. Not all jurisdictions have plan. In fact, some jurisdictions are saying they are not doing plans. Some of them that did the plans earlier are now saying that they need to revisit them because they were done a little bit early. I mean, I don't think the timing is bad, like I said earlier in my first

answer. We haven't forgotten the economy. We haven't forgotten people. In fact, it's made our services stronger over this last year because of the pandemic.

Will it be tabled in this session? I want to say yes, but Mr. Speaker, I have learned to be a little bit cautious with that. What I can commit to in this session is that that draft will be done. We have heard from stakeholders. We have heard from the business community, from the NGOs, from the Indigenous governments, from the MLAs, from the general public. We have heard the needs. We have heard the concerns. We are going to present a draft Emerging Stronger Plan that we will provide to the standing committee first, and then, once the standing committee has a chance to give us some feedback and stuff, if there is not too much, I would love to say we will be able to table it. I do commit that standing committee will see that draft.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** No, that's very good news, and I understand that other jurisdictions may not have plans to create a plan. We started at a different place than other jurisdictions at the beginning of 2020, and so I think that it is important for us to recognize that and for us to be prepared. What I am wondering is if the Premier can speak to the type of key milestones a plan might have or that the public can expect to see, and when they would expect to see those key milestones turned into actions?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I can't say what the key milestones will be at this exact moment. That is the work that we are doing now. Like I said, we are working with all departments to consolidate all of this work. Not only the work that needs to be done, but the work we've done. The Member is right. Before COVID-19, our economy was in trouble. This is not new. This is something that we had faced, and the Members were wise when we developed the 22 priorities. A lot of that was around making sure that the economy was strong in the North. That work was going on before COVID, and it will continue to do. When we do present the draft Emerging Stronger within this sitting to the standing committee, you will see milestones, and I am hoping that we will be able to get some feedback from the Members on those milestones.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before the Emerging Stronger Plan discussions, we talked about the Emerging Wisely Plan, and that was really kind of the cornerstone event of how we were going to move on through lockdown into re-emerging from our homes and back into the world of the Northwest Territories as we know and love it. I am wondering if there is a plan from Cabinet to re-release that

plan based on what we know now and what we can expect for the remainder of 2021 once people are vaccinated, once schools start to, they're going to close for the summer. They're going to reopen in the fall. People are starting to plan and prepare for that, especially when it comes to hiring of teachers, when it comes to plans for summer, plans for business. There is a lot of planning in all aspects of our lives, and so is there a plan from Cabinet to re-release Emerging Wisely so that people know kind of what to expect for the rest of 2021? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Since that's the CPHO's office, I would redirect that to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. As far as I know, the CPHO is not planning to re-release the Emerging Wisely Plan. I appreciate that the Member and the public want certainty about what's going to happen in 2021, but unfortunately, we're not in a position to provide that. Much of what is driving our response is happening outside of Canada, outside of the NWT. We know there are new infectious variants that are circulating. We don't have a lot of information about the vaccine potential to stop transmission. That is still being studied. We know that hospitals in the South are overwhelmed. While I appreciate the need for more certainty, we have a very limited amount of control over that, and really, it is only within the Northwest Territories. If we can stick to our containment and vaccination plan, then there will be loosened restrictions within the NWT, but I expect the border controls to remain in place for some time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

### Returns to Written Questions

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 20-19(2): PROCUREMENT FROM INDIGENOUS-OWNED AND-OPERATED BUSINESSES

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 20-19(2) asked by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh on October 29, 2020, to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment regarding procurement from Indigenous-owned and -operated businesses.

The Member asked for the percentage of capital expenses were spent with Indigenous-owned and -operated businesses. The Government of the Northwest Territories or GNWT, does not currently

report based on Indigenous-owned and -operated business. Rather, it reports on whether the company is Northwest Territories-owned and whether the company has Business Incentive Policy or BIP status. We acknowledge that this is something we need to look at and will be included in the scope of the procurement review.

The Member asked what steps has the GNWT taken to identify and remove barriers for Indigenous businesses to participate in the modern economy. The GNWT works every day to support entrepreneurs, Indigenous business and other organizations in driving economic development across our territory. Through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the GNWT develops, promotes, and sustains an environment in which Northwest Territories or NWT entrepreneurs, small business owners are encouraged to invest, take risks, and prosper. We do so with targeted policies, programs, and funding initiatives, such as the Support for Entrepreneur and Economic Development Policy and in partnership with organizations such as the Business Development and Investment Corporation, Community Futures Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and through our regional offices.

The Member asked what incentives or programs does the GNWT have in place for the purchase of goods and services from Indigenous-owned and -operated businesses. Currently, the GNWT does not have any incentives or programs specific for the purchase of goods and services from Indigenous-owned or -operated businesses. The GNWT supports the creation and growth of competitive businesses as a foundation for the NWT economy when purchasing goods, services, or construction through the BIP. The BIP is an economic policy that provides an incentive to Northwest Territories-based businesses in a manner that recognizes the higher cost of operating businesses and manufacturing products in the NWT, encourages Northwest Territories-based businesses to create employment and develop necessary experience and business skills, and complies with any intergovernmental agreements to which the GNWT must adhere.

As outlined above, we acknowledge this as something we need to look at and will be included into the scope of the procurement review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 21-19(2):  
APPLICATIONS TO THE NATIONAL CO-  
INVESTMENT FUND

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 21-19(2) asked by the Member for Kam Lake to the

Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation on November 5, 2020, regarding applications to the national co-investment fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member inquired about how many Northwest Territories Housing Corporation employees are currently assigned to work on applications to the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. Currently, we have one full-time community relations advisor who is tasked to provide guidance and assistance to parties interested in making applications for the fund. Additionally, several Housing Corporation staff members also provide support in these efforts.

The Member also inquired about what percentage of those employees' time is spent working on applications to the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. The community relations advisor position is dedicated towards increasing access to this federal program, and it is the main focus of the position.

Lastly, the Member asked what communication activities has the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation completed in support of increasing applications to the national co-investment fund. We have been conducting joint presentations with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation at the community level at the request of community leadership. Additionally, we have a dedicated section on our website towards the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. Further, print media advertising is being used by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to promote this federal program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 250-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
351-19(2): ADDICTIONS TREATMENT SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 251-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
406-19(2): TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION  
COMMISSION CALL TO ACTION REGARDING  
TREATMENT CENTRES

TABLED DOCUMENT 252-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
407-19(2): SELF-ISOLATION EXEMPTIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 253-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
414-19(2): STANTON TERRITORIAL  
STERILIZATION OF EQUIPMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 254-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
415-19(2): ZONOTICS

TABLED DOCUMENT 255-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
427-19(2): ADDICTIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 256-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
428-19(2): MEDICAL TRAVEL

TABLED DOCUMENT 257-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
445-19(2): SELF-ISOLATION FOR MEDICAL  
TRAVEL

TABLED DOCUMENT 258-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
461-19(2): DENTAL PRACTICE IN SMALL  
COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 259-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
485-19(2): ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS TO  
REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND MINES DURING  
COVID-19

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following 10 documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 351-19(2): Addictions Treatment Services;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 406-19(2): Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action Regarding Treatment Centres;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 407-19(2): Self-Isolation Exemptions;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 414-19(2): Stanton Territorial Sterilization of Equipment;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 415-19(2): Zoonotics;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 427-19(2): Addictions;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 428-19(2): Medical Travel;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 445-19(2): Self-Isolation for Medical Travel;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 461-19(2): Dental Practice in Small Communities;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 485-19(2): Essential Service Workers to Remote Communities and Mines During COVID-19." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

TABLED DOCUMENT 260-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
380-19(2): MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

TABLED DOCUMENT 261-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
399-19(2): PUBLIC SAFETY

TABLED DOCUMENT 262-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
412-19(2): FIRE HALL IN DETTAH

TABLED DOCUMENT 263-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
413-19(2): HOW CORE NEED INCOME  
THRESHOLD IS USED FOR HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 264-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
416-19(2): HOMELESSNESS IN INUVIK

TABLED DOCUMENT 265-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
416-19(2): HOMELESSNESS IN INUVIK

TABLED DOCUMENT 266-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
418-19(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
HOUSING CORPORATION FUNDING, POLICIES  
AND STAFFING

TABLED DOCUMENT 267-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
423-19(2): NATIONAL HOUSING CO-  
INVESTMENT FUND

TABLED DOCUMENT 268-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
424-19(2): HOME OWNERSHIP

TABLED DOCUMENT 269-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
425-19(2): HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 270-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
438-19(2): MACKENZIE PLACE HIGH RISE

TABLED DOCUMENT 271-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
447-19(2): EXTENDING CELL PHONE  
COVERAGE RESPONSE

TABLED DOCUMENT 272-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
484-19(2): INGRAHAM TRAIL FIRE SERVICES  
FROM DETTAH

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling 14 documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 380-19(2): Municipal Funding Gap;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 399-19(2): Public Safety;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 412-19(2): Fire Hall in Dettah;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 413-19(2): How Core Need Income Threshold is Used for Housing;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 416-19(2): Homelessness in Inuvik;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 416-19(2): Homelessness in Inuvik;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 418-19(2): Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Funding, Policies and Staffing;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 423-19(2): National Housing Co-Investment Fund;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 424-19(2): Home Ownership;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 425-19(2): Homelessness and Housing;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 438-19(2): Mackenzie Place High Rise;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 447-19(2): Extending Cell Phone Coverage Response;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 484-19(2): Ingraham Trail Fire Services from Dettah." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 273-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
157-19(2): DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 157-19(2): Domestic Violence Leave." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 274-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
476-19(2): ENFORCEMENT ON RESERVE  
LANDS

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 476-19(2): Enforcement on Reserve Lands." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 275-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
390-19(2): INTRODUCTORY TRADES PROGRAM  
IN INUVIK

TABLED DOCUMENT 276-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
453-19(2): TEMPORARY VARIATION OF  
STATUTORY TIME PERIODS

TABLED DOCUMENT 277-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
475-19(2): RCMP DETACHMENT IN MONFWI

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 390-19(2): Introductory Trades Program in Inuvik;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 453-19(2): Temporary Variation of Statutory Time Periods;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 475-19(2): RCMP Detachment in Monfwi." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 278-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
391-19(2): COVID-19 BORDER AND TRAVEL  
RESTRICTIONS

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 391-19(2): COVID-19 Border and Travel Restrictions." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Tabling of documents. Member for Nunakput.

TABLED DOCUMENT 279-19(2):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
SUBMISSION TO CANADIAN RADIO AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CALL  
FOR COMMENTS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table "Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Response to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission Call to Comments and Review of the Commission's Regulatory Framework for the NW Tel Inc. and the State of Telecommunications Services in Canada's North." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 280-19(2):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR THE  
PERIOD MAY 26, 2020 TO OCTOBER 14, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 281-19(2):  
NWT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PENSION PLANS  
ANNUAL REPORT AT MARCH 31, 2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 282-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY PENSION ADMINISTRATION  
REPORT - RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT AND  
SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING ALLOWANCES  
ACT AT MARCH 31, 2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 283-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY PENSION ADMINISTRATION  
REPORT - RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT AND  
SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING ALLOWANCES  
ACT AT MARCH 31, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 284-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 285-19(2):  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER TO  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR 2020

**MR. SPEAKER:** Pursuant to Section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the "Summary of Members' Absences for the Period May 26, 2020, to October 14, 2020." Pursuant to Section 21(1) of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and Section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the "NWT Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Annual Report, at March 31, 2019." In accordance with Section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and Section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the "Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, at March 31, 2019," and the "Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, at March 31, 2020." Also pursuant to Section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the "Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2019-2020." Also, pursuant to Section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the "Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly for 2020." Thank you.

Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

## Notices of Motion

MOTION 26-19(2):  
APPOINTMENT OF LANGUAGES  
COMMISSIONER

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Friday, February 5, 2021, I will move the following motion. Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that pursuant to Section 15 of the Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories, that Ms. Brenda Gauthier of Fort Smith be appointed as Languages Commissioner for a term of four years; and further, that the appointment be effective February 5, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: 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, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order to rise and report progress. All those in favour?

---Carried

The motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

## Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering 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, and would like to report progress, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is 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 Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Replies to Budget Address (Day 1 of 7)
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions

14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
16. Tabling of Documents
17. Notices of Motion
18. Motions
19. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
20. First Reading of Bills
21. Second Reading of Bills
22. 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

23. Report of Committee of the Whole
24. Third Reading of Bills
25. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

