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**Thursday, February 11, 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**

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*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

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(Deh Cho)

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(Kam Lake)

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(Sahtu)

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**Mr. Rylund Johnson**  
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**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*  
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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, February 11, 2021****Members Present**

Mr. Blake, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Ms. Cleveland, Ms. Chinna, Ms. Cochrane, Ms Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Mr. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Ms. Thom, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Wawzonek

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 111-19(2):  
COVID-19 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
SYSTEM RESPONSE**

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us all in many ways but none of us more so than within the Health and Social Services system. The protection of our residents is our number one priority. In order to meet the challenge, our system quickly mobilized a number of critical pieces that enabled our territory to respond effectively to the pandemic. We did this through the implementation of decisive public health measures and a coordinated approach to health services. We provided the necessary testing, tracing, and care to manage cases, and make best use of our limited health resources.

The public health measures and orders put in place by the Chief Public Health Officer and the diligence of our residents and businesses in following them has meant that we have been able to contain cases in the NWT. These measures have not been easy and have had a significant impact on everyone, but we have been successful in protecting our residents from the spread of COVID-19 and avoiding the return to more stringent measures.

Mr. Speaker, the expansion of territory testing and analysis within the territory has been critical in order to respond quickly to positive cases and implement the necessary care and safety precautions to individuals and community members. We now have rapid point of care testing capacity in all of our community health centres which can deliver initial results in as little as 15 minutes. Confirmatory testing is completed using the "gold standard" polymerase chain reaction testing, or PCR testing,

methodology at the Stanton and Inuvik hospital lab sites, significantly improving turnaround times to an average of 24 to 48 hours.

Mr. Speaker, wastewater testing has proven to be an effective early warning system detecting COVID-19 in our communities. To date, we have implemented this testing in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, and Fort Smith. This surveillance program is a collaborative effort between community governments, Environment and Natural Resources, Municipal and Community Affairs, Health and Social Services, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Wastewater testing has enabled us to detect COVID-19 in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Hay River.

When we identify positive results, public health officials begin contact tracing and implementing other essential public health prevention measures to manage the spread of COVID-19. We saw how this works last month as part of the public health response to contain the cluster of COVID-19 cases in Fort Liard.

When wastewater testing in Hay River picked up a positive viral signal, we launched a coordinated response that included enhanced sewage surveillance, targeted testing for people who had been self-isolating, and dedicated clinics and extended hours to test individuals for COVID-19.

When the source of infection was traced to Fort Liard, a rapid response team was immediately deployed to assist with contact tracing, self-isolation logistics, and other essential tasks to contain the virus and help protect vulnerable people.

Mr. Speaker, the responses to prevent exposure and transmission of COVID-19 among our residents have had unintended impacts on our mental health and sense of well-being. The Health and Social Services system is committed to assist residents to cope with these impacts through improved service delivery, community partnerships, and ongoing communications.

Some of the actions that we have taken to support individuals and families include providing short-term financial support to families who cannot get assistance from other GNWT programs and providing services to vulnerable residents in Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River. We have also

increased the frequency of our advertising campaign to raise awareness of the availability of key services like family violence shelters, community counselling programs, and help lines. To support residents with mental health or addictions concerns, we established the territorial COVID Navigator in partnership with 811 and ProtectNWT. The COVID Navigator can help residents connect or reconnect with the appropriate health and social services resources, including their local community counselling program.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, on behalf of Cabinet, I want to thank residents and businesses for staying the course, for following the public health orders, and for coming forward for COVID-19 testing when asked through the public health advisories. Our current success would not be possible without the commitment made by every resident of the NWT. I am impressed and inspired by Northerners. I also want to provide thanks to all the Health and Social Services staff. The response to this crisis is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all these professionals to protect the health and safety of NWT residents.

I am asking residents to continue to follow the recommended measures to keep us protected while we work through the vaccine roll-out. Please continue to practice the healthy habits that we know work to stop the spread of COVID-19. These measures include self-isolating when required; staying home if you are sick; getting tested at the first sign of symptoms; wearing a mask when you're out; washing your hands frequently; and keeping a safe distance from others, even if you have had your vaccine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 112-19(2):  
AURORA COLLEGE TRANSFORMATION  
UPDATE

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When this government committed to establishing a polytechnic university, we did so with the promise that we would be transparent in the process. Guided by the NWT Post-Secondary Education Framework, there were a number of key documents released last fall that explain the process of transformation and those documents, the implementation plan and areas of specialization for the polytechnic university, continue to guide the process, but transparency does not stop there.

In October, we launched the Aurora College Transformation website to meet that promise of transparency and accountability, and visitors to the site can track the progress of the transformation.

Today, I am pleased to announce another way to keep up to date on the progress of the transformation with the release of the first quarterly report. This report adds another level of transparency and accountability for partners, key stakeholders, and the public.

Mr. Speaker, the transformation process is a multi-year initiative that includes meeting 81 commitments and more than 100 milestones over the course of six years. The quarterly report released today tracks the progress of these commitments and milestones in the five focus areas of the transformation: academic program management, accountability, governance, operations, and recruitment and retention of students. The report illustrates the number of key milestones that were completed in 2020 and key milestones that are planned for the duration of the transformation. It shows how many milestones are completed, in progress, and not yet started, in addition to highlights from each area of focus. Indigenous governments, the public, our partners, and key stakeholders can expect to see this level of transparency and accountability in quarterly reports until we launch the polytechnic university. Between publication dates, those interested can track our progress on the Aurora College Transformation web pages to get monthly updates on specific milestones, on engagement opportunities, and to learn more about the transformation in general.

Mr. Speaker, 2020 was an important year for the transformation. Many critical milestones were completed and many key documents were developed and released. In 2021, there are two critical milestones scheduled, amendments to the Aurora College Act and the development of the first ever three-year academic plan. There is also a great deal of work taking place on the other 106 milestones currently planned. That is why we have created the quarterly report. With an initiative as important as the transformation, it is important to celebrate all of our successes.

Our commitment to transform Aurora College into a sustainable, effective, and efficient polytechnic university will provide more post-secondary education opportunities for residents, right here in the territory. Those opportunities will include increased access to learning in every community, ladder programming from literacy to upgrading to certificate to degree, and new programs in the coming years that are aligned with the polytechnic university's areas of specialization. All of these changes are to ensure that Northerners are first in line for in-demand jobs and that we can leverage our strong connections to land, tradition, community, and people.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the successful transformation to a polytechnic university will result

in significant and wide-ranging economic recovery for the NWT, including preparing Northerners for employment; supporting business by supporting changing labour demands; expansion of infrastructure; development of co-investment partnerships; focusing on finding innovative solutions to northern issues; and capitalizing on northern opportunities. The quarterly report delivers on our promise to be transparent and accountable. I hope that it will also help to deepen understanding of what the polytechnic university will mean to residents, to communities, and to the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about the NWT summer student program. Last year, the Government of the Northwest Territories hired far fewer summer students than they normally would in an average year. Last year, however, was not a normal year, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced the government to re-evaluate its hiring practices and partially restructure their human resource procedures. In essence, the government needed more time to prepare itself to operate under pandemic conditions. Therefore, the government hired fewer students so they would have a smaller workforce to oversee during COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, the government has had only one year now to prepare itself for the large influx of incoming summer students. By now, I expect the government to have a concrete plan in place for the Summer Student Employment Program for 2021. During Committee of the Whole the other day, the Finance Minister mentioned that some job offers have already been sent out to potential summer student hires. This is very promising news for our students.

As I said in a Member's statement last May, COVID-19 or not, our students need to continue to be supported with employment opportunities and work experience. I realize that working in the public sector is not a shared goal for every summer student, but regardless, these summer student opportunities offer some level of employment choices for students in the NWT. Our students deserve every opportunity they can in order to find work to support their studies and transition into full-time employment within our workforce. Therefore,

Mr. Speaker, I strongly hope that our government will maximize the number of summer students hired by the Government of the Northwest Territories for 2021. We must signal to our students that they are not forgotten and they are valued. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for human resources later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MOOSEHIDE CAMPAIGN

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to bring recognition to the Moosehide Campaign Day, which is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year since it began, to bring awareness to stand up against violence toward women and children. Violence against women and children in the North is 10 times the national average, and that is only what has been reported. Many instances go unreported for many reasons. The root cause of this violence against women comes from various impacts of colonialism, residential school trauma, lack of employment, housing, adequate health and mental health supports, education, addictions; I could go on. There are things my colleagues and myself have raised in this House during every sitting. Women and children in the North cannot seem to escape this trend. I am positive every one of us in this room, at some point in their life, has been witness to, knows someone, or even experienced it themselves.

Mr. Speaker, it is so common in Indigenous communities, it's almost considered normal. I would like to be loud and clear. This is not normal. We need to speak up for ourselves, for our women, and for our girls.

The Moosehide Campaign, as I mentioned, is to raise awareness, and its goal is to end violence towards women and children. Those who wear the moose hide square are taking the pledge to stand up and speak out against violence towards women and girls, to support each other as men, and to hold each other accountable, to teach our young boys about the true meaning of love and respect, and to be a healthy role model for them, to heal themselves as men, and to support their brothers on their healing journey.

Mr. Speaker, the Moosehide Campaign supports any effort to raise awareness and bring an end to gender-based and domestic violence across all sectors of society. I encourage everyone to take the pledge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Colleagues, before we continue, I just

want to remind Members to please ensure your devices and your phones are shut off. It's actually why I don't bring my phone in here. That goes for everyone. Thank you. Next, we have Member for Kam Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEN'S NEW DAY PROGRAM

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, this year marks a decade since the annual Moosehide Campaign began efforts to end family violence through education, support, and healing. This week, I introduced you to Avery, a real NWT resident with a fictional name, whose story includes family violence. The NWT has the second highest rates of family violence in Canada, and the Department of Justice funds the men's New Day program to help men learn new coping mechanisms to improve their relationships with their partners and families. It is the NWT's only support service focused on men who use violence in intimate relationships.

Once run by the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre as an open drop-in support service, the New Day program was moved to the John Howard Society in 2017 following a \$40,000 report commissioned by Justice on the state of the program. The report recommended that the program needed to be more fluid, more than just a curriculum, and that community outreach should be considered as part of any future program plans.

Mr. Speaker, I have three significant concerns. Program participation dropped significantly after its move to the John Howard Society; the dwindling New Day program remains this government's flagship support for men; and support programs cannot continue to solely exist in Yellowknife. Like many Members in previous Assemblies, I am concerned about the future of this program. John Howard's four-year contract with the New Day program ends next month, and there is uncertainty about its future.

In Avery's case, the family called the John Howard Society. They were told they needed to book an appointment, but before that, the participant had to be screened by a counsellor to be admitted to see a wellness counsellor. Men face stigma about seeking help, Mr. Speaker. Pre-screening seems to be an unnecessary barrier to those seeking help. If the family has gotten so far that they have convinced a father, husband, or son to get help, that should be all that is required for program admission.

Family violence is not isolated in Yellowknife. It is found in every community, in every income bracket, and sometimes behind curtains you least expect. I look forward to learning about the future plans for

this program from the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Colleagues, I just want to remind Members to please slow down. Our interpreters are having trouble keeping up. Just keep that in mind. Don't worry about the clock. We will always make time. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRIORITIES AS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think maybe we should all walk out of here, come back in, and start over.

---Laughter

Anyways, Mr. Speaker, this morning, as I sat in front of my computer thinking about my Member's statement for today, I reflected on a question recently posed by one of the media outlets. The question asked was: what are my priorities going into this session? I did not respond to the media. However, I will answer the question here.

Mr. Speaker, my priority has been, and will continue to be, the constituents of Hay River and those who reach out to me for support no matter what region they are from. The issue or issues each constituent brings to me is of importance to them; therefore, it is of importance to me. When I reach out to any one of you on the other side of this floor with a constituent issue, I would ask that you please take the issue seriously and, prior to your response, place yourself in their shoes.

When someone comes to me because they are about to be evicted from their home; find themselves homeless; have been on a housing waiting list for up to eight years and still holding out hope; cannot pay their rent or utilities; have no food for their children; being mistreated due to the colour of the skin; having their health issues dismissed by healthcare workers because of perceived notions; a P1 being overlooked for a job or promotion because management "does not want to see them fail," then find out it was filled with a P2, P3, someone's spouse or a friend from the South; employees crying because they are being bullied and harassed at work; losing contracts to southern firms because of a storefront office; losing a contract to a southern firm and hearing the standard government line that "we followed our policy and the process was fair" or your bid was "non-compliant;" receiving a Standing Offer Agreement and not receiving any work; contractors not being paid in the 20 and 30 days we established; these are only some of the real issues that matter to me.

We were elected to make a difference and solve issues that matter to our constituents. We need to start making change where it counts, and that change has to start at the grassroots level. I do not see that happening. Mr. Speaker, if we can improve the lives of our constituents and ensure our northern business are benefitting from government contracts and resource development, only then can we say we are doing what we were elected to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH DURING PANDEMIC

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the beginning of this session, I've spoken a lot about the anxiety and worry that myself and our residents are feeling as this pandemic continues on. For myself, personally, I live alone and found the restrictions imposed over the last year, and particularly during the initial phase of the lockdown, very hard to adhere to as a single person. My social life, my human interaction, comes from people external to my household. When that was removed and even a hug from a friend made me feel guilty, the isolation that can come from living alone was only amplified. As I continue to address mental health issues in my role as an MLA, I've had numerous residents come forward to tell me that they feel the same, and some of these people are our teachers.

Many of our teachers come to the North from the South. Often, they are young, new to the profession, and have not spent a lot of time away from the bustle of southern cities or in locations as remote as they may find themselves in the NWT. Often our teachers rely on vacations and visits south to their families in order to recharge and maintain wellness, as is the case for a lot of NWT residents in general.

Given the nature of the work teachers do, they do not have the option to work at home like many of us. Their jobs require them to be in close quarters, sometimes under less than hygienic conditions, which, given a global pandemic, must be causing a huge burden of stress not previously felt. Just ask any teacher how quickly the common cold, or a flu, would rip through a school in pre-COVID times. Now that illness brings the possibility of death and, with it, a rise in anxiety for employees.

I already feel that teaching is an underappreciated profession. I have childhood memories of my mom on the picket line, in the pouring rain, fighting for a cost-of-living raise of 30 cents. Often, I watched her work into the night preparing lesson plans and

spending easily one-quarter of her own salary every paycheque on supplies for her classroom. Teachers are dedicated. They care. In return, I want to show them that we care, too, and I will have questions for the Minister of ECE at the appropriate time regarding supports for teachers. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DISTRICT HEATING

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons I believe our Power Corporation needs a new board not made up of deputy ministers is because it needs a fresh look at its goals and objectives. Is it an ally in fighting climate change or a corporation determined to protect its bottom line, keeping our communities on diesel at the expense of our rate payers? Does its mandate include devolving energy sovereignty to Indigenous governments, or is it determined to maintain a public monopoly at all costs?

We have seen the Northwest Territories Power Corporation resist handing over control of power systems to communities. This is because, when a community increases its renewable energy capacity, net metering kicks in. Even if that community has 100 percent federal dollars, the NTPC is afraid it will lose ratepayers and the costs will have to be passed on to everyone else. This is not an easy decision to be made. It is a complicated fight, but I believe that NTPC has lost its vision in where it's going.

I would like to suggest another area for the NTPC to expand its mandate into: heat. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation in their act specifically includes district heating in the definition of "energy," and it is well within their mandate to provide heating as a utility. District heating is proven to work. It comes with cost savings, and it decreases emissions. However, the work needed here cannot be done without coordination. It requires thought from start to the finish. Even if a community gets 100 percent federal funding and connects all of the residences in that community to district heat, they would then need to hire multiple staff and operate and establish a utility. Mr. Speaker, especially in our underfunded communities, that is well beyond their mandate.

What we are left with is proven technologies that lower the cost of living for our residents, with no one willing to implement them. Private enterprise is not equipped, nor are they able to access the same level of funding. My point being that there is nothing more I have to do as a legislator to permit the Power Corporation to provide residents with district

heating, a much-needed additional revenue stream for them, I might add. It is now a business decision by them. I know the City of Yellowknife would be very encouraged to put the pipes in the ground if the Power Corporation and the Department of Infrastructure would assist and find some way to take on the utility-management aspect. No one is better suited than the Power Corporation to do this work. I will have questions for the Minister about directing the NTPC to begin this work and start getting themselves and our communities off diesel.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to believe it has almost been a year, a little over a year, since this pandemic hit, and it has affected our people across the territory and across the world. Our medical systems are learning as they go. I want to acknowledge the good work the GNWT has done for coping in this crisis; 21,000 Canadians across Canada have lost their lives to COVID-19, not one in the NWT, and I thank God for that. I am pleased to hear from my constituents that the roll-out of the COVID vaccine in Nunakput went well on the first shot of inoculations going through the communities. Each community site was prepared for the roll-out. Nunakput communities were impressed by the preparedness of the vaccine teams. They documented the people and those who were given the shots.

Some Nunakput residents were experiencing a little bit of a sore arm a couple of days after it, but nobody reported any major illness or anything. Each Nunakput community has a social-sharing grapevine, Mr. Speaker, Facebook. Most residents have had time to get a shot and the vaccine available in their community. According to the HSS authority website, vaccine teams will be visiting again soon. The schedule is Paulatuk, February 16 and 17; Ulukhaktok, February 16, 17, and 18; and Sachs Harbour, February 18 and 19. The updated schedule does not include Tuktoyaktuk. Today, Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister about that. I want to encourage all my constituents and residents across the NWT to stay vigilant, limit social gatherings, and wash your hands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARIBOU HUNTING ZONES

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I want to make a statement on caribou. The caribou management zone is an area where people are not allowed to hunt within this area, within this zone, and they move the zone every once in a while. Recently, the elders have been calling me, and they are saying, "Why is that zone getting bigger every year?"

It's getting really difficult to hunt in that area, so I have been getting a lot of phone calls from elders. When we look at this, our elders who had survived on the caribou, today, they still depend on the caribou, but some days it's very difficult to go hunting. These are the words that are coming from the elders, that I am bringing to you. The Minister of ENR, what kind of policies and acts do they have in place, and how are they going to work with the elders in the community? These are some of my questions I will refer to the ENR Minister. Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation ends]

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. On January 11, 2021, there was a GNWT news release about our first progress report on our territory-wide approach to climate change. Unfortunately, there was not much to report, given the lack of progress over the last year. This may have been partially due to COVID, but it is also rooted in the faulty design of the climate-change approach from the last Cabinet that carries over into this Assembly.

As an example of the lack of progress, the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions last year was said to be a whopping 6 kilotonnes on total emissions of over 1,000, so less than 1 percent. Nowhere in the report does it say what the percentage of reductions was relevant to any baseline. The summary report claims that we are "generally on track" to meet the pan-Canadian framework target of reducing our 2005 emissions by 30 percent by 2030. However, at this rate, it is very clear we will not reach the target on time.

We still have an opportunity to shift course and join the growing international movement to save this planet from catastrophic climate change. The federal government signaled in its last Speech from the Throne that we need to move toward a net-zero target by 2050. This means that there are no new greenhouse gas emissions unless there are reductions in other areas of the economy, through actions such as energy conservation or efforts such as building retrofits or switching renewable energy for fossil fuels.

The carbon tax bill squeaked through last Assembly with a vote of 10 to 8 at second reading. At that point, I said, "I have consistently raised the need for an integrated approach to monitoring and public reporting of energy self-sufficiency, climate change, greenhouse gas reductions, carbon pricing, and the impacts on the cost of living, and this bill does not address that." The first attempt by our government to integrate reporting has not succeeded, in my view. There are few links drawn between the carbon tax retained, investment in greenhouse gas reductions from those revenues and other funds, and how all of this links to the pan-Canadian target. There are also very few details on how this government has actually changed its way of making decisions to better account for and integrate climate change. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources as the lead Minister on climate change. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
2020 NWT HOSPITALITY AWARD RECIPIENT  
MR. MIKE GONET

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Mr. Mike Gonet for receiving the 2020 Northwest Territories Hospitality Award. Mr. Gonet's commitment to tourism in the Deh Cho and the NWT did not go unnoticed by a lot of NWT residents who took advantage of vacationing in the NWT due to COVID this past summer. Today, I want to share my personal appreciation for the time and dedication that he and his staff displayed. I would like to emphasize the significance of him and his staff being recognized as one of the top operators in the NWT. The quality of life in the Northwest Territories would undoubtedly be diminished without selfless individuals like him and his staff, who take it upon themselves to provide an experience of the NWT that will be unforgettable.

I would like to share with you some of the comments that were shared in his nomination:

"A great big thanks to the welcoming staff at the park."

"Friendly and loving people, their welcome made the experience better."

"Well-kept grounds and friendly staff."

"Mike is just an all-around genuinely nice guy who is extremely hard-working and really cares and takes pride in his work."

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity of stopping in the Blackstone park a couple of times this past summer, and it was amazing how much work had been done to improve the park and make this day more enjoyable. During both visits, I witnessed Mike and his staff engage with park users to see if there was anything that they needed to make their stay much more enjoyable. As well, I heard from other Northerners throughout the summer about their positive experience with him and his staff.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank ITI for recognizing the meaningful work that he and his staff did this past summer. I believe this will help bring more visitors next summer to see the hidden beauty of this park it has to offer, and given the experience firsthand of Mike and staff's hospitality.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve and represent them in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, and I cannot state my gratitude enough to justify the importance of excellent service they provided in the region and in the NWT. I'd like to ask you to join me and give them a big round of applause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, replies to budget address, day 6 of 7. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

### Replies to Budget Address

#### MR. NORN'S REPLY

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. As the Member from Hay River mentioned earlier, he had a few days to ponder. You think about what you are going to say that morning. A lot of times, you put together your statements. I had a few days to think about this, and I am glad I did. You have to remind yourself that our jobs are not a sprint; it's a marathon. We have to think about what we are going to say. Originally, there was some developments that happened in my riding I was very upset about. I thought, "You know what, I'm going to just take my time," and sure enough, some things happened. Some developments happened that happened for the better, and I'm glad they did.

Overall, I'm glad to see some positive changes for the North, for my riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the past week alone as I mentioned. Overall, when I speak here today, that doesn't make my message any less pressing, but I still want a praising but firm address for our colleagues on the other side. As the Minister of Finance quite eloquently put it last week, we are pushing forward as a government with cautious optimism, and I agree with that statement.

Before I go into some of the politics of all this, Mr. Speaker, I want us to start off with a positive memory and positive thoughts. I think that's a good, important thing to do and not get into thinking and negative thoughts because that's not a place where we should go as leaders.

With that, not too long ago, I still remember as a kid going up to visit my dad, one could take off with their little ones in the summer right here downtown. For example, there was Raven Mad Days going on. You could hear the live music, kids running around doused in shaving cream. Those were good memories. There would be local businesses selling their goods. There would be food carts and artisans selling their creations. Really good memories. I know many of us are really missing those things such as drum dances. Drum dances around a bonfire, the camaraderie, talking with elders, talking with your friends, laughing, hand games, talent shows, and jigging contests up North. We miss those things that had happened. I hope we get back to that soon because that's community spirit, Mr. Speaker. Through that, I want everybody in the North to try to keep pushing forward, keep thinking positive because we're going to get back there eventually. I mentioned last year in an online address, we need to still continue to go along with patience and vigilance.

Going back to some of our political discussions, Mr. Speaker, I am happy we are starting to see some gradual changes in our policies in all our departments. Some notable changes that I've seen so far are some long-awaited changes coming through to our Business Incentive Policy and procurement policies, for example.

The main message I would like to leave my colleagues is we need a balanced approach when we look at this budget or any other budget. Listening to a lot of my colleagues in the room, when we write down our messages, we come from all walks of life. Our ideologies, we come from different political beliefs and backgrounds. I think, overall, we're starting to see some changes that we can agree on, and we're starting to get some consensus. That's very, very, very comforting.

There're some things I think we could still work on. I'm still genuinely worried about the economy because there's still some lackadaisical messages. We're still a little bit lazy, for lack of a better word, in terms of getting a plan, an economic recovery plan from our government, and we're still hearing it on this side of the House. We still need to find a clear plan. I am hoping that we can hear some solid timelines, some clear guidelines, something come up through the works eventually, like very soon because, the longer we wait, it will just be a detriment to our economy and our people in the North.

I'm going back a bit talking about the BIP policy earlier. Last year, I joked, sitting here in the House when I did my budget address that I thought it was comical that Walmart, an American company, was BIP listed. This is no longer funny to me anymore. It is a year later. There is something very broken with our system, with our incentive policies, if they exclude homegrown Indigenous businesses such as Denendeh Investments, for them giving excuses why they can't be BIP listed. Looking through that, I can't think of any other way than saying there's some racism, racist barriers there. There's no other way to explain it. You can't draw any other conclusion. We need to change that. We need to move away from that thinking. If there are people in our government that think that way, they don't need to be there anymore. We need to get rid of them. I'm really firm on that. I can't stress that enough.

Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that our government tightens up our business policies and procedures when it comes to policies such as the procurement and the BIP processes. We need to be stricter with our policies and tighten up the wording for these directives, and they need to come from each and every department so they leave little room for manipulation or interpretation. We've got to close up those loopholes, period. If we stick to that road, we stick on that road, there will be more inclusion and less exclusion from our northern business and our people working in the North. Above all else, we need to stop economically leakage out of the territory. Keep territorial money in the territory, wherever we can and whatever we can.

Mr. Speaker, again, I'm going back to turn my attention to our Northern and Aboriginal businesses. In a few statements this past year, I really tried to drive home this message of, again, keeping the money in the territory. I keep thinking of this term. I don't know if it was ever brought up, but I was thinking about it when I was writing this, "territorialism." We've got to think about ourselves. I'm going to keep on saying it until I am blue in the face. We need to scrutinize every contract, every hire, every dollar from the public purse, and try to keep it here. We need to look after our own.

The key is you're not just to sort of help our people survive, but we need to see them thrive. We need to see our businesses thrive and not just keep our noses above the water. Right now, we're not going in that direction. Through all this in my research, I heard an interesting statistic from one of our business leaders that, for every dollar that the government invests into business, it translates into \$7 into our local economies. That's huge. Through that, I thought about this more. The pandemic really is painting businesses into a corner. I don't want our government to put ourselves in a situation where it's basically an economic triage where, eventually, we're going to have to decide which businesses

we're going to bail out and which we're going to let go under. I really don't want to go down that road and have that burden. I don't want that to be our legacy.

Mr. Speaker, the definition of free enterprise is when private companies compete for profit without government interference. I can tell you right now, because of this pandemic, the laissez-faire way of doing things or hands-off approach from the government has gone out the window, but I get it. I am realistic. We are doing this to help save lives through the COVID pandemic and to keep the number of infections down. To do that, I would like to tell our residents again, as mentioned before by one of my colleagues here, we all need to do our part to get immunized and follow directions from the medical experts.

Mr. Speaker, with that, what can we do as a territory to help our businesses, our corporate citizens in the North? One message I really want to drive home is to buy North. Over Christmas, you go out, you check your mail, and you see that little logo with the little arrow at the end, the Amazon logo. So many people found that it was just much more convenient. I know that there's a pandemic going on. They're afraid to go out and mingle, go out to the stores, and go to your local Northern or to places like Overlander. Those businesses are up North, and we're not doing that. I think, before we hit that click button to do our online shopping, we need to think about our mom-and-pop stores in the North, because these mom-and-pop stores are the backbone of the North. They create jobs. They help people put food on our tables, help pay their bills, and the more we click on the online shopping button to help out the southern firms, the more we are going to hurt our own people. I want to make sure that we do that. I am guilty of that, and I am going to do my part to do better in that department. With that, I urge all our residents to get out and go shop when you can, and just help our economy to keep chugging along because that's what we have to do. We have to keep persevering through this.

Despite all this, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go on with our northern businesses. I do see some great opportunities for our territory. One opportunity I see is in remediation. Again, it's all about thinking through it and listening. I did hear my colleague from Frame Lake mention remediation this earlier in the week, and I do believe he is onto something. A lot of us don't agree with what he says, but he's been here a long time and he is onto something. In speaking with some of the business leaders in my riding, I was told that the NWT is poised to become a world leader in mine remediation. In Chief Drygeese territory alone, there are six abandoned sites along the Ingraham Trail that the YKDFN want cleaned up, and I did not even mention the Giant Mine remediation yet. Right now, the financial

responsibility lies with the federal government under GNWT control as part of devolution. This is a great partnership opportunity, and I really hoping this can gain some traction in the life of this Assembly and get things going. Again, it goes back to jobs, training opportunities, contracts, keeping the money here.

Again, I mentioned I was quite angry about one item, and that item I was referring to was the Frontier Lodge. I'm going to move to the other side of the lake, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the LKDFN, Lutsel'e Dene First Nation, sent out correspondence to our government, to the Department of MACA in particular, to help get the lodge off the ground and operating for last year's season. These talks broke down. This is unacceptable. It took over a year to finally get some movement on this file to help get the lodge operating again. To give a bit of background for everybody, the Frontier Lodge was owned by an out-of-territory entity not too long ago. In December 2019, that ownership changed to the LKDFN. Prior to that, there were no issues in terms of permitting, licensing, and red tape to let them operate in peace. Since that changeover to an Aboriginal business, meaning the LKDFN, they were suddenly faced with permitting barriers and red tape. How do you explain this? Again, it just goes back to that discrimination piece. There is no explanation. It shouldn't take a year to get back to an Indigenous government for something that is fairly simple to fix. Overall, when I do my oral questions here, I think the Minister will give us some update. I'm glad we're starting to get things moving again in terms of that business, and we need to see that.

Again, everything always comes full circle. I mentioned in last year's budget address we dealt with the Depression in the 1930s. How did they dig themselves out of that? Infrastructure. The U.S. and Canada, they put all their eggs in a basket. They had to; they had no choice because of the stock market crash. They had to put their money into bridges. Sorry. My colleague from Nunakput just made me laugh. They had to put their money into bridges, highways, infrastructure, to keep people working, and it's all about trying to keep our economy moving along. If history has taught us anything, investment in infrastructure is a good thing. It will be good for short-term measures, but if it's done right, there could be some long-term opportunities through that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping we can give our economic players a fighting chance, keep them in the game, and bring back our economy to vibrant state once again, to get back to life the way it once was, get our kids running around in the streets down in Raven Mad Days, covered in shaving cream, laughing, and seeing our local artisans and our businesses up and running again. It doesn't

seem like it's going to happen right now, but we will get back there. I want to get that positive message out to our Northerners. I really believe we can get there. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Replies to budget address. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 541-19(2): AURORA COLLEGE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of ECE. Yesterday, we had our economy theme day and I asked the Minister my first two questions, and I was so excited about the responses that I got that I accidentally omitted one of them, so here I am going to ask that question today. I would like to know: how will this transformation of the polytechnic grow space related to research in Inuvik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and you can't blame the Member. I talked about new jobs that are being created in Inuvik and the great things that will be happening there as part of the transformation. Transforming into a polytechnic university means making research a bigger part of the institution. As part of the transformation planning, part of the work is under way, including building research capacity. Increased research capacity will come with increasing staff and expanding facilities. The college is already hiring three chairs; I mentioned one of them yesterday, the Climate Change Adaptation Research Chair located in Inuvik, as well as a chair located in Fort Smith and one located in Yellowknife.

The institution will really evolve under the governance of the board, but we are already planning for Inuvik to be, really, the research centre of the post-secondary. It will be where the most research capacity is, given what's already there. The Western Arctic Research Centre out of Aurora Campus is a remarkable facility, and I am confident that it will continue to be expanded in terms of staff and facilities going forward. There are already plans in place to replace the warehouse facility at the Western Arctic Research Centre with something bigger that is going to attract more research partners.

We've already gained partial federal funding for this, and we are looking for the rest so that we can

get this work under way. In addition, the college is also working on implementing a research services team that will be tasked with building research capacity, both inside the college and among other potential partners throughout the territory, such as Indigenous governments, communities, industry, and non-governmental organizations. That's going to be a way to bring research dollars into the territory, not just for the college, but for everyone. The research team is expected to bring several more positions in addition to the ones I've talked about to Inuvik, as well as Yellowknife and Fort Smith.

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

#### QUESTION 542-19(2): SUMMER STUDENTS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister responsible for human resources tell us the total number of summer students who were hired for the summer of 2020? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2020, we had 236 students hired as summer students; 228 of those were Northwest Territories residents. Thank you.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Can the Minister tell us if the Government of the Northwest Territories will be initiating any further holds on the hiring of summer students for 2021 as done in 2020?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** We are certainly not planning on any holds, Mr. Speaker. We didn't plan on any holds last year. Unfortunately, COVID-19 did create unexpected challenges. Given where we are at right now, I certainly am happy to say that there is no anticipation of any holds.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Can the Minister tell us if she anticipates the number of summer student hires for 2021 to be greater than the number of hires for 2020? If so, can she provide us with an estimate as to the number of summer student hires so far?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I do certainly anticipate the number of student hires to be much higher. In fact, I hope it is a particular good year for summer students. I can say, as I mentioned earlier, there were 236 hires last year. Typically, we have upwards of 600 students who register for the program. Last year, we only had 460 who registered for the program. As of right now, there are already 205 students registered for hire. There are seven who have already been hired or pending,

and we are only in early February. I do think the numbers right now are looking good and hopeful, again, that that will lead to a much higher number this summer.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, I asked the Minister if the department of human resources would create a hiring contingency plan in the event of an emergency such as COVID-19. Can the Minister tell us what progress the department has made in this area, specifically regarding summer student employment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The summer student program is very important tool that the Government of the Northwest Territories has to hire students, to introduce them to government work, to introduce managers to potential future hires as a recruitment tool, and a retention tool, as well.

As it was last year, Mr. Speaker, once the COVID-19 pandemic went through the spring and the summer and workers returned to their offices, we were able to bring some students on. As I said, 236 students were hired. It, right now, does depend on each department, what their needs are. What we are trying to communicate, again, number one is that it's for students to register for the program, but then also for departments to be able to communicate their own needs and to be conscious of the fact that we have a number of students who we want to have returning.

In short, Mr. Speaker, there's not a set contingency plan. It will, of course, depend department on department, and it depends on what may or may not come this summer. Right now, it is certainly our hope that we learned a lot from last year's process, and we learned a lot about how to get people back to work. Relying on that, we are looking forward to a good season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 543-19(2):  
CARIBOU MOBILE ZONE

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When I made my Member's statement, I commented on caribou management. I also mentioned the hunting zone and how difficult it is for people to go hunting. I would like to ask the ENR Minister a question. Before I ask that question, I want to say this question that I'm posing right now is coming directly from the elders. It's their words. [Translation ends]

When I first spoke about the mobile zone in my Member's statement, I would like to ask a few questions that have been outlined here by an elder in my constituency. First and foremost, they would like to know: when was the first mobile zone initiated or established, and who made that decision? Mr. Speaker, masi.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mobile zone was established in 2015. It involved the Tlicho government and ENR. We looked at it. We also looked at having discussions in 2018. It started in 2015, and we have had further discussions in 2018 about the mobile zone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** The next question that another elder from the community asked is: this mobile zone keeps getting bigger every year, which makes it more challenging and difficult for harvesters to be out there and harvest food for their families. They're asking: why is it getting bigger every year when we have the opportunity to go out there? Basically, that's what one of the elders was asking. What's causing the increase in the line?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** First of all, the perfect storm happened. The Beverly herd and the Bathurst herd and the Bluenose East herds kind of amalgamated together, so it was a concern. We also have our Bathurst collared animals out there, and so it has been impacted where everybody is. The Beverly, like I said, has moved in with it. What has happened is it's a similar size, but it has kind of moved into the east further, which has had an impact on the road and that. It's similar to last year, but it has been the perfect storm, and unfortunately, this is the situation that has occurred.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Obviously, the elders predicted what kind of answers the Minister was going to give. There are three herds. That means there was an increase in population of the caribou herd. That should allow us to harvest in that area, not discouraging us to hunt, Mr. Speaker. Another elder, because I spoke to a few of them, who called me just this past week, asked: how are the elders engaged and involved in the decision-making of this mobile zone? I understand there's the Wek'eezhii board, but elders are asking: how are we involved as elders? Mr. Speaker, these are the words of the elders.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Before I answer that question, I have to thank the Member for these questions. I appreciate that he's talking to the elders. They are our foundation. I have had the pleasure of just recently meeting the YK Dene elders and having a good conversation with them. I

have made a commitment to other Members that, if elders wish, I am more than willing to meet with them. Moving forward, how was this developed? How were the elders engaged? The Tlicho government have meetings; they invite our ENR staff in there. They have that opportunity, they have that exchange, they hear their concerns, and then they are brought forth to us. The other thing that the Member talked about was the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. They represent the region and also the Tlicho government. We get information from them. We also get information from the chiefs and the grand chief and from the Member as well. I am more than willing to work with elders moving forward.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like the elders should be all-inclusive. It sounds like there's only a handful of elders who may have been involved. The ones who were calling me have not been directly involved, and they want to be out there. Even at 70 years of age, they want to be out there with us. It's a bit of a challenge right now because every Tuesday, the boundary line changes. It's substantial right now and making it more challenging for us to hunt. Anyways, the next question I have is: with respect to community hunts or harvesting from the community perspective, what kind of options are available for a fuel subsidy or transport subsidy to MacKay Lake? That's the only area where we can hunt, so what is available to the harvesters in my region?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I thank the Member for that question. Good news: the Department of ENR has given \$30,000 to the Tlicho Government to help the people in the riding, but it's just not for the Tlicho. We've also done the same thing with the YK Dene, the Lutselk'e Dene, and the North Slave Metis, so we've given \$30,000. We found the money thinking outside the box, as the Member asked me yesterday, finding money to help that area. We are willing to get that money out there. Again, I think the Member talked about one thing, and I'd just like to say, for those elders who were missing, I'm more than willing to go on a tour with the Member to meet with these elders. It's educational for me. It helps me. I bring staff here; they get to hear it, as well. Because we need to make informed decisions and that's our traditional and local knowledge, and elders are a perfect avenue for it, so I'm more than willing to work with the Member to attend meetings with him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 544-19(2):  
MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECE. Has the department developed any sort of COVID-specific mental wellness training or supports for teachers and students to deal with the ongoing stress and fatigue of the pandemic? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, ECE has developed, offered, and delivered a professional development training session on promoting mental health and well-being in the time of COVID, recognizing, as I've said before in the House, that there have been few professions as upended as teaching due to the pandemic. Mental health and counselling services continue to be offered for JK to 12 students, either in person, virtually, or over the phone. I will note that, in the early days of the pandemic, when students had to work from home, counsellors went above and beyond to try and contact students in any way they could. It obviously wasn't a perfect situation, but the efforts have been made throughout.

Teachers also, through their collective agreement, have access to a mental health program called Starling Minds and LifeSpeak. I just know from speaking with teachers around the territory that these are really valuable resources and they are well utilized. That's something that I know that a lot of teachers have relied on during the pandemic. There have also been virtual workshops and resources for education staff so that they are aware of and informed about some of the counselling options that they have because sometimes people think they don't have access when, really, they do. We want to make sure that everyone knows every avenue that they have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** I thank the Minister for that. I'm glad to hear that those supports are in place. I understand that confidentiality may be a bit of a factor, but can the Minister comment on whether or not they are seeing an increase in the number of teachers who are taking personal days or are going on stress leave as a result of COVID-19? Even if there is not specific data, maybe the Minister can speak a bit to any anecdotal evidence he is hearing to this.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** There is no doubt that this has been a stressful time, and I'm sure that there are teachers who have been very stressed by this. There are different situations across the territory. I have spoken with teachers where it's not really an issue in their community or their school, but other

ones are really feeling it. I have heard anecdotes, of course. I don't have any hard numbers with me right now, but we can work with human resources and the education bodies and get that information because I think it's important to know what the effects of this pandemic have been on our educators.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you for that, again. My next question is a really easy one, yes or no: does the Minister commit to pushing with his colleagues for the teachers to be declared an essential worker and therefore be given the vaccine immediately as a priority group?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** This is, of course, a decision of the Chief Public Health Officer, who has made clear that she makes decisions based on public health information and not political pressure. That being said, we are always advocating for our teachers. I'm happy to bring this to the Chief Public Health Officer again for discussion.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I heard a yes in there for the Minister to go and advocate on behalf of the teachers to be getting the vaccine. My last question, again, is sort of repeating what was spoken in Committee of the Whole, but I would like to know if the Minister or his department is going to increase funding to the three local school boards here in Yellowknife in order to deal with their rising insurance costs. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** For those who aren't aware, school boards, there are schools in the territory that are not owned by the GNWT. Those are located in Yellowknife. They are owned by YCS and YK1, and because they are not GNWT assets, they are insured by the school boards. The school boards have been getting insurance through a cooperative in Alberta, a company that insures schools all over Alberta. However, given Alberta's recent history of floods and fires over the last number of years, which has been unprecedented, insurance costs have skyrocketed, and school boards have been paying, collectively, tens of millions if not over a hundred million dollars more a year in insurance costs. The school boards in Yellowknife were also insured by that company, which has since actually wound up. They had to go into the private market, so their costs have also skyrocketed. If those schools are uninsured and they burn down or they are damaged, it's on us to foot the bill to replace them or repair them, obviously, if there is significant damage that goes beyond regular maintenance. We can't have the schools uninsured, so we are working with the school boards to figure out how we're going to address this, but, of course, we are

going to have to offer some sort of support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 545-19(2):  
VACCINATION SCHEDULE FOR TUKTOYAKTUK

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Can the Minister tell me when the vaccine team will be coming back into Tuktoyaktuk? Because it's not on their scheduling to be visiting Tuktoyaktuk, on the upcoming schedule. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for the question. The next round of vaccinations are going to be offered to the most remote communities with the least amount of healthcare infrastructure, and so that does not include Tuktoyaktuk. That is going to be scheduled separately, and at this time, we don't have a date to provide the Member for when the vaccine team will be in to his community. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I think Tuktoyaktuk is pretty remote. It's 3,000 kilometres away. Anyway, it's a concern for me. We had a pandemic in 1914 that killed 5,000 Inuvialuit 18 miles away from Tuktoyaktuk. My elders are worried. I'm getting phone calls. Why are we put into that category? We have a road, yes, but we have to drive 148 kilometres to the hospital, one way. I really am recommending this Minister tell Ms. Kandola to get her staff into the community and put us on this list for getting these inoculations done. I have a card here from them saying we're seven days out on this immunization card, that the needles went into everybody's arm up in Tuktoyaktuk; seven days away, eight, so what's going to happen? It's not acceptable.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** There are a few facts to bring into this conversation. The first is that our vaccine allocation was reduced by 38 percent, and as a result of that, we don't have as much vaccine as we did for the first shots. The second is that the immunity conferred by the first shot is 92 percent, so people who have had their first shot have almost as much immunity as the person who has had two shots. The final point that I would like to make is that there is a period of time where people can receive their second shot without any hardship to their first one, that is no loss of effectiveness, and that is up to 42 days. We have already spoken publicly about the fact that, because of the reduced vaccine shipments, some people will end up waiting

longer for the second shot, but rest assured; there will be a second shot within that time.

**MR. JACOBSON:** When this 42 days is over and people do not get that inoculation shot for the second shot in Tuktoyaktuk, what? Do we start over for first and second needles again and we are waiting another 40 days?

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** We anticipate being able to give everyone their second shot within 42 days.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. Just in regard to that, if we are so short on inoculations for the community, we have people who never went and got their inoculation in the first go-around; we have some elders who were out of town on medical. Are they still able to get their inoculation shots when the next go-around comes into the community of Tuktoyaktuk? I need a date for the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** When the vaccine team returns to any of the communities, the people who did not receive the vaccine for the first time for any reason, whether they were not ready or they were not there or whatever, they are eligible to receive their first shot at that time. The complete vaccination schedule is available on the NTHSSA website, and the schedule goes until next Friday. Tuktoyaktuk is not on that schedule, but I am anticipating that, at some point early next week, there will be planning for the week of February the 22<sup>nd</sup> and that the Member can promote to his residents the timing of the clinic in Tuktoyaktuk. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 546-19(2):

DIABETES PROGRAM IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Diabetes-related complications can be very serious and even life-threatening. Properly managing blood-sugar levels reduce the risk of developing the complications associated with diabetes. Having a good diabetes program can help to prevent this or delay the onset of these complications. I know for a fact that there is no diabetes program, a dedicated one, for the residents of my community, as I had spoken about my personal experience recently. It makes me wonder if there are any available services in all small health centres and in all small communities. I plead on behalf of the many diabetics in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services investigate to ensure that all small health centres are equipped

to provide a diabetes program in all of the small communities? Mahsi.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that, for people who have a diagnosis and not a brand-new diagnosis, there are blood tests that are taken at the health centres and that blood is analyzed at one of the hospital labs. The results are sent back to the health centres with a flag if there is an issue that needs to be followed up. That is my understanding, that that is the way in which diabetes care is provided to communities outside of the regional hubs. I can certainly confirm, if the Member is particularly concerned about Fort Providence, that the general rule there applies to his community, as well. Thank you.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Yes, I know for quite some time, even before the current Minister was the Minister, I had been expressing concerns with probably nurse practitioners in the health centre. Those are all of the complaints I have been receiving from residents, and I am not sure if there is anything related to my filing complaints that may have prevented my blood work that I did twice in that health centre from ever leaving the health centre or even being documented. That is my concern, and thus I ask for an investigation.

Plus, I have been asking for quite some time to have an evaluation program for all small health centres in all of the small communities because nobody really knows what is really happening in all those small centres, small health centres. Nobody is evaluating anything, any of the programs, if there are any, because I just spoke to a person on the phone this morning before showing up here. They are stating the same thing: there is nothing there; there is supposed to be somebody who is appointed to do it; they are just not doing it. I spoke to a nurse there myself, personally, and they said, no, they do not have a program. That is my concern. It could be the same in all the small health centres. There is quite a number. I just want the health Minister to say, "Yes, we will investigate and evaluate and look after the serious health concerns of the residents of the Northwest Territories." If she can't do that kind of work.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 547-19(2):  
MARGINALIZED CITIZENS' NEEDS

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just about to email the questions to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in the North, we have the

"haves" and the "have nots." The "haves" are mostly government employees and those in YK or regional centres. The "have nots" are those mostly in the small communities. I would ask the Premier to tell those who are struggling when this government will seriously start to address the issues each is dealing with on a daily basis and when they can expect timely support to put a roof over their head and food on the table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do always say that a society is judged by how we treat our most marginalized populations, and I do agree that our smaller communities are some of our most marginalized populations. In fact, a lot of the people who come to our capital city are from smaller communities and end up in homeless shelters and struggling in our income support systems and all kinds of systems that are not fair. It is close to my heart, and I am glad that we are looking at things. What are we doing?

**Health:** health has a community-based suicide prevention fund, money for them, peer-support funds for people returning from treatment. Expansion of homecare is going to happen. The Child and Family Services and the Healthy Family Program is going to be expanded, and there is on-the-land treatment funding. I do remember the Minister saying it was undersubscribed the last time she had spoken in the House, so I would really advocate for communities to access that funding if it is still undersubscribed.

**Housing:** dear to my heart, it's why I came into politics. In the last government, and I am confident that this government will do it, as well, there was a direction from the housing Minister at the time, who just happened to be me at the time, that homeless shelters need to be built in smaller communities. The majority, over 90 percent, of people in homeless shelters in our capital city are from smaller communities. In that government, we did build homeless shelters, I believe, in three, and hopefully that will continue. The hundred lease-to-own units, that is in our priorities. We do not own any property in Yellowknife; they are all apartments so that all of those would actually be outside of our capital city. That is a good news story. I did hear the Minister just talk the other day about dealing with the insurance and the land tenure for housing, which was always an issue, so that is something that will help our smaller communities.

The seniors' income threshold was just changed, one of the best things. I do remember an MLA saying in this House that a poor senior had a screwdriver stuck in their oil tank to be able to protect it. I'm not okay with that. That was changed.

The housing Minister did a great job in changing that so only seniors get their own income, not their families', based on to determine if they needed help. Reducing the municipal funding gap is certainly going to help communities, as well. All communities that request have a surplus.

Education, child and youth counsellors, in partnership with Health, is a huge asset for our small communities. It's tough for children in the smaller communities. The northern distance ed program is going to be expanded to five communities in this government. That's huge. That's showed success. In Ulukhaktok, three students were able to graduate grade 12 and go South without having to do upgrading. It shows it works. I'm a huge advocate of that, as well.

The small community employment fund: in 2019-2020, there were over 750 jobs that were given. In 2021, there are 431 jobs so far to 32 communities. We're looking at getting daycares. Universal daycare isn't as easy as just saying it's free for people or for low-income people. We don't have daycares in communities, so that has been a priority of the education Minister to try to get the infrastructure to get those daycares in communities. Universal is only good if you have the services available. For the polytech, the Minister has talked many times about actually expanding and working with the 22 community learning centres, not only the three campuses, but what can we do with the community learning centres, which will help their people as well.

ENR has several new and enhanced programs to support harvesters and families getting out on the land, such as the grubstake's start up money to get people out on the land and the CHAP program for community harvesters. For the territorial protected areas, we're looking at the guardianship program, waste reduction, forestry programs, research and monitoring programs, firefighting programs; over 800 jobs in small communities.

Finance is going to do a BIP review, Business Incentive Policy review, that will maximize, as was stated earlier, to have jobs in the North, which will help small communities. The Indigenous government procurement policy that we are doing, it's my belief that, if we help Indigenous governments to help their people, we help our own government. That will help small communities.

Three large infrastructure projects, some Members are really fond of and others aren't: Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Slave Geological, and the Taltson Hydro. Those are projects that will bring jobs for people. We have the largest infrastructure budget in the history of Assemblies. Those jobs are hopefully going to be for northern people as much as possible.

Increase in the regional decision-making is a priority of ours. That will help to make sure that the regions are heard. The resource royalty-sharing within governments that sign onto devolution was not so great this year, but the goal of that was to put money into Indigenous governments so they could help their people.

Through that, Mr. Speaker, I know in the last government we always said to the federal government, flow the money through us and we will disseminate to the communities. We have taken a different stance in this government. We've talked with Indigenous governments and said, "We will be your partners." We will go to the federal government together, and if it makes sense, we will actually advocate for them to actually take their money to the Indigenous governments. Sometimes, of course, we need programs to support for our own, as well, but my belief, Mr. Speaker, is that if we do help Indigenous governments so that they can prosper and provide programs to their people, to their membership, it, in turn, ensures that all people, all communities, will actually have supports. It saves this government money.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go, but I do think that this government is on the right track. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Just let me rephrase that question. No. Seriously, what I would like to hear from the Premier is when we can expect to see more public housing in the NWT. What I want to hear is a commitment that this government will support the private sector in providing housing in the market communities while this government focuses on the non-market communities. I believe that, in the market communities, most people can afford housing. In the non-market communities, I think we are dreaming if we think that the private sector is going to go there and do it. I think that's where our money should be going. I just want to know if we can get a commitment that we will look at that focus.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** That question is outside of my portfolios, and I don't have that information for the Member on hand. As the question pertains to the responsibility of the housing Minister, I suggest that the Member redirect the question as required by the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Yes. Keep our line of questions to the appropriate Ministers. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another area, and maybe this isn't directly for the Premier, but since she is the head of this government, I will ask. One of the problems I see is

that this government has said that there is no appetite to provide addictions centres in the Northwest Territories. What I would ask is: will this government commit to looking into developing a relapse centre to help those who need a place to go for a short period when they feel they need relapse and where they can receive some temporary support? Maybe they don't want to develop a full-blown treatment centre here, but on the street and talking to people, what they are looking for is something that is short-term where they can go. I talked to one of the Ministers the other day, and she indicated that people would go up to her and talk to her and just look for that support. They do that with me, as well. I would just like to see something where somebody can go for a short period of time. I hope that the Premier would be able to answer that question.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** That question is outside of my portfolios, and I don't have the information for the Member. As the question pertains to the responsibilities of the Health and Social Services Minister, I suggest the Member redirect the question as required by the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have one other question here, and I know the Premier can answer this one. I would ask the Premier what this government is doing to reduce the overall cost of living for residents in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** That one does work more for the executive. The cost of living, we are not going to be able to reduce. The North is expensive. We're not going to be able to say that we are just going to get cheaper. Groceries are expensive here. Food is expensive here. Fuel is expensive here. Housing is expensive here. What we are looking at is programs to be able to support those costs of living.

The last government used to say that the best social program is a job. I never really agreed with that. However, I do believe that part of the best social program is having a job. If we can review our Business Incentive Policy, that will make a difference. The Minister of ECE is looking at doing a review of income support. That will make a difference. The housing Minister is working on how to be more accessible to people in the communities. That will make a difference.

I can't say that the cost of living in the North will be cheaper. I should say, though, if we can get people off diesel, that might make a difference, as well. We can't say that it's going to be the same price as the

South, but we are doing as a government what we can to make sure that our programs, our services, address the needs of people, and addressing the needs of people means making sure that they can afford to live in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. NORN:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I had my questions up here, and I just have some technical difficulties. If you can just go to the next Member, please? Thank you.

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

QUESTION 548-19(2):  
CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Good old paper. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, who is the lead on climate change. Can the Minister explain how the Northwest Territories could possibly be on track for greenhouse gas reductions to meet our national and international obligations when reductions last year were less than 1 percent of baseline? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, ENR's the lead, but we have many departments working on this. Infrastructure is the one responsible for greenhouse gas. I do thank the Member for giving his questions up ahead of time so I am able to give this information here today instead of postponing it or telling you you'd have to ask another Minister.

In 2018, the Northwest Territories annual emissions were 1,230 kilotons, so we need to reduce our emissions by about 136 kilotons to meet our target by 2030. In 2019-2020, the first year of implementation of implementing the 2030 energy strategy, the Government of the Northwest Territories directly achieved approximately 6 kilotons of greenhouse gas emissions reduction. This represents a 4.4 percent reduction towards the GNWT target and have achieved mostly through energy efficiency and conservation investment. As our strategy continues to be implemented, larger and larger emission reductions will occur as large projects are funded and built which will more than likely bring online. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** That's great. That's more information than is contained in the actual report, but 4.4 percent in one year. We've got to reach the

target in 2030. We're not going to make it, 2030. This government promised integrated reporting on climate change, but the first annual report failed to calculate how the carbon tax has impacted fuel consumption, greenhouse gas reductions, or even the effects on the cost of living. There are few links drawn between carbon tax and greenhouse gas emissions. Can the Minister describe how the climate change reporting actually integrates the carbon tax, the energy strategy, and the climate change strategic framework, and how he plans to include this information in future reports?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Our government released our energy and climate change strategy as we understood the need for them to work together to adapt to climate change and transition to a lower carbon economy. To this end, the climate change action plan annual report includes updates on relative activities from the energy strategy and the NWT carbon tax. Specifically, these updates can be found in the section on the goal number one, transition to a lower carbon economy. The GNWT has developed a plain-language overview report to update the public on climate change action. This report includes information on implementation of a carbon tax energy strategy and climate change strategic framework. We will continue to deliver an integrated, whole of government approach to tackle the challenges of climate change and energy efficiency in our territories.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I fully recognize that COVID has obviously affected our ability as a government to address a number of important policy areas including climate change. The federal government and many others around the world are moving to a target of net zero by 2050. Can the Minister tell us when our government is going to review the less than ambitious pan-Canadian framework target and adopt net zero as part of our economic recovery approach and to deal with the climate emergency?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Again, this is information that I had to get from the Department of Infrastructure, and I thank the Minister and her staff for it. Under the 2030 energy strategy, GNWT committed to a full review after five years. The strategy was released in 2018, which means review will occur in 2023. This will provide enough time to properly re-evaluate the strategic objective to ensure that they represent what is achieved, given new technology and opportunity. These reviews will involve public and stakeholder's input. This input will both inform the future review of the energy strategy and future GNWT decisions on emission reductions.

**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. Clearly, we're not going to make the target. The Auditor General of Canada chronicled how our government's last two plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions were dismal failures, and the current one is certainly heading in that direction, too. The Auditor General said that a lack of leadership, policies, and legislation to give ENR the proper authority was largely at the root of the problem. What specific Cabinet decision-making tools or requirements have been changed to ensure government is taking climate change, the climate emergency seriously. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I believe the GNWT is fulfilling its mandate to show leadership on the climate change by being one of the first Canadian jurisdictions to take a consistent and systematic approach to ensuring meaningful consultation on climate change decisions in all departments. In December 2020, Cabinet and the Financial Management Board decision-making templates were revised to incorporate consideration of climate change mitigations and adaptation factors, including Executive Council decision papers, financial management submissions, joint Executive Council/Financial Management Board decision papers, and legislative proposals. Mr. Speaker, I can honestly tell you: during those conversations, we've heard the Member, we've heard the public, and we're trying to make sure the Executive and all departments make decisions based on climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 549-19(2):  
FRONTIER LODGE

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I've got paper now, so I'm good now. Just in line with my reply to the budget address, I mentioned the Frontier Lodge, so I had some questions for the Minister of MACA. I'd like to just start, at least hear from the Minister, just to give us a quick update because I know there was some developments, and just to let the public know what the rest of us know what the latest developments are? Marsi cho.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the application that has been submitted, we had identified some complications with that. We haven't received a number of lodges throughout the Northwest Territories that needed to be, that were sold, and that ended up leading into required legislation and amendments to accommodate those

sales and those transfers. My department has reached out to the owner, and they have been in correspondence. Also, correspondence has just been sent out to them yesterday, and then, also, acknowledging them this morning, as well. I will follow up with the Member with their current status. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NORN:** Yes, I look forward to hearing some of that correspondence from this morning. I will table here shortly, the Chief of the LKDFN wishes to meet with her department. I wonder if I can give that to the Minister to follow up and meet on that?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Absolutely. I will be available to meet with the Member and with the leadership, as well. This, actually ignited a different approach that we would have to look at this as an example of how we are going to be dealing with lodges outside of the municipal boundary and also looking at the acts and regulations that it had affected as a result of the sale.

**MR. NORN:** That's encouraging. I mentioned in my speech earlier, it shouldn't have taken a year to get to this point, and I'm hoping that her department and maybe some other departments who follow suit, what are some lessons learned here? What can they give back? What are some of the things that the Minister could tell us they have learned here through this process, and does that prevent this from happening again?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** This ended up by resulting in a new way, not a new way but an updated way of how we are going to be looking at sales for any lodges throughout the Northwest Territories. The delay for the renewal and for the transfer of permits had resulted in a lot of different conversations, and also looking at the amendments and two acts, as well. I will follow up with the Member. It became quite complicated, to be honest, making sure that we do things and that we do comply with what is presently existing. One of the ones that we are looking at is the Fire Prevention Act, and that one will be brought up and brought forward, too. It did become very complicated. I will follow up with the Member.

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

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Through all of this, I had to include the Premier in on this. I am hoping to get some input from Madam Premier on this. It is an appropriate time to develop new standards. Does the Premier have any comments on this, and will she consider some of the impacts that these current policies have on the remote lodge industry? Marsi cho.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I don't have the in-depth knowledge that the Minister has. Again, it's not my portfolio, but what I can say is that I do recognize that we need to support the lodges throughout the Northwest Territories. They're a major industry, and it's a huge part of our tourism, and for the economic development for regional centres and small communities. I do know that the Minister is working diligently to make sure that we can not only address this issue -- as she said, we didn't expect it, but we are doing the best we can within this government to address those issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 550-19(2):  
HOUSING SOCIAL SUPPORTS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of housing. Yesterday, I asked the Minister to commit to first connecting NWT residents to social supports before eviction. The Minister responded that her number one concern was safety, and I agree that safety is number one. Not connecting residents to safety is a safety hazard. I am asking the Minister to make connecting NWT residents to support services within the GNWT part of the existing process followed for evictions. Will the Minister make this commitment? Thank you.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member. I hear her passion when she is addressing our eviction process and looking at public housing tenants throughout the Northwest Territories. We are reviewing our tenant relations manual right now, and hopefully, we will be able to bring that forward in March. Looking at those specific connections that she is requesting, I would have to come forward and look at the review once we speak with the local housing authorities and the local housing organizations. Once we have those determinations, it will result in looking at connections that we need to acquire throughout the Housing Corporation connecting with social programs throughout the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** When somebody does not pay their rent in the Northwest Territories, they get a slip of paper shoved under their door in their public housing that says, "Pay your rent." When their rent continues to not be paid, they get an email, maybe, and then they get a notice to come in and talk to their LHO or LHA. When they come into their LHO or LHA, the person is then put on a payment plan. If

the rent still is not paid, they're given a last chance agreement and evicted.

What I am asking here today is for the Housing Corporation to tell their LHOs and LHAs that they have a responsibility to stop and ask people, "What's wrong?", "Are you okay?", because as it turns out, some people have lost their jobs during COVID-19, something else is going on in their lives, they cannot pay rent, and they have not been connected with supports like income security.

All I am asking is for a checkbox on a form when they are going through an eviction that says that the person was connected with a support. I don't think this needs to wait until March. I don't think it needs to wait until next year. I think that providing a connection between NWT residents and supports services that are paid for and delivered by the GNWT should be a natural thing, and all I am asking for is a commitment to do that.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you for your comments, Member. Yes. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much to the Minister. I really appreciate that. I am wondering when we can expect to see drafts of such policies and the mission statement committed to yesterday.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The Member had just raised the question yesterday. I still need to speak to my department to have a look at further conversations happening with the LHOs and the local housing authorities. I will keep the Member informed.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I will admit I have had many conversations about this with the Minister in recent weeks. We have had very good conversations about this, and I'm wondering if, in brief, the Minister would give us an idea of what she would like to see in such a policy. Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** To the Member, once the review is done with the local housing authorities, I would bring that information back, and that would determine what the policy would look like and the specific changes that are going to be required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 551-19(2):  
DISTRICT HEATING

**MR. JOHNSON:** Got in just in time, Mr. Speaker. As per the act, the objects of the Power Corporation

are to sell energy on a safe, economic, efficient, and reliable basis. If you go into the act, the definition of energy in sub (b) includes "heat that is supplied through a district heating system by hot water, air, or steam." I'm glad to hear that this is one of the objects of the Power Corporation. However, it is not something we actually do presently, so my question for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is: is the Power Corporation willing to build and operate biomass district heating systems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With no time on the clock, I guess we have lots of time here. The NTPC Act does include the ability for the corporation to sell heat energy through the district heating system as well as the ability for the corporation to become a water and sewer utility. NTPC's core mandate is to provide safe, economic, efficient, and reliable electricity services to the Northwest Territories. As the Member can appreciate, this is not an easy task to do in the northern NWT context. We want NTPC to focus on this task and not use its limited resources on other activities at this moment. Unlike the electricity system, which is a natural monopoly in areas such as the heating market where there is competition, it is best to let the private sector meet any market ban and let the market take any risks with these ventures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I recognize the Power Corporation has limited resources, and one of the reasons that I want them to expand into this area is to make some more money so that maybe they can afford their infrastructure. Presently, the Power Corporation does actually enter the heating market. For example, in Fort Smith, you can purchase electric heat off the Power Corporation at a rate that is actually pinned cheaper than diesel. It's cheaper for commercial buildings who have access to that to heat their buildings with electricity than it is diesel. Is the Power Corporation willing to expand its electric heating rates to all hydro communities?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The GNWT is currently undertaking a study on how to increase electricity sales. The study is looking at whether or not a special electric heat rate would be feasible and appropriate in the North Slave hydro system. The North Slave often have to use diesel to meet peak demand. Being able to avoid using electric heating during peak periods will be crucial, and it's not clear if there is an electric heat rate that would be low enough to compete with the cost of heating with oil. This study will inform if the electric heat rate in other communities beyond Fort Smith and beyond

Fort Resolution is something that should be considered for future advancement.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I look forward to seeing that study, but I would have liked a yes as opposed to a study. Right now, the Power Corporation has a net metering cap on renewable energies where any community selling back solar to the grid eventually hits a cap, and many of our communities have reached that cap. They went and got 100 percent federal dollars, they built solar panels, and now they are not allowed to build any more because the Power Corporation won't let them. Is the Power Corporation willing to remove the net metering cap on renewables?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Good question. I have heard that from all the MLAs. The 15-megawatt cap on net metering was a policy that was set by the GNWT to ensure that any single individual does not install too much solar generation. Too much self-generation is harmful to our small electricity grids and increases electricity rates. This is also the reason why we have the 20-percent community cap. Net metering is meant to allow people to generate enough power to cover their own yearly electricity by allowing extra power to be fed into the electricity grid to be able to get credit back whenever they need it later. It is not intended to allow people to feed large amounts of surplus power. The 15-kilowatt cap is designed as a compromise to allow as many people as possible to take advantage of net metering, without one person installing too much and limiting other people to be able to participate. The GNWT is currently studying options to modify the net metering program to address concerns associated with the reliability and impacts on the rates, while at the same time allowing people to participate and reduce GHG emissions. We expect this work to be completed in the next fiscal year. This will inform the future decisions on this matter.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I heard there that there may be another study that will allow our Indigenous governments and our communities to actually build and control their own electricity infrastructure beyond 20 percent; maybe allow them to actually own some of that information in the future. It seems that the Power Corporation is caught in this "we can't allow more renewables because it will affect the entire ratepayer system, and we can't seem to find any solution at all, despite there being federal dollars." I think a little creativity is needed on the board, so my question for the Minister is: is there anyone presently on the board who has a specialization in energy?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The Northwest Territories Power Corporation board consists of deputy ministers within the GNWT. I know the Members may not be happy about that. The department is looking at a governance review of the Power Corporation, and once we get that going, it will further determine what to do with the Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, reports of standing and special committees. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 306-19(2):  
AURORA COLLEGE 2019-2020 ANNUAL  
REPORT

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "2019-2020 Annual Report of Aurora College." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 307-19(2):  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY UNDER THE TRANSPORTATION OF  
DANGEROUS GOODS ACT - 2020

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly Under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act 2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 308-19(2):  
LETTER FROM LUTSEL K'E DENE FIRST  
NATION TO PREMIER DATED FEBRUARY 5,  
2021 REGARDING MACA LICENSING  
REQUIREMENT FOR FRONTIER LODGE /  
REMOTE LODGES

TABLED DOCUMENT 309-19(2):  
LETTER FROM MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AND  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS TO NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES TOURISM DATED FEBRUARY 10,  
2021 REGARDING REMOTE LODGE LICENSING

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table correspondence regarding remote lodge licencing. The first is a letter from the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation dated February 5, 2021, and the second is from the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs dated February 10, 2021. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 310-19(2):  
LETTER FROM HAMLET OF SACHS HARBOUR  
TO MLA NUNAKPUT DATED JANUARY 26, 2021  
REGARDING LETTER OF INTEREST FOR  
PROJECT AT AIRPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 311-19(2):  
LETTER FROM MLA NUNAKPUT TO HAMLET OF  
SACHS HARBOUR DATED FEBRUARY 2, 2021  
IN SUPPORT OF AIRPORT PROJECT  
PROPOSAL

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table two letters: a letter I received and a letter of support for the Hamlet of Sachs Harbour, dated January 26, and my response to the hamlet was February 2, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, motions. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 27-19(2):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO  
FEBRUARY 23, 2021,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 11, 2021, it shall be adjourned until Friday, February 12, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.;

AND FURTHER, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Friday, February 12, 2021, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday February 23, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.;

AND FURTHER, that, at any time prior to February 23, 2021, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such

notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

Mr. Speaker, maybe we can look at making this less of a mouthful just for us to take a break. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Item 18, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; 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 Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, 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 now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to deal with Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to continue on with Education, Culture and Employment, for labour development and advanced education on page 52, with information items from page 53 to 63. Minister, do you have witnesses?

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, could you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Back by popular demand, we have Deputy Minister Rita Mueller and assistant deputy minister of Corporate Services, Sam Shannon. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Welcome back for day three. We will begin with questions from the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Okay. Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I am just going to turn your attention to page 54 on small community employment. It's not so much the numbers. I just have some questions about this line item. If I could just ask the Minister to explain what exactly these funds are for, we will start there. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The small community employment fund is a pot of money that the communities or employers and communities can apply for to create or subsidize jobs in centres outside of Yellowknife. It is very flexible, an easy application process and is just a way to help get people working in small communities. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is good to know, that there is some consideration, a pot of money, to get work going in small communities. Like I said, every dollar here matters. My next question is: is this pot of money, what's the word, being fully subscribed? Like where are we sitting? Is it undersubscribed? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Perhaps Mr. Shannon has details on the exact numbers.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Shannon.

**MR. SHANNON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister. Yes. We do, our staff do, an excellent job of engaging with communities to make sure that all this money gets out the door and is going to what its intended purpose is. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. NORN:** Yes. My last question for this line item is: can the Minister give us a breakdown by region? I ask that just to make sure that there is some fair sharing throughout the regions and the territories for our small communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I can ask the deputy minister to provide that, and we can also give breakdowns by community as well as the number of jobs created in each community by this one. I will ask my deputy minister for some more information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Mueller.

**MS. MUELLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister. Just to give an insight on the types of jobs, this is for full-time and part-time jobs, in small communities: in 2018-2019, a total of 659 jobs were created, part-time and full-time, over 32 communities; in 2019-2020, 750 jobs were supported by this program in small communities; and to date, in 2020-2021, we have about 430 jobs that have been supported. However, we can definitely give a breakdown by community, by region. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought I was done there, but yes, I will look forward to seeing that information. In hearing this, it sounds like this is a really important program, and it does create jobs right at the grass-roots level. Are there any talks to increasing this fund to try to up those numbers for jobs in small communities? Marsi cho.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I always talk about increasing it, but there is nothing on the books right now. I do think that it is one of the

programs that going forward we need to look at and consider how we can use it to target employment in the small communities because that has been a tough nut to crack, and I know that this has proven successful at that. It is definitely on my radar. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you. My other one, I have questions about Skills Canada. There is a line item here. It has not really changed. It's \$70,000. I am looking at this for the explanation in this line item. It says that it's for priorities related to adult career and employment. It does not seem like that much of a number, so can I get an idea from the Minister of how well this pot of money is subscribed? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I believe this is a contribution to Skills Canada for them to hold the Skills NWT events throughout the territory. I believe that, recently, they've been confined to Yellowknife, but I'm interested in seeing how we can expand that reach. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's good to know. I think, for something like this to promote trades, to promote skilled labour, that sort of stuff, it can't be just confined to Yellowknife. I think that's something that needs to be looked at, to get it out to up in the Beaufort, up in the South Slave, Sahtu, Deh Cho. Just getting it out there, because we need to get these skills promoted at the smaller-community level, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, and I agree. It's a third party, and they also receive funding from other sources, as well. I see the value in having the regional competitions. You can see that, when we have the regional competitions, it does bring more people from outside of the capital to the territorial competition. They can show off their skills, and it allows them to get exposure. I agree that this is something I will definitely look into, and have been, actually. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you. I'm just going to move along here. I have one last question about the literacy funding. This one, here, it has kind of

fluctuated a little bit, but I just wanted to know a little bit more about this program. Where is it being delivered, and what type of programs are delivered under this funding pot? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'd like to ask the deputy minister to respond.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Mueller.

**MS. MUELLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If the Member would like, we could also show the breakdown of the different programs that are prescribing to this, but really, the whole focus is on improving adult literacy overall. That could be specific to a particular job, for example, where they have particular language that future employees need to have. It can be done more broadly in trying to support an initiative that the community wants to do in engaging adults and trying to improve their literacy in such a way that they feel more confident in, perhaps, then applying for taking on other training. It really is a wide variety. Thank you.

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

**MR. NORN:** A quick comment and then I have one more other question. It is important, I think, adult education, learning, literacy. Learning is a lifelong process, and I think it's good to see this line item in here. I'm hoping that it's being used for what it's meant for. I did have a question on page 57. It's kind of a number question, and I was curious about this because I didn't quite make sense of it. The student loan fund here, there's a line item here labelled "Northern Bonus." Can the Minister just explain what exactly that line item is and just describe to the House because I don't understand what that is. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. The Northern Bonus is a program whereby we provide an incentive for people to move back to the North, and it helps them pay down their student loan. I can ask Mr. Shannon for some more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Shannon.

**MR. SHANNON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister. As the Minister mentioned, the Northern Bonus is \$2,000 a year, up to a lifetime limit of \$10,000, for a student who either returns to the North or moves to the North from a southern jurisdiction that could be applied to their student

loans. For the case of northern students who are receiving SFA, it helps accelerate their remission or repayment of SFA loans. For southern students, it helps go toward paying off their recognized student loans. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. NORN:** That's a good explanation. I just wasn't sure, but I appreciate that. I have nothing further at this time. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Madam Chair. Just on Small Community Employment Support, as well. Mr. Norn did touch on a few of them, so it has been answered. I'm looking forward to additional information that is going to be delivered to us on the regions and the communities. The funding was \$5 million back in 2019, and now it's hovering just over \$4 million. There has been an increase in funding, as well. With the last Assembly, actually, probably all outlying community MLAs pushed for it, and I think there's a high value for this. It creates employment in the communities. We've just heard on the numbers. Obviously, we would like to see more of that. The last time, it was a supplementary that it was brought in. Would the Minister be in consideration of bringing a supplementary on this particular subject area to increase the funding? Because I'll be supportive of that, and I think other Members, well, they have their own perspective. There has been a lot of support in this area, so I'm just wondering whether there's an appetite to do that, Madam Chair. Masi.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member stated, the increase that is seen in 2019-2020 was the result of negotiations between Cabinet at that point and Regular Members. There was a one-year increase. While I would love to be able to say I'm bringing something forward, we had to craft this budget based on all of the needs and wants across all departments. This is what we landed on. I would love to have, really, everything in ECE see a budget increase. The fact is that these are the main estimates, and there is not a plan to bring forward a supplementary appropriation for this item. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Madam Chair. Obviously, the Minister is listening carefully to what our issues are or challenges, and this is an opportunity for us to have more positive news instead of decreasing

numbers from 700 to 400 in actual employment in the communities. In fact, we should be aiming for higher, so I think this is an area where we can do that. I am certainly hoping that the Minister will seriously consider it as we move forward, because the whole COVID thing is still with us. It is very challenging for students to return home from school. I have kids in college, as well. These are some of the challenges that they're faced with, especially in small, remote communities. Not every community hires GNWT students, so this is creating more opportunity at an isolated-community level. I would like for our Minister to seriously consider it. Madam Chair, that was just a comment to the Minister on that.

Skills Canada, there hasn't really been much increase over the years; \$70,000 has been that earmark number for quite some time, now. When you look at Skills Canada, there are quite a few very successful individuals who have gone through the process. Just speaking from my experience, my kid has been involved in that, and he's now a journeyman ticket holder, an electrician. In fact, he got the highest mark. If it wasn't for Skills Canada, would we have seen those success stories? I'm not sure, but I'm thinking down the road, the next five, 10 years. Since Skills Canada has been very successful to date, in my eyes, anyways, has there been a contemplation of possibly increasing the funding, Madam Chair, from \$70,000 to, it would be nice if we could get double that, but I'm just wondering if the Minister is considering that down the road. Masi.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I appreciate the Member's comments. This is a great way to promote trades, get people involved in trades, and the Member is right to brag. I think his son was not just number one; he was number one in the territory. It was a big accomplishment, and I commend him for that. Skills Canada does get additional funding. To that point, I think that we talk about how can we promote trades, and maybe this is a way. I am happy to have those conversations with the department and with Skills Canada to see if perhaps we can expand it so it has more of a regional reach again, as well. I think that might be useful, also. Given that it is a relatively small contribution, I am happy to have those discussions with the department and the organization. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Madam Chair. I am glad that the Minister is interested in, I guess he can call it a gateway to empowering the regions, the

communities. That was my next line of questions: how can we reach out to the communities, the most isolated communities where we are lacking journeymen plumbers and oil-burner mechanics for those homes? Madam Chair, the Minister has already committed to looking into this, so I just want to say thank you to the Minister for committing to that, and I am looking forward to a positive outcome. That's just a comment, Madam Chair. Masi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. I will take that as a comment. Are there any further questions? Seeing none, please turn to page 53. Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$54,518,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary on page 29. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that we provide Skills Canada \$70,000 a year in this line item, but they also access another \$85,000 a year from the GNWT, as well, through our labour market programs, so I just wanted to put that on the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. All right. We are on page 29. Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$353,599,000. Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 76-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 – EDUCATION,  
CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT - DEFERRAL OF  
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 137),  
CARRIED

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that committee defer further consideration of these estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at this time. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Norn. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operations expenditures, total department is deferred. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we will take just a short, little break to give the Sergeant-at-Arms time to clean the desk, and we will introduce the next department. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We will call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Does the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs have any opening remarks?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Overall, the department's estimates propose a decrease of \$458 thousand, or 2 percent, from the Main Estimates 2020-2021. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs while continuing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories' fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending. Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- \$631,000 in new funding to establish a Gender Equity unit. This unit will work to ensure that government decisions, including financial decisions, consider their sometimes-unequal effect on people with different identity factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, or abilities. This new unit will also be responsible for developing and implementing an action plan in response to the Calls to Justice in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
- a sunset of \$384,000 in funding related to the Deputy Secretary for Federal Engagement position; and
- a sunset of \$705,000 in funding related to the Office of Devolution Initiatives.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly by:

- supporting residents in small communities by providing funding for single window service centres that provide these residents with support to access both GNWT and Government of Canada services;

- supporting a continued focus on respectful and meaningful relationships with our Indigenous government partners that facilitates the negotiation and implementation of self-government and land claims agreements throughout the territory; and
- supporting the ongoing collaboration with Indigenous governments to create and implement an action plan that will guide the changes required to ensure the further implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Does the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce the witnesses for the record?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me today Mr. Martin Goldney, who is the secretary to Cabinet and the deputy minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, and Ms. Amy Kennedy, who is the director of Shared Corporate Services with Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, and welcome. The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with Cabinet support starting on page 112, with information items on page 114. Questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the department tell me what the \$232,000 spent under contract services is for? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Sorry, Madam Chair. What page?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** One-thirteen.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If I can turn it to Ms. Amy Kennedy?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In this area, under contract services for Cabinet support, that covers some of the contracts required to provide support to the Public Utilities Board, the administration of which sits in this area, as well as other contracts required to support the Cabinet support function. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I know what kind of contracts those might be that are used to support Cabinet? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That amount would also include support for contracted services for things like public relations and public engagement with the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just noting that the majority of this budget is towards compensation and benefits for staff to support Cabinet. I am just wondering if there has been any sort of look at streamlining those services to maybe make some cuts in this area? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, we are not looking at cuts to deal with the staffing of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs. We are a small department at this time. There are positions that were taken out further on in this, such as the person who is responsible for federal engagement in Ottawa. Those are things we are looking at, but directly, we are a small department. We need the staff that we have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I was just speaking about Cabinet support, not the department as a whole, noting it's quite a big expense for 12 positions. That was where my concern lay. I would ask that maybe the department think and consider about reducing costs in areas

such as PR, et cetera. I don't know that the taxpayers should be paying for that. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some things are very important. Public relations are important, especially when we are dealing with Indigenous governments, Madam Chair. It is important that the public be advised. We can look at it for the next budget, but in my opinion, Madam Chair, I think that Executive and Indigenous Affairs is actually one of the leanest departments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Again, I am speaking to the line item around Cabinet support, which would mean PR for Cabinet. That's what I am speaking to. I imagine that there are a lot of areas within the EIA budget where other community relations and PR type of work with Indigenous governments is collected. More of a comment than anything. I'm done, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will take that as a comment. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that there has been a decrease in one position for Cabinet support. Can I just get clarification as to what position that was? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I'm just wondering what line item.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Can you clarify what line item that is?

**MR. JOHNSON:** I'm looking at page 114. The previous year's was 13 positions, and this year's is 12. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This was just a re-allocation. We are moving the board register position, and we are moving into a senior communications advisor. The board register position wasn't as needed, but the senior communication advisor was desperately needed. I have heard throughout this Assembly that communications was an issue, and we decided to actually put in a position for that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. If the board registrar position has been cut from the function within the Cabinet support area, who is doing that work now, or who will be doing the work starting April 1<sup>st</sup>? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know the name of the person, but the board registrar position is currently vacant. The responsibilities of the position have been covered and will continue to be covered through internal resources. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Just so I understand, I do want to compliment the Minister because there is a pretty good web page in EIA where people can see the boards that we have responsible for appointing. You can actually see who sits on them, their term of office, whether there are vacancies. That's pretty good in terms of transparency, and I want to compliment the Minister. It was something that I think got started in the last Assembly, but is that the function that this individual is responsible for, is tracking and maintaining that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the position. However, Madam Chair, as I said earlier, that position is still being covered by internal work. It hasn't been chopped off. We recognize the importance of having those boards; in fact, it's a conversation we have often at the Cabinet table. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I hear from the Premier that she is committed to maintain that that work is going to continue, so I don't have any difficulty with that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Are there any further questions under the Cabinet support? Seeing none, please turn to page 113, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$2,493,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee now turn to corporate communications, beginning on page 115, with information items on page 117. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have, a number of times, expressed confusion and that I don't actually think there is clarity between the role of corporate communications and Cabinet communications, and I want to underline why. My view of why this has happened is that, in a lot of governments, the Cabinet communications would be clear political appointments. We get these emails from a press secretary that doesn't exist, but in a lot of governments, you would choose your press team. You would make them clear political appointments. They would not be members of the public service; they would serve at the will of the Premier for that. You see that in the Prime Minister's office. You see that in other governments.

Over time, our Cabinet communications have become civil servants. We keep the same people over the governments, and as such, they are essentially not a political communications tool but a corporate communications tool, where they speak on behalf of the GNWT as opposed to this Cabinet as a whole. I think there needs to be a hard look at what is happening with corporate communications and Cabinet communications, and then all of the communications within departments, and there needs to be a clear line of when someone is giving political communication advice and when someone is speaking on behalf of the public service or the GNWT.

All that being said, I've expressed this concern before. Can we have an update on when we will see a review of the different communications functions? I hear we are adding another person to communications, but I don't know if that necessarily improves communications without the roles and responsibilities and restructuring occurring. Can I have an update on the communications strategic planning work that is being done in EIA? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My deputy minister would like to take that question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are still in the process of an implementation exercise where, in 2018, there were some changes made to

how communications would be supported throughout government. As we have been implementing that work, it has been a bit of a culture change, but we are seeing some successes emerge. We are right now in the process of doing some validation of that work to make sure that we are on the right track, and some of the expectations for improvements are working, so there are no plans for a further review. Right now, we're assessing some of the changes that were made relatively recently, beginning in 2018, through a communications transformation project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to micromanage communications. Communications are very much the bread and butter of what the Ministers and the Cabinet want things to look like, but I do have some larger concerns. I believe corporate communications holds the ultimate responsibility for the GNWT website, and then we allow other comms shops in departments to go and adjust the websites. This has led to just GNWT websites being a mess and completely inconsistent, and it's hard to find information. I think there are different understandings of whether websites are places for departments to store everything that has ever happened, or whether websites are user-friendly places for citizens to find information.

I think MLAs spend far too much time talking about communications because we get frustrated. We get frustrated when we ask to have easily shareable information and it's not done. I think, as a contrast, if we go to the WSCC website, which is arm's-length and I'm assuming that their comms staff have complete control over it, it's just a better, more user-friendly website. This isn't an impossible thing for our government to do. Are there any plans to overhaul GNWT websites and perhaps give corporate communications complete control in this area, centralize it, and let them go and clean up some of the very bad websites that still exist in certain departments or corporations? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I also recognize that accessing things through the websites in the GNWT is not an easy task. I struggle myself to find things. People know that technology isn't my strong point, except for the tools I use, and so when you struggle with computer usage and things, I realize it's even harder to access those things. We have added an extra person to the Cabinet communications

support, because, with COVID-19, that was the biggest thing. Corporate communications is really focused on our graphics, the corporate image of us, and then the departments also have communications. We do recognize in this government that our websites do need to be cleaned up, made more accessible, and so, Madam Chair, within this government term, we will be looking to do that work. However, I cannot say it will happen right away. We are dealing with a huge workload at this point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I often hear the Premier say that they're dealing with a huge amount of work, but Executive and Indigenous Affairs is the smallest department. It's about 1 percent of our total budget. If you want to double your staff and actually take the lead on some of these initiatives, I'll vote for that. It's 1 percent of the budget; it's not going to make or break the bank. My question in regard to the website is: can I get clarification of who is responsible for GNWT websites? I believe corporate communications is responsible, and everything has to kind of go through them. Then the Office of the Chief Information Officer in Finance kind of has approval there, and then Infrastructure has the underlying IT. I just want to know: can we sort this out so that there is someone who is responsible for the GNWT websites, a clear point of authority? Because I don't believe that exists right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll turn that to my deputy minister, Mr. Goldney.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Member is right that there is much room for improvement on our websites, so there are those conversations happening. Corporate communications does have a role and is working to try and get some consistency in how our information is presented online, but that necessarily involves those discussions with the others that the Member has mentioned, including the Chief Information Officer and the technology folks within information shared services. Those conversations are happening with the goal of having some more accessible information available on those websites and consistent presentation. It is a bit more complicated than one might assume. There are some architectural changes that are being explored

now to get a more user-friendly, accessible website, but that work is underway. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there further questions to the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, corporate communications? Seeing none, please turn to page 116. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, corporate communications, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$1,473,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will move on to the directorate, beginning on page 118, with information items on pages 120 and 121. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if to start us off the Premier could tell us, with this new gender equity unit, what the people of the Northwest Territories can expect to see come out of that from their perspective and how this changes the operations of the women's advisor role that was existing before. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If you can, turn it to Martin Goldney, the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are looking forward to adding resources to that function and enhancing the ability of the existing special advisor to not only do that liaison work but also help guide a whole-of-government approach to some of these issues. We have quite frankly noticed that we need more leadership on some of these challenging issues, and we were also facing the reality of an urgent need to respond to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry and Calls to Justice. These positions will support that work and provide some of that leadership and, as the Premier mentioned in the opening remarks, also support a whole-of-government implementation of some gender equity lenses. Some of that has already been done, but we do recognize that we need to do more. These positions will support all of that work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. How many positions specifically are being added to the gender equity unit? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe it's a total of three positions will be added. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Have they hired all three positions? Are they staffing them from within, or are they going out to competition on these positions? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, we do have a little bit of extra support, but it's off the side of a desk. If this mains are approved, this takes effect April the 1<sup>st</sup>, Madam Chair, and at that point, yes, we will be putting them out to competition. It's the right way to do it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am just wondering, and maybe I am reading this wrong. They do not appear to show up in the headquarters line items for active positions within the directorate, so I am just wondering where they show up for staffing. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank, Madam Chair. If you could, turn it to my deputy minister, Martin Goldney.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the count is not reflecting that addition because there is also a sunsetting for the office of devolution and the three positions there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** No. Thank you, I really appreciate that, that clarification. One of the other questions that I have is: under this gender equity unit, there is also a Status of Women Council, which is fabulous and wonderful, and I see here it shows that they have gone from \$394,000 to \$444,000, which is great because it appears to be an increase in the budget. However, when I was looking -- sorry, Madam Chair, if you will allow me

to go forward to 129, it looks as though the budget and the contribution from the GNWT is actually \$425,000. I am just wondering if the Premier can speak to the differentiation between the two and why they differ. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had to flip to 129. The reason it is not included is: the \$50,000 that we are looking for an increase, it's not included right now because it's not approved. Once it's approved, it will be included into this.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. That is good news, then, that there is going to be some extra money then for the status of women. I am just wondering, then, because it appears, though, that in previous years, as well, the actuals were consistent at \$394,000, and the budgets are kind of all over the place for status of women on page 129. The contributions range from anywhere from \$394,000 to \$509,000, so I am just wondering if the Premier can speak to that, as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What I will do is turn that to Ms. Amy Kennedy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. \$394,000 had previously been the contribution for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. There are other government departments that provide contribution funding, as well, to this organization, and so on the information item on page 129, that GNWT contribution is everything that the organization receives from across government.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Is this also the section where I would ask about GSOs, or is that in another section? Are you able to clarify for me, please? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Yes? Yes. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much. No. I appreciate that, and I do see regional operations

here. Thank you. Currently, the NWT is sitting at 23 GSOs, and as I have pointed out multiple times this week, there is a web of government services for people to kind of navigate through. I am wondering if there is a plan to expand the 23 GSOs to all 33 communities so that people all have an opportunity to work with somebody to navigate government support systems. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. These 22 actually address 22 of 23 of the smaller communities. There is one community that is not interested at this point. We would have expanded it, but at this point, they did not want it. At this point, we are not really looking at expanding it to 33 communities, and the reason why is that we are looking at the integrated case management model. If that works, then that would be the new initiative for the government versus having it a one-stop shop. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Can I just clarify? Is it the integrated case management model, or is it the integrated service delivery model? Are they thinking of taking kind of the ICM shop and expanding that throughout the territory, or is it more of a service delivery model for the entire Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is called the integrated service delivery model. At this point, we are just looking through it and seeing where we go with it, but it has shown success so far. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I got very excited there for a second, thinking we were putting ICM everywhere. No. I definitely a hundred percent support the initiative for the integrated service delivery model to be expanded throughout the GNWT and used with all of our front-line services. That's a big change, and that is going to take time, to change the way that all front-line services deliver services to the people of the Northwest Territories. In the meantime, would EIA be willing to, in communities that are willing to accept one, put a GSO so that people have an interim position that can help them navigate government systems? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, we are not looking at expanding our government service offices except for the communities that are in it, unless the one small community was interested. At that point, we would look at it. Again, we are looking at different service delivery models. Madam Chair, the smaller communities do not have the resources; they do not have people, and so that was our priority. The larger communities have NGOs; they have many different departments. At this point, with 22 priorities, expanding that would not be a priority at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I will respectfully disagree that, even though we have services here in Yellowknife, people have a really hard time navigating them and don't necessarily find open doors and don't necessarily find the right doors. While there are services here in Yellowknife, they are not always being able to be accessed by people. I agree we do have 22 priorities, but I do believe that people being able to access government services helps us achieve many of those priorities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will take that as a comment.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just get some more explanation on what the government service officers are allowed to do? Are they also cross-appointed as Income Assistance officers; can they approve housing; or do they simply just bring you to the services and help you fill out the forms? Do they actually have the authority to approve applications for other departments? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They aren't multi-faceted that they would do the housing applications and the income support. That's a whole bunch of skilled things here. Actually, the referral person, it's basically for smaller communities. It's to help people such as our elders who struggle with English, struggle with accessing services. They will tell people what

services they might be able to qualify. They will get them the forms to apply. They will help them apply and fill out the forms if they're needed. They will do faxing, et cetera. They are not income support or housing workers, so they send them to the departments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's also my understanding that government service officers also help with Service Canada and they are, in fact, partially funded by the federal government. Can I just get an update whether we are still getting federal government money for these positions? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, that was a really exciting thing that happened, I believe it was last year or the year before. Yes. Currently, we are still getting the funding from the federal government, again, because the federal government access to programs is probably even a little bit more complicated than the Government of the Northwest Territories. They have worked in partnership with us, and now those government service officers have the ability to assist people in smaller communities to access federal programs, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Has there been a recent labour evaluation of the government service officers? I think we kind of just put a lot of half-time positions and a few full-time positions in communities, and there wasn't really any evaluation done of how much work. I know some of the community workers are extremely overworked, and I think that, perhaps, it's time to relook at some labour adjustments here. Is that work being done? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will turn that to our deputy minister, Martin Goldney.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The government service officers do report to managers, so there is some reporting available on workloads and additional support might be added as may be

required, but there isn't a formal assessment outside of the usual management process from those managers respecting workload of GSOs at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my concerns is that I don't actually think government service officers are the real solution and that they were designed to help navigate a system that is extremely difficult. When you look at the ICM reports and the integrated service delivery model, that's what they're saying. The systems actually need to work better together. We can keep adding all the pathfinders and navigators that we want, but that's not really solving the root problem.

One of my hopes for the Department of Finance's review of our budget is that there will also be kind of a corresponding look by the executive on where people are best suited. I know that this budget doesn't have a Service GNWT model, but I think having something like a government service officer who could actually stamp your housing application, who could actually stamp your income application, who could actually do all of that work in one place and could actually help you bring you over to Health and Social Services, is the goal. I don't think adding more pathfinders really works.

My question there is: as Finance reviews each of the programs for each department in silos, is there some sort of corresponding work being done by Cabinet to look at, "Wait. We have this pathfinder who is meant to help these five departments, but maybe the five departments can have some overlap or work together"? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the purpose of the government renewal project that the Minister of Finance is bringing forward so that all programs would be reviewed and to see the strengths, the weaknesses, the gaps, and areas that need changing. That work is being done in this government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Switching briefly, I don't often give compliments to the Department of Lands, but one of the things that I like about the Department of Lands, when I go to their unit, they did some internal restructuring. They have a new Public Land Act implementation project team, and they have created positions where their entire job is to implement the new Public Land Act.

When I look in EIA's corporate restructuring, I get extremely lost, and I know it's not my job to internally run departments, but I'm always unsure who is doing what. I notice you have a policy shop. You have a devolution shop. You have an Indigenous and governmental affairs shop, a negotiations shop, an implementation shop, an intergovernmental relations shop, an Aboriginal relations shop, a Cabinet secretary shop, all with different policy positions.

This is one of those things that also annoys me is that sometimes I hear the Premier say, Madam Chair, that they're busy, but there are more policy people in this department than anywhere else. My question is: I think the United Nations Declaration is one of our biggest pieces of work to date. All we have got is struggled to get an actual terms of reference going, but who, of those shops, is actually responsible for that work? I note that, when we were doing devolution, we created the Office of Devolution Initiatives. It was a clear point of accountability in the government for who was doing that work. I think the UNDRIP implementation is just as large-scale a work, but I am unclear who in the giant mess of EIA is doing that work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll turn that to the deputy minister, but I will say that I am at that table for every meeting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the UNDRIP implementation work, that is being largely led from our Indigenous Affairs side of the department, calling upon numerous parts within that department because it is such a big undertaking that we do recognize it is going to require voices, not just from the negotiations side or the implementations side or the Aboriginal consultation and relations side, and the intergovernmental affairs side.

We are beginning to look at how the department is structured and looking forward to having conversations with Indigenous governments directly, to have that frank conversation, "Is our structure one of the things that is impeding progress?" There will be more, I think, as we learn from Indigenous governments their experience in dealing with us as a department and as a government. That work, we do look forward to sharing more about, but it's just starting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. For clarification, I don't want to mislead the Members. I am at every table with the Indigenous government leaders. We do have staff, also, who are working behind with the Indigenous government officials, just for clarification. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that clarification. It was going to be my next question that, if there's not a staff-level technical group, we are probably never going to get anything done. I have yet to see a group of politicians actually implement anything, let alone something as complicated as the declaration. I think we very much need our staff working together.

Madam Chair, when the Premier was elected, there was a commitment for a long forward economic plan and vision. We also heard that in the Emerge Stronger vision. This is another one of those things which I think is a huge policy undertaking. Can I just get clarification of who is leading that work in EIA? I believe it is an EIA responsibility as opposed to ITI. Once again, I think this is one of those things where a specific office and a specific point of accountability is really needed because so much of the expertise in EIA is Indigenous government and not economic. Who is leading that work? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Economic and social recovery, I believe that's what he's talking about, is actually being led by our deputy minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, working with every single deputy minister across the government. It's a table of deputy ministers doing that work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Once again, I don't want to continue to tell the Minister how to run her department, obviously, but I know our deputy ministers are just as busy and so are our Ministers. I think this is one of those things that really needs to be devolved into a specific policy shop, and they need to be given some arm's-length free rein to look at some creative economic solutions. Because past experience in the GNWT has been that any of the kind of creative, out-of-the-box solutions, they get killed by the time they get to

a deputy minister's table or to a Minister's table. We kind of end up with the same safe reports and plans, of which we have many that we could simply recycle, if the goal is a plan. In creating a 10-year economic plan, are any consultants being hired, or economists? Is there outside consultation being sought? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, we haven't done any outside consultation for it. It is distressing, Madam Chair, just to hear that deputy ministers may quash dreams and hopes and thinking outside the box. I would hope that my deputy minister for Executive and Indigenous Affairs is not doing that, or any deputy minister within the Government of the Northwest Territories. We are asking for innovation and creativity, and in fairness to all of them, I think they are all thinking out of the box for this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am really excited to see the increases to the funding for the women's initiatives, et cetera. I notice, overall, there is an increase of \$150,000 to the three programs listed: the Native Women's Association; the Status of Women; and the Women's Initiatives grant. Could the department tell me if this has all been repurposed money out of the Office of Devolution initiatives, or does this funding come from, say, somewhere else like the federal government? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It kind of works differently. The sunsetted programs such as the Office of Devolution would just be taken out of the budget, so it's not really to say that that would flow into it. The extra \$50,000 in each area is actually what we're asking for from the main, so it wouldn't be federal government monies. It's what we're asking from this government to be approved in these mains. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you for that. Yes. I was just wondering if we did get any sort of initiatives or extra funding from the federal government for women over the next while, considering that they are supposed to be more supportive of gender equity, et cetera. I'll just continue to push or ask that the department continue to push for the federal

government to give us some of this money to help us. I am just curious to know that, in this time coming up, it's not exactly the happiest time for people. I note things like the Arctic Inspiration Prize is always something that really does spark northern pride and enthusiasm. It always seems to go to very good causes, if I'm not mixing it up with other ones. Is there any thought to increasing that amount in the next while, in a sense of creating more community pride and things for people to see as hope and bright spots? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, we aren't looking to increase the Arctic Inspiration Prize, although I do recognize that, absolutely, it is important. It helps foster hope in people; however, there are many programs and services that also foster it, and as stated many times in this session, I've heard, we can't leave the next government in a deficit. It's a fine balance between actually increasing programs that are needed to meet our priorities and our operational needs and still making sure that we provide a sustainable government for the next government, the people who will be taking over. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This one is a little bit of an obscure question and probably maybe one for the last Assembly or last year, but I'm looking at the contract services. In the 2019-2020 actuals, it was \$474,000, but it looks to be generally more around \$150,000. This year, it is looking like \$115,000. I'm just curious to know what that blip amount was in 2019-2020, and is there a possibility that that type of increase would be needed at another date, therefore causing them to come back with a supplemental? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have an explanation, but I think, for more clarity, I'd like to turn it to Ms. Kennedy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In 2019-2020, the Department of EIA undertook several contracts related to deputy minister recruitment, and so those contracts are covered in that area.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Where would all the severance for deputy ministers who have been let go over the last year fall? Would it be in this budget here, or would it have been in the past? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Madam Chair, I'll turn it to Ms. Kennedy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The compensation benefits line for the directorate within each department would show those amounts in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, I would imagine.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the department provide me with the total amount of money since this Assembly started that has been spent on severance for deputy ministers? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I will turn it to my deputy minister, Martin Goldney, for that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we can look at that. I think we do have to consider whether or not some of that information might reveal the terms of settlement agreements which we're required to keep confidential, but we can look at whether a global figure might be available.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I can understand why we wouldn't be able to get a sum total of that number, so I'll expect that from the department. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can I get an explanation as to the sunset of the Office of Devolution Initiatives? As I understood it, they were tasked with obtaining an offshore petroleum resources management agreement. I'm not aware of an agreement being signed yet. They were also involved in trying to develop a terms of reference

for further work on MVRMA transition. I have never seen a terms of reference. Why is this being sunsetted? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I will turn that to Mr. Goldney for the answer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When we were looking at the progress of work being made and the resources that we have available, we were confident that we could let the sunsets set and still move forward with those initiatives with the resources that we have. We are very optimistic that we'll see significant progress and milestones reached on an offshore accord, hopefully even before March 31<sup>st</sup>, if we can, but there is good progress being made there. On the MVRMA initiatives, we do recognize that we've got resources, including those that support the intergovernmental council, that work very closely with Indigenous government officials, as well, so we expect much of that work to be carried forward with those resources. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm glad to hear the optimism of the deputy minister, but I'd like to get a little bit more concrete information. Can the Minister commit to providing committee with a written update of the status of the negotiations for the offshore? I don't even know what our negotiating position is other than, hopefully, we want to get something at least as generous as the Maritime provinces have received from the federal government. I'd like to start with that. Can I get a commitment out of the Minister that she is going to provide a written update briefing on the status of the negotiations and whether we are actually at a point of getting an agreement? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Madam Chair, absolutely, we will provide a written update on where exactly we are with that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. Likewise, on the

MVRMA transition: as I understood, there had to be some kind of an agreed-upon study to look at whether any further authority might be delegated or legislative authority might be provided to GNWT. What is the status of that work? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Madam Chair, I'll turn that to Mr. Goldney.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The focus of that work, at least in the initial phases, has been to engage with Indigenous governments and try and come, to the extent possible, to a common understanding of what might be appropriate to see more authority delegated. That is what officials have been working on with Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments, of course, have their own priorities, too, so a lot of that focus and a lot of those resources were first directed at the development of the intergovernmental council protocol on legislative development. Now that that work has been successfully completed, there are more discussions expected on the MVRMA work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm trying to find a way to not delve too much into the weeds here, but I'm hoping that the Minister would actually consult with this side of the House before an offshore accord would be signed or there had been an agreement reached with the intergovernmental council on what might get studied in terms of the MVRMA. Can the Minister make that commitment, that she would consult with Regular MLAs before signing off on this kind of an arrangement so we would actually know what our government is doing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely, I will make that commitment that, prior to signing, I will give an update to standing committee on the status. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I just want to nail that down, that, before an offshore accord would get signed, this side would have an

opportunity to look at it and give some feedback. That's one commitment, and then I'll follow it up with a second one. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make a commitment that we will work with the other side to receive some feedback, but recognizing, Madam Chair, that there are other parties involved in this work, as well. I cannot commit that whatever the committee says shall be written in stone. We have other parties at the table. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I fully understand that. Look, it's a complicated arrangement. It involves IRC. It involves the Government of Yukon, the federal government; I get it. However, on the MVRMA side, I'd like to get the same commitment from the Minister that, before an agreement that might be negotiated with the intergovernmental council, this side of the House would have an opportunity to provide some input into, or at least understand and know and give some feedback on, what we might agreeing to in terms of MVRMA transition. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I will commit that we will provide an update to standing committee and take their feedback. Again, that one involves even more parties at the table. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. You gotta love the way that we try to govern ourselves here, and that's the way it should be, that we try to find ways to work together. I appreciate that, and this side of the House has a legitimate role in that, as well. I wanted to ask a couple of questions, if I could. I'm trying to understand the difference between setting up the Gender Equity Unit, which I generally support, and what the relationship is to the Status of Women Council. If someone can just sort of explain the differences in roles and responsibilities there? I'm just a little bit worried that there might be starting to get a little bit of overlap, a fuzziness, there. Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to try to deal with this politically sensitive topic. The Gender Equity Unit will be working within the GNWT, as the deputy minister said, to look at things such as the Truth and Reconciliation of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, specifically, and some of the gender issues within our government. The Status of Women Council, within previous governments before that, were kind of used as a support for the Government of the Northwest Territories. However, in the last government, Members who were in that last government remember that the Status of Women Minister at that time was told, "Hands off. Do not work with them. Do not tell them what to do. Do not ask them for any guidance, except for taking their annual report."

Within this government, you will see that the problem was that the legislation says that that council was responsible to the Minister and to support the Minister. The last government bound the Minister's hands and didn't have any authority over that council. Because of that and wishing to support as many services as possible, what we're doing in this government is: we are actually looking at changing the act for the Status of Women Council. I can't say what that looks like yet, because we're working with the Status of Women, but recognizing that we need a unit. You cannot have a Minister responsible for the Status of Women, very critical, without having staffing, so this is about getting the proper support so that the Minister responsible for the Status of Women no longer, in this government, will only have one person trying to save the world. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I was in the last Assembly, too, and anything I can do to support the independence of the Status of Women Council, I am right there for them. They need to be independent and be able to give the Minister and this government whatever advice they see fit and have the resources to do so. I just wanted to get that on the record, and there should be no confusion about their independence whatsoever. I think it already exists in the current legislation. If we want to reinforce that and improve it, let's do it and let's do it quickly, but they are and should always be independent of this government and adequately resourced. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier, do you have any comments?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Member just answered his last question himself. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does anybody have any further questions? Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for clarity, it's a thought to myself, when you start seeing an agreement by March 31<sup>st</sup> for offshore oil and gas, that's like music to my ears because, this territory, we are resource rich and we're cash poor. Potentially this could get the whole Beaufort-Delta back to work. That being said, I'm in full support of what you're doing in regard to getting this done, because my riding, with all the oil and gas we have up there, we're going to make your diamond mine look small down here. That's all good, though. Thank you. I support you, Madam Premier, and thank you, Mr. Goldney. Keep up the good work. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Do you have any comments, Madam Premier?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's devolution. It's about having northern voices for the northern territories, and I am also a strong proponent of northern people. We live here. We have to have a say in what we do with our own, onshore and offshore. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions under the directorate? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 119. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$6,511,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will now move on to the executive council offices, beginning on page 122, with information items on page 124. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. The active positions on page 124, can we just get some explanation as to the extra position and whether there are other positions being deleted and added? That kind of information would actually be more helpful to have in the future, as well, if there are positions going in and out on that page, but what is the extra position next year going to be? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe it's the communications, but I'll ask Amy Kennedy for confirmation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Yes. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The addition of a position in this area is the new senior communications analyst position. The position is being transferred from Cabinet support.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to understand this. One of the communications persons who is working for Cabinet support is now going to be working for Cabinet communications? Sorry. Can I get another explanation? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No. The board registry position is being deleted, and then the extra communications is being put in here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. How many people already work at Cabinet communications? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Kennedy will look it up. Do you want to turn that to Ms. Kennedy?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

**MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sorry. I don't have the exact number of Cabinet communications people right here within my information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Maybe Madam Premier can get back to the Member with that. Thanks. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. This extra position, is that position going to be working with the Minister or the Premier or all of Cabinet? Sorry. I'm confused at the best of times. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Each Minister has a Cabinet communications support kind of switch between sharing with them. However, with the COVID-19, I heard from the Assembly over and over again, "Get out there more," "Get more things in the paper," so this position is actually geared towards the Premier's office. That's why you see the Facebooks coming more. You'll see more messaging. Every two weeks, we're out there in front of the cameras, but it also works very closely with the, I don't know what the position is, director of Cabinet communications. I might be giving him a demotion in title, but the head of Cabinet communications, they work very closely together to ensure that the whole of Cabinet gets the support necessary. It is specifically mostly for the Premier's office. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I'm happy that the Premier is going to get some extra communication support. I'm just wondering how all the rest of it fits together within Cabinet and across the GNWT. Has there actually been a review of the communications function within GNWT ever done, and if so, how recent is it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that we are working on it, but I don't know if we have done a review. I will turn that to Martin Goldney.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am aware of two reviews in relatively recent memory. Those reviews informed the transformation efforts that we began to implement in 2018. They would have been shortly before that time period. Sorry, Madam Chair, I don't recall offhand just when they were done precisely.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Maybe I could ask the Minister if she could commit to give us those reports or summaries of them just so that we can see what's there. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that lots of government documents get put on shelves and are a hard time to find, but I will try to find those documents is my commitment. In fact, I want to look at them myself. Madam Chair, absolutely. If we can find them, we will produce them.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. We will have a great time comparing notes, then, afterwards. I appreciate that commitment. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. No further questions? Are there any further questions under Executive Council offices? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 123. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Executive Council offices, operations expenditures summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$4,460,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, please turn to Indigenous and intergovernmental affairs, beginning on page 125, with information items on 128 to 131. Questions? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is one of my main concerns because I don't see any progress, and I haven't been briefed yet with regards to settlement of claims and implementation of claims. Some of the concerns that I listened to on the weekend from a couple of Aboriginal groups is that, most of the time, people are going without mandates. Negotiators are going without mandates to the meetings, and I just wonder if that is going to change. That's my first question, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a misconception that the negotiators on behalf of the GNWT don't have mandates, but actually, they do have mandates. The difficulty is: sometimes, if there is an ask that is more than they are mandated to do, they can't sign those off. They are negotiators; they are not Ministers. Anything that has a financial number to it cannot be signed by any individual Member, even a Minister, unless it's an approved budget. If it's a financial ask or something like that, it does have to come through the Executive Council. That is the issue. It's not that they don't have mandates. It's when the mandates' limits are exceeded that they have to come back and get more approval. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have been part of the implementation of the Salt River claim, and federal negotiators have access to deputy minister in Ottawa to make a decision. We don't have that here. They always have to go back. If you only have two meetings or three meetings a year, you'll never get a claim settled. I am wondering if there is a way that we could expedite some of these claims. When you settle a claim, it's beneficial to the area that the claim is settled. There is always financial input into the community. There are jobs. I am concerned especially with my area, the implementation of the Salt River claim to its fullness, and I am also concerned about the NWT-Metis Nation claim. There is not a lot of movement, and I am concerned about that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, I would beg to differ. Actually, there has been quite a bit of movement within this government on the status of the claims at this point, more so than in the previous government, when I was part of Cabinet. With the NWT Metis Nation process, we have come to a place where we have a framework agreement for the self-government. I think that is just less than a month that we have settled that. With the Manitoba and Athabasca Denesuline transboundary negotiations, we have an agreement in principle which is going through consultation with the Indigenous governments applicable, Indigenous governments within here. With the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, we have an agreement in principle that I believe we are just at the point of signing, which will come. Thank you, Madam Chair. We have made progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Chair, I met with a group on the weekend, and there was a group that is very concerned about the transboundary agreements that are coming forth with the Denesuline and the Manitoba group because they said that, once that is signed, because the previous government was in court with litigation with that, and now it seems to be that we are going along with the federal government and letting them do that. Any time there is any development within those areas, the people in the territories are subject to section 35, and we have to agree to consult them when it's our land. Those are big issues, and people are really, really concerned about that.

They are also concerned that they are also going to get seats on the Mackenzie Valley water board. There will be three of them. There are three, I think, decided, wanted to go on. Part of this whole Denesuline and the Manitoba group or whatever, agreeing to transboundary agreements within the Northwest Territories is unacceptable. That is what I was told. It's unacceptable, and it's going to be a big topic because we are not going to be going into Saskatchewan or Manitoba and start claiming lands there. No, but let's be reasonable about this, okay? I am from here, born and raised, Indigenous to this area. Salt River has lands right next to where the Denesuline want to go. Okay? Every time, if Salt River wants to do something, we will always have to go to consult once they are there. Those kinds of agreements are not okay. As MLA for Thebacha and representing these two groups, I will not be in favour of something like that because they have already told me that they are not.

I know you are going to go and consult, but going to consult and putting people at a meeting, Mr. Goldney knows this, is not consulting. People have extreme concerns about this whole thing with the transboundary and the federal government. We should not be agreeing to that. We are not going to be starting going to claim land next to Edmonton, even though the Northwest Territories paid for all of Edmonton to grow up because we all have to go there if we want to go anywhere else.

I am very strong about that because I have talked to both sides. I have also talked to people from both claims, and they have very much a concern about that. I know I am going to be on SCRIA, and I am going to have a look, and I am going to be briefed and everything. I have to make sure that people know what's happening here because not everybody has been a chief in a negotiation process. It's not a good process sometimes. I mean, Mr. Goldney knows that. We have had our differences. We have also had our whatever, and we are still friends today. It's just that transboundary thing is a major, it's going to be a major, hurdle. The previous government, under Premier McLeod, okay, you were part of that government, and we were in litigation with that. Now, all of a sudden, I see that they are going to get lands there, and that is a major concern. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** [Microphone turned off] ...with that. I will start by saying I had made the assumption when I first started that, you were right, any transboundary would be objected to by all Indigenous governments within the NWT, but that is not so in the Gwich'in on the Beaufort-Delta, is my understanding, because the Gwich'in do

travel more. In talking to Ken Smith, it's a little bit different up there.

The transboundary in the southern area is going to be contentious. My understanding was that, before, the federal government was doing this; they were doing that with us at the table or not. Yes, Bob McLeod's government was fighting to say, "Let us be at the table. At least let us be at the table," because they were going to sign it off, be a done deal, and not even ask for consultation in the North. They have that power. My understanding is that we actually finally got to the table, and we are asking for consultation.

I did meet with the group when they signed the agreement in principle, and they asked me point blank, "How do you think the Indigenous governments will take this in the consultation?" and point blank, the head of chair, I said to them, each of them, "They will take it -- my gut, I don't know, but my gut is telling me they will take it as well as you would take it if Indigenous governments from the NWT were coming into your territory." That is my last conversation that I had with them. I do not expect the consultation on this side to go well, but I do know that, if we are not at the table, we are in danger. The federal government has been pretty clear that they have the power. Madam Chair, the deputy minister may want to expand. If he wants to, I am not sure.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I am just going to remind the Members and remind the witnesses and everybody to talk through the chair and refrain from speaking directly to the witnesses. Thank you. Did you have anything further to add, Mr. Goldney?

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe I will just add quickly that we do acknowledge those have been very challenging negotiations. We do expect to hear concerns from those who are being consulted with, and we do expect that we will have to listen and carefully consider everything that we hear before decisions are made. That is the goal of the consultations, but we also have to recognize that there is balancing required and that there is value in settling these long-standing grievances and disputes. I am sure all of the views will be considered carefully. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. I know this is very near and dear to our Member for Thebacha with her past of negotiations. I am going to move on to the Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just looking at the line item for Aboriginal intergovernmental meetings fund, I see that last year we were at \$600,000 and this year we are at

\$300,000. I am just wondering if the \$300,000 is the number for what this government intends to accomplish with their priorities. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. At this point, the meeting fund, it's confusing, well, it's not really confusing. Basically, we take turns with the bilaterals, which are the meetings between executive and the Indigenous governments. One meeting, it's in their territory, and the next is in Yellowknife. It just happens that there will be more in Yellowknife this time. However, the bigger thing is that we are in COVID-19. We did not use all the money, and unless something changes throughout Canada, I don't know. We won't be doing a lot of travelling until, at minimum, the end of March, until 75 percent are vaccinated. Some Indigenous governments want in-person; they want to come to Yellowknife. Other ones do not even want to see us; they just want people to stay away from our communities. We are predicting that we won't need any more than this in the coming year unless the borders open. We are looking at September for the South. If there is need more, then we will find it internally, but at this point, we are projecting that a lot of meetings for this area will be on video conferencing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I see that there is a sunset of funding for the deputy secretary for the federal engagement strategy. I am wondering if the Premier can speak to that, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I will try to be politically correct. Within the last government, we did have this position brought up. It was felt that the relationship with the federal government was not really strong. It was felt that we didn't have enough representation in Ottawa negotiating with the federal government. However, what I would like to say is that, within this government, I say to my Ministers all of the time, "It's easy to say no to someone you don't like. It's really difficult to say no to someone you like." I carried that forward, and I say it constantly to my Ministers. We have worked at the relationship with the federal government, and I meet with them on a weekly basis most often because of COVID-19. At this point, I would say that our relationship with the federal government is probably one of the strongest that we have had in

many, many, many years. At this point, we feel that we do not need that position because we are meeting weekly. The federal government is working with us, and our relationship is strong. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, one of the concerns that I understood was that there was a question of whether or not federal Ministers in Ottawa understood the reality of life in the Northwest Territories. This was one of the tasks that the deputy secretary for federal engagement was tasked with accomplishing. I'm wondering if this is still a concern for this government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, absolutely. That was the priority as they didn't know enough about the North. Again, because of COVID-19, we have been meeting weekly with the Prime Minister and Chrystia Freeland. I have access to the top Ministers. The meetings have increased because of it.

The other thing, too, is we work very closely with the Yukon government and the Nunavut government, and because of that tightness that we have formed, and really strengthened those relationships, as well, you are seeing things for the North. I think they are understanding. COVID is a great example. They identified Indigenous communities. They could have just said "reserves." That's often one of the problems that we had in the NWT was all of the money for Indigenous people went to reserves versus off-reserve, which is the majority of us, but because of the advocacy within Nunavut, ourselves, and the Yukon government, the three territories are getting vaccinations quicker than any jurisdiction in the whole country. That, in itself, Madam Chair, speaks to the relationships that we have formed with this federal government.

I do think that the federal government does have a better understanding. Do they understand us completely? Absolutely not. They will not understand us completely until they can at least come and fly here, not just in and out and stay at the Explorer Hotel and leave, but until they actually live here.

Like I say, Madam Chair, at this point, we do not feel that this position is necessary. In the spirit of trying not to leave the next government with no money, if we have a position that we don't feel is necessary, why would we continue with it? In

fairness, the position was wonderful. The person did a great job, but it's not necessary at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. One of the responsibilities of this position was to put together a federal engagement strategy to guide the relationships, and not only the relationships, but also the key messaging coming out of the Northwest Territories. Is this strategy something that still exists today or is being updated with this government? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that position is still responsible for doing it. In fairness to the position, and in fairness to my own office staff, that work has actually been done across departments. The principal secretary, the Cabinet secretary, have spent a lot of time with that. We are still using that position a little bit. It does not justify the amount of money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's always wonderful to hear that relationships are going well. I think that's really important, and I am happy to hear that they are effective relationships, that Ministers are speaking with federal Ministers, and life in the North is becoming clearer to federal Ministers. I am wondering if the Premier feels that potentially we will be looking at 100 percent fully-funded infrastructure projects, then, given that federal Ministers understand life in the North better now. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's part of my ask. However, we can't just say that a good relationship means that they are going to give us 100 because they are not giving 100 percent to any jurisdiction. I would like to say that the federal Ministers also have their own jurisdictions. They also want to get re-elected again. If they are not even giving their own, I can't expect that, just because they understand the needs, that they would just give us all the money. However, in saying that, it doesn't mean I'm not asking for it. Thank you.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My nod, sorry, was because I'm done, but since we're here: I think that, even though they have their own ridings to serve, the Northwest Territories is unique in its needs and is unique in its history. That speaks for something, and I think that anybody, regardless of where they live, wants to be able to see that people have a fair shot at basic infrastructure. I'm happy that Cabinet is asking for 100 percent infrastructure dollars, and I encourage them to keep doing so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Members, we don't have enough time for another Member to get through their ten minutes of questions. I will turn it to Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I ask that we rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022 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.

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

---Carried

Item 23, 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 Friday, February 12, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to Budget Address (Day 7 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Motions
  - Motion 28-19(2), Amendments to the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020
  - Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund

- Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 12, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:01 p.m.