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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 4, 2021****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Members, I begin this day with the sharing of sad news. The honourable David Searle, the first elected Speaker of this Legislative Assembly, passed away on March 1, 2021. He was 85 years old. Mr. Searle was born in Edmonton but moved to Yellowknife when he was a child and always considered himself a Northerner at heart.

Mr. Searle worked at the Cominco Gold Mine before attending the University of Alberta and serving in the Royal Canadian Army Reserve. Mr. Searle received his law degree at the University of Alberta in 1961 and returned north. He started what was to become the largest law firm in the Northwest Territories, de Weerd Searle. Mr. Searle practiced law in the NWT for 20 years and was the founding president of the Law Society of the Northwest Territories.

At the same time, Mr. Searle was elected to this Assembly in 1967 and served as a Member for 12 years. He became our first elected Speaker on May 1, 1975. As our first elected Speaker, Mr. Searle was instrumental in bringing a representative, fully elected Government to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Searle's legacy in the North reaches far beyond this Assembly. He was a key figure in business, playing a critical role in the creation of the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories. As a scout leader, Mr. Searle was a leader and mentor to many young children. He was the first president of Scouts Canada in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Searle's accomplishments are many, but none may be greater than the moral and ethical principles he imparted in his friends and family.

He is survived by his wife, Celia Stock; daughter, Kristi; and stepsons Edouard and Nicolas. A proud grandfather, he will be missed by his eight grandchildren.

On behalf of current and former Members of this Assembly, I offer our condolences, thoughts, and prayers to Mr. Searle's family and friends. The flags

at the Legislative Assembly are at half mast and a condolence book will be available in the Great Hall for Members wishing to pass their condolences on to the family.

Members, it is fitting that, today, as we reflect on the great history of this Assembly, that we are also marking 30 years of service by Brian Thagard, our Sergeant-at Arms. Mr. Thagard joined the Legislative Assembly as facilities manager on March 4, 1991. He was appointed Sergeant-at-Arms in October 2004.

As Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Thagard is responsible for the Legislative Assembly, its grounds, and for the protection of Members in this Chamber. A constant and calm presence, Mr. Thagard continues to serve this Assembly with great pride and dedication. I ask all Members to join me in acknowledging his 30 years of service. Mahsi.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers statements. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 129-19(2):
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in advance of International Women's Day. In 1975, the United Nations designated March 8th as an opportunity for unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action about the place and role of women across the social, economic, cultural, and political fabric of the world. While it is a day for celebration, on reflection, we must raise awareness of the work that is left to be done towards greater gender equality. The theme of this year's International Women's Day is Choose to Challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I decided to search the definition of "challenge." What I found is that to challenge is to question the correctness of something. In other words, to ask ourselves if a way of being, a way of thinking, as assumption that things must be a certain way, is, in fact, based on fact and evidence or if it might be based on beliefs we were raised with, assumptions, stereotypes, or fear. If we all

choose to challenge, we acknowledge that we likely all have some beliefs, assumptions, ideas, or views that should be questioned. The theme also challenges everyone to identify and call out gender bias and inequality and to work on changing people's attitudes and behaviours in order to create a fairer, more inclusive society.

Mr. Speaker, governments can also choose to challenge. Doing things the way they have always been done is easier. The processes and the systems are in place, but to truly challenge those processes and those systems takes courage, patience, and humility. The Government of the Northwest Territories is choosing to challenge inequality by proposing the creation of a gender equity unit.

The work of the gender equity unit will include:

- making sure the GNWT's commitment to gender equality is included and reflected in budgets, policies, and programs;
- promoting and training staff on how to use gender-based analysis plus to assess how diverse groups of women/girls, men/boys, and gender-diverse people may experience government policies, programs, and initiatives;
- coordinating cross-departmental action on gender issues and women's economic empowerment; and
- promoting gender equity and leadership at senior levels.

In short, the gender equity unit needs to challenge the way we make decisions and allocate resources. History and science tell us that challenging social norms and standing up for a diversity of voices and perspectives can improve decision making and organizational functioning. That choice is far from easy. This will make our decision making better, more inclusive, and more productive.

The gender equity unit will also support the continuation of the Campaign School for Women, which equips women with tools and supports to run for elected leadership. The success of the Campaign School for Women can be measured by the increased number of women who are running for office. We need to choose to challenge our own ideas of who should run and who should win and what they are capable of. In this Chamber, the elected leadership of the Northwest Territories now counts nine women around this circle, the most women ever elected to a Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, one election does not mean that the challenge of gender equity is conquered. We, all of us, cannot allow ourselves to forget that one

election has not changed the fact that the Northwest Territories was, until this election, at or near the bottom in terms of gender representativeness across Canada or that we still have the second highest rate of gender-based violence. We must still choose to challenge every day in how we govern and in how we look at one another.

As the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I choose to challenge. I choose to challenge gender bias. I choose to challenge inequality. I choose to challenge discomfort, fear, and unfamiliarity and to embrace my role as a Member of the 19th Legislative Assembly to ensure that gender diversity becomes a new normal and not merely historic. Mr. Speaker, I hope others can take a moment to consider whether or how they too can choose to challenge in celebration of International Women's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 130-19(2): 2020 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, volunteerism plays an important role in contributing to healthy, safe, and vibrant communities. In the NWT, community volunteers are essential to community health and well-being, and we recognize their role in contributing to a strong and resilient territory. To acknowledge the vital contributions of our volunteers in the Northwest Territories, the Outstanding Volunteer Awards program was developed in 1991. The awards provide an opportunity to recognize outstanding volunteers in the Northwest Territories and highlight the importance of volunteerism in the NWT and among the NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, today, I want to acknowledge and celebrate the 2020 NWT Outstanding Volunteer Award winners. This year, due to the health protocols around public gatherings, it was decided to create a video recognizing the recipients of the award. This video will be released for viewing today.

The recipients of the NWT Outstanding Volunteer awards for 2020 are:

- Outstanding Elder Award - Marino Casebeer
- Outstanding Youth Award - Anna Seagrave
- Outstanding Individual Award - Caihla MacCuish

- Outstanding Group Award - Inclusion NWT, Board of Directors

I would like to briefly highlight each award winner. Marino Casebeer has been a volunteer with the Folk on the Rocks Music Festival for upwards of 30 years. He has been a major part of organizing the Folk on the Rocks stages, artists, gear, sound checks, and schedule throughout his tenure as the head stage manager among many other roles. He has passed his love of music, the Folk on the Rocks Festival, and volunteering onto his community and his family. All of his children have been active volunteers with the festival for years. As part of winning the award, Marino received \$1,000 to donate to an organization of his choice. His donation will go to Folk on the Rocks.

Anna Seagrave has been an active volunteer in the community of Yellowknife for many years. She volunteers with a variety of projects, including Fostering Open eXpression among Youth, known as the FOXY program, the YWCA Yellowknife Council, Yellowknife Catholic School Indigenous Education Program, and she teaches throat singing to the youth at Weledeh Catholic School. She is a role model in her work to preserve Inuit culture and to support Northern young women to succeed in the Northwest Territories. She is a peer leader who promotes healthy choices and encourages young women to believe in themselves. As part of winning this award, Anna received \$1,000 to donate to an organization of her choice. Ms. Seagrave selected FOXY.

Caihla MacCuish has served on the Board of Directors for the Yellowknife Association of Community Living. She is the co-chair of the Yellowknife Dance Collective, and she has been a member and chair of the Yellowknife Community Garden Collective board. Caihla has dedicated her time to carrying out committee work, delivering community workshops and classes, organizing fundraisers, and contributing to the visions and missions of the organizations that she volunteers with. Her positive outlook and dedication to making her community healthier and happier is evident in every project she becomes a part of. As part of winning this award, Caihla received \$1,000 to donate to an organization of her choice. Her choice this year will go to the Yellowknife Women's Society.

Our final recipient for Outstanding Group Award is Inclusion NWT. Inclusion NWT provides lifelong support and services to individuals with disabilities and their families. The board consists of nine members who are responsible for establishing the association's policies and overall direction. The board works exceptionally hard to fully support the staff at Inclusion NWT so that they can effectively interact with and support individuals with disabilities

and their families. The Inclusion NWT board meets regularly to identify gaps in community needs and come up with plans around filling those gaps and providing the best support possible. As part of winning this award, the Board of Directors received \$1,000 to donate to an organization of their choice. This year their choice is the Respite Services Program.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Cabinet, I send my congratulations to everyone receiving the awards this year and to those who were nominated. I would like to acknowledge the importance of the volunteer work they contributed throughout their communities. Lastly, I want to remind everyone that nominations for NWT Outstanding Volunteer awards are open year-round. Please encourage your constituents to submit nominations. Mashi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 131-19(2): WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, March 8th is International Women's Day, a global celebration of the women and girls in our lives who have made immeasurable contributions to making the Northwest Territories, Canada, and the world, a better place for everyone.

A little over a century ago, women were fighting for the right to vote and the right to stand for office. Demanding better pay and voting rights, 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York City in 1908. By 1911, the first International Women's Day was honoured by several European nations with more than one million women and men attending rallies in support of women's rights to work, vote, hold public office, and end discrimination. Fast forward to 2019, Mr. Speaker, and Northwest Territories residents voted in the first gender-balanced legislature in Canadian history. This would not have been possible if it was not for trailblazing Canadian feminists and activists who fought for what they believed in and challenged the status quo of a system that was created with a significant gender imbalance.

We have made great strides as a society to advance gender equality, but we still have a lot of work to do. Women continue to face gender-based barriers and discrimination, and these obstacles make it difficult for women to get an equal footing. The world has been accustomed to male politicians, and there is a certain societal expectation that says female politicians should play nice. If we are seen as aggressive or having too strong a voice, it is easy to characterize us using negative and misogynist stereotypes. In many places, women are still seen as incapable of taking on responsibility in

what are perceived as male-oriented areas, such as finance, energy, economic development, climate change, foreign affairs, defense, trade, and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this is often the case in parliaments where women are given 'women's only' portfolios or only allowed to sit in women's committees and are being pushed away from the other committees because of their gender. At times, it is a tougher environment for female politicians, Mr. Speaker. We have a microscope pointed on our activities all the time, the detractors just waiting for us to fail so they can say, "I told you so." I remember when I was elected Premier, people were saying things like I could not lead, that the economy was going to fail. The sky has not fallen with my election as Premier, and I would argue that we have weathered the past year well.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of representation is critical to the younger generations. It is about being a role model and paving the way for young women to aspire to do great things: to be doctors, teachers, CEOs, and political leaders. The more women that get elected to any kind leadership position, the more it shows younger women and the women around us that they can do it too.

I remember hearing a story about Norway's Defense Minister. Important context: between 2001 and 2017, six of the seven Defense Ministers in Norway were female. A young boy was talking to the then Defense Minister and asked, "Can boys be Defense Minister?" It is a good reminder that we all look for what we see, to understand what can be. Representation is key. It is important to me that the next generation of women take up this fight, as well, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that there are greater resources and role models to not only show that it is possible but to provide the "know-how" to do it.

We must continue to work together to develop and implement strategies to eliminate these barriers, prevent violence against women and girls, update policies and programs to promote the development of women in leadership positions, and continue the momentum as we strive to achieve gender equality.

Mr. Speaker, the full participation and leadership of women in all aspects of society enriches the lives of us all and supports a kinder, more progressive world. However, women remain underrepresented in public life and decision making. Some of the best responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have been led by women, not only as politically-elected leaders, but at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19. They include healthcare professionals, from cleaning staff to doctors, who continue to put their lives at risk every day to help people. They are scientists who have helped develop vaccines to protect residents and communities from the virus.

They are the educators who have adapted and have continued to educate the future generation of leaders.

Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day was established 110 years ago to promote equal rights. These efforts laid the foundation for women to continue the fight against gender-based discrimination, patriarchal values, and systemic gender oppression that has held women back from being equal participants in our society. As we celebrate the creativity, solidarity, and resilience of the women and girls all around us, it is important we remain committed to a world where women have a meaningful seat at the decision-making table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WOMEN IN BUSINESS

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to know some pretty incredible people who identify as women. I have met, learned from, worked with, and loved women who are change makers, trail blazers, creative geniuses, intellectual rock stars, and expert humans.

Monday is International Women's Day, and this year's international theme is Choose to Challenge. The constituency I serve is home to great change makers who choose to challenge: Myrna Pokiak, artist, mother, entrepreneur, and advocate for the NWT's business community; Cynthia Mufandedza, mother, entrepreneur, politician, and business and community advocate; and Tiarella Hanna, entrepreneur, selfless volunteer, and animal advocate. One strong commonality between these passionate women is that they are business owners. When I think of the women I grew up with who are entrepreneurs, the list is extensive: Sarah Kalnay-Watson of Let Me Knot; Meagan Peters of Etandah; Sarah Erasmus of Erasmus Apparel; Charlene Chapple of Haylani Apparel; Cheryl Houweling of Kavanaugh; Nadja Lennie of Fireside Denture Clinic; Diana Curtis of Diana Curtis Designs; and Gillian Rivers of Ph8. A small piece of large list of born-and-bred northern women entrepreneurs.

A persistent entrepreneurial creative spirit challenges the status quo and is ready to constantly evolve, but do not be fooled. Business is exciting, fast-paced, and new. It is also scary, riddled with risk, and exhausting. However, business is not about perfection or never failing. Every misstep is a chance to learn, grow, and get better, so teaching

women and girls how to fail, be brave, and try again is imperative to the success of our future entrepreneurial spirit. My mother always says, "Do what you love, and the money will come;" so do what you love, and risk and reward will eventually even itself out.

Mr. Speaker, about 16 percent of Canadian small business owners are women. Studies show that, by increasing gender equality and women's participation in the economy, Canada could add up to \$150 billion to our national GDP. How do we get there? US research shows that, while women account for 37 percent of entrepreneurs, they receive 2 percent of venture funding. Traditionally, women are felled -- I'm having a hard time today, Mr. Speaker. Okay. Traditionally, women are felled under micro business, getting micro loans. However, women business owners are not less-than. We need to support the evolution of female entrepreneurs from micro to medium to mega. Mr. Speaker, with that, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement today.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. CLEVELAND: Business is critical to the success of the North. There is opportunity for success in every single one of our NWT communities. Canada set its own International Women's Day theme of Feminist Recovery, but let's not just support recovery; let's inspire, aim higher, invest more, and leverage dollars that invest in women. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON VACCINE ROLLOUT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, we here in the Northwest Territories are a very fortunate population. According to the Department of Health and Social Services, the NWT is the leading jurisdiction in Canada when it comes to its first-dose vaccine delivery. Mr. Speaker, as of February the 26th, 14,520 NWT residents have received their first vaccine dose, which equals to 32.2 percent of the entire NWT population. In comparison, according to the Government of Canada, again as of February 26th, there has only been a total of 1.7 percent of the total Canadian population who has received their first vaccine dose. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the statistics on the global vaccination delivery rate compared to Canada's rate are even starker. For example, according to the United Nations secretary general, as of February 17th, there are 130 countries that have not yet received a single dose of vaccines. The secretary general said

that only 10 countries have administered 75 percent of all vaccines worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics demonstrate an uneven distribution of vaccine delivery around the world. This unfortunate reality is a sharp reminder of how fortunate we are in Canada and in the Northwest Territories when it comes to vaccine delivery. In addition, it is worth noting that, according to a News North article from just yesterday, the NWT is the number one jurisdiction in Canada for prioritizing vaccinations for persons with disabilities. It is also important to note that the NWT and Prince Edward Island remain the only two jurisdictions in the country that have zero deaths from COVID-19.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Fort Smith, I would like to take this moment to once again say thank you to Dr. Kandola, the Chief Public Health Officer, along with Minister Green and Premier Cochrane for all their work in helping to keep our residents safe and protected from COVID-19. The residents of Fort Smith are very grateful for the work that has been done to protect the NWT from the adverse effects of this pandemic. I hope to continue seeing the NWT succeed in our fight against COVID-19. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECYCLING DEPOTS

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, it's our job in this House to look at the large systemic issues that affect all of the people of the NWT, but it is also our job in this House to look at the small incremental changes that can help those people. I believe the GNWT, in order to become a much more adaptable public service, needs to change the way it operates. In order to create an adaptable government, we require a four-step approach to approaching the smaller problems:

- identify where people are struggling going about their daily lives;
- identify the next smallest thing that can be done today to mitigate that struggle, not a large overhaul, a next smallest thing;
- do that thing; do it right away; do not engage with stakeholders; do not create a strategic plan; just do it; and
- repeat the process.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, if our front-line staff follow this model, it will free up room in our House to have those large, systemic debates we must have. As an example, some years ago, I had a conversation with a man who collected models in downtown Yellowknife. He would collect models from wherever he could, mostly out of the trash, then would slump the bags over his back and walk them out to the recycling depot across town for the few dollars he earned. This was his near daily routine. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if one pays attention, it is a common sight in Yellowknife to see people walking down Old Airport Road with a bag full of recycling slung over their shoulders.

The small and simple solution to address this problem is to offer a second recycling option located in downtown, Mr. Speaker. I had previously asked ENR whether a second recycling station in downtown Yellowknife was possible. They seemed to agree it was a good idea, yet for some reason, it still has not occurred. I am not even asking for a fully staffed second location, just a satellite station that feeds into the main one. There are many different ways this can look. Across the world, there are various vending machines, Mr. Speaker, where you can feed in a few recyclables for some cash. The current depot recently adopted a drop-and-go service. Surely, there is such a way to extend this drop-and-go service to an area downtown for our elderly, disabled, and those with mobility issues. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR about whether we can make life a little easier for those who have to walk across town for a few dollars, and hopefully, we can do it quickly, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-POVERTY REPORT CARD

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The first Northwest Territories Poverty Report Card was released by Alternatives North in November 2020. I've reviewed it, and it's hard to summarize in a few words. The ones that come to mind are "overwhelming" and "shocking." I can't possibly hope to do the report justice, but suffice it to say that income disparity between rich and poor, small communities and larger centres, and within communities continues to be a huge problem that the COVID pandemic has only highlighted and, in some cases, made worse.

The GNWT has had an Anti-Poverty Strategy since 2013 but has done little more than monitor indicators of poverty. I want to highlight the recommendations from the report:

- it is time to assess the GNWT's poverty

reduction strategies;

- GNWT needs to regularly review data collection and outputs to reflect changing conditions;
- long-term solutions are needed, such as a basic guaranteed income, a living wage, and economic restructuring;
- lone-parent families and children should be the highest priority for poverty reduction;
- measurements of poverty, including living wage and market-basket measures, need to be expanded to better inform solutions;
- food insecurity has been highlighted by the pandemic and needs to be urgently addressed;
- immediate action is needed to overcome housing problems throughout the NWT; and
- reconciliation needs to be part of poverty reduction.

I am dismayed that, once again, a small non-governmental organization is doing the work of this government. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on our poverty-reduction efforts and responses to the recommendations provided in the first report card on poverty in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL ENGINEERING MONTH

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Engineering has been around since the first humans walked on this Earth and began altering their physical environment in order to improve their comfort, safety, and food supply. As mentioned earlier this week, March is National Engineering Month. Hosted by Engineers Canada, the national regulatory body, it is intended to spark interest in the next generation of engineering professionals and celebrate the role engineers play in shaping society. Next week, the NWT and Nunavut chapter, NAPEG, will be hosting their virtual symposium themed "Powering the North of the Future," and registration is free for anyone.

Engineers take four years of university, followed by another four years of mentorship and experience, in order to become professional engineers, or "big E Engineers," as we like to call ourselves, but there is more to this profession than just those of us who have "banged the anvil" and wear the ring.

Engineering techs also play a crucial role in our industry, and when I look at our planned polytechnic university, I'm excited for the opportunity it could bring to this field.

In the North, like many of our skilled labour positions, we often bring engineering techs up from the South to work on our projects. By creating an engineering tech program at the university, we will create an opportunity to train Northerners who specialize in circumpolar engineering. This, to me, is an engineering field that would incorporate traditional Indigenous knowledge as well as permafrost experience and climate change adaptation, to vastly improve our understanding of cold regions engineering. With this type of program, hands-on training could be provided by local engineering firms who would also provide mentorship for students, a key component of the engineering philosophy. This would produce successful northern engineer techs who will remain in the North and contribute to the profession.

There is no shortage of national and international research studies being performed in the Northwest Territories; however, there is a shortage of northern-raised professionals to execute them. In 2018 alone, there were 13 engineering projects listed in the Aurora Research Institute's Compendium of Research in the Northwest Territories. Some were local groups, such as the Nihtat Corporation in Inuvik, which performed a geotechnical investigation for the GNWT in support of a wind study, but several were from overseas, such as the airborne radar program performed by the German Aerospace Center to monitor vegetation, soil, and permafrost conditions in the boreal forest, or the University of Helsinki, which studied the short- and long-term effects of forest fires on carbon pools in the Arctic permafrost and subarctic forests.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the wealth of knowledge that participating on international projects like these could bring to our local expertise? How they could help us to better understand our own backyard? By ensuring that engineering tech programs are part of our new university, we will be better equipped to deal with our northern, remote climate by retaining knowledge, expertise, and experience in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS' DISASTER
COMPENSATION

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about the Hunters and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Program. Even though all my colleagues are talking about International Women's Day, hunters and trappers is maybe a toast to my granny, who was a very long-time hunter and trapper.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the support for hunters and trappers affected by disaster in my riding last fall. Hunting and trapping is a subsistence lifestyle and income; however, many harvesters today choose to practice this traditional way of life and preserve these harvesting skills while working another job that provides the cash to support these traditions. Many people don't live entirely in their trapping cabin year-round, generating only the cash they make off their trap line. I recognize the Department of ENR administers the Hunters and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Program, and I am concerned that the qualifications for this program may leave many harvesters in my region without support.

Last spring, in my riding, we experienced high water levels that did not go down to previous levels this year, while I watched other water levels on the Great Slave Lake basin reach unprecedented levels this fall. We have seen the severe impacts from flooding in the southern portions of the territory and, as well, in the northern portions. I am concerned for hunters and trappers in my riding. It is unknown what the spring melt will bring. If the water continues to go up, many cabins will be flooded in my region.

Mr. Speaker, hunting and trapping and harvesting is a way of life. These are skills that take many years to refine, and it costs money to practice. Many harvesters in my region may not generate 20 percent of their annual income through harvesting and trapping, but that does not make their pursuit of traditional skills any less important. I am concerned that, if the flooding occurs in the Mackenzie Delta this spring, many cabins will be flooded and many harvesters will be negatively impacted and may even give up their traditional way of life. I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on this later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MEDEVAC SUPPORT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am bringing up medevac services in our small communities in the Delta. It has been brought to my

attention that we've been having undue delays in services in the communities that are requiring medevac services to bring patients from the communities into Inuvik or beyond. I am wanting to know, in regard to making sure that the Beaufort-Delta is given the service that is required in this urgent nature, because the communities I represent in Nunakput, three of them are air-serviced, and one is by road. I got a few calls from families on delays of service, and it's not right, because of pilots being timed out on their flying time; or if it's not the pilots, it's the staff. We need to reassure the constituents that we are able to provide that service of medical travel for medevac in the Delta. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Oh, sorry. I missed one. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, you can't hide from me. I want to speak about International Women's Day, which, of course, is on Monday. My statement last year celebrated the near-parity achieved in the 2019 territorial election. That gave women MLAs influence on shaping the priorities of the 19th Assembly, to reflect areas where women usually have primary responsibility. On this year's International Women's Day, I want to talk about how to maintain parity in the Legislative Assembly and how to bring more women into levels of government.

We need to build a pipeline to ensure women are ready and able to take on political leadership in the next Assembly. Building a pipeline of female candidates is not going to be easy. Women face challenges to running for office because of the need to modify caregiving roles for children and elders, to work long hours, and to live in a different community from their family. Add to that the challenge of political culture in Canada. Women in public life are harassed online and in person, regularly accused of stupidity and corruption, and held to unrealistic expectations of how they will spend their time while trying to balance their personal lives.

Mr. Speaker, politics is not a career for the faint of heart; it's a 24-7 pressure cooker. Why bother? Because public service is a calling, an opportunity to make a difference, where laws are made, policy

written, and budgets developed. Thinking about universal daycare, better student outcomes, more seniors housing? This is where these ideas are debated and sometimes realized. It's a place where passion meets purpose for the greater good of NWT residents.

Once a woman has decided to run for office, there is the question of how to and how much it's going to cost. We have a good answer now to how to: the Women's Advisory Unit created a campaign school for women running for elected positions of all kinds. It's available online to anyone at any time. The question of how to pay for a campaign is an unfinished piece of business. The special committee on increasing the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly heard that the cost of a campaign is a barrier to running. As a result, the committee recommended that there be an election expense rebate program to off set expenses for all candidates, men and women. Rebates are currently available in eight provinces and at the federal level. I resurfaced this idea to the current rules and procedures committee last year, and I am delighted they have recommended adoption of a rebate program for the 2023 election. I look forward to debating this idea in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, the next territorial election is two and a half years away. That may seem like a long time, but we all know it's not. Now is the time for women to consider a career in politics, confirm their passion to make a difference through public service, and line up family support. I encourage every woman here to reach out to women she knows to talk about running. Those of us here now have a duty to help make the 2019 election gains for women sustainable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Frame Lake.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 3-19(2):
ANNA SEAGRAVE - YOUTH CATEGORY
RECIPIENT, 2020 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER
AWARDS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I am very pleased to congratulate my constituent Anna Seagrave for her selection as the Youth Category winner of the 2020 Outstanding Volunteer Awards. Ms. Seagrave has practiced the art of Inuit throat singing from her early years, and last year, volunteered her time teaching Weledeh Catholic School students her traditional art. Her instruction

provides fulfillment for young women seeking cultural expression and creativity. Congratulations to Anna.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Acknowledgements. Member for Great Slave.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-19(2):
MARINO CASEBEER - ELDER CATEGORY
RECIPIENT, 2020 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER
AWARDS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to give recognition to an exceptional Great Slave constituent. Congratulations to Marino Casebeer for receiving the Outstanding Elder Award. Marino is a 2020 recipient of the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards and contributes to making the community of Great Slave and our entire territory an excellent place to live. Congratulations to Marino. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 637-19(2):
RECYCLING DEPOTS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems my quest to get a small satellite recycling depot in downtown Yellowknife has been caught up in some of the larger review of how our depots operate and the licences under them. My first question to the Minister of ENR: when was the last time we put our recycling depot licences out to tender?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These depots were renewed in July 2020, and they will expire July 31, 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Perhaps there is some misunderstanding by me on exactly how we give out the licences. I understand they were renewed and that previous licence holders got them in 2020. In 2022, we will once again decide whether to renew them, but I'm asking when they went out for a proposal process. I know the department has done this in the past, and there have been some issues. What I'm asking is: was the 2021 the result of a competitive process to run the depots, which can actually be quite profitable?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It was renewed in July 2020, so that means the company was able to

renew their bid or their business licence with us. No, there wasn't a competitive bid in 2021, and it does expire in 2022.

MR. JOHNSON: I'm actually not all that concerned about the tendering of the licences, but I have been previously told that this was one of the barriers to adding a satellite station in downtown Yellowknife. I will get to the point. Is the Minister willing to implement the option of, whether it be a reverse vending machine or a drop-and-go or a partial-hours, some sort of way that those with mobility issues can drop their recycling off downtown and get money for it?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Since the Member has brought this forward, we at ENR have looked at various options for automatic deposit in Yellowknife. The staff are putting some tech packs and specs together so we know that the equipment we do have to put out there would actually stand up to our weather in the Northwest Territories. We are in the process of looking at that. Thanks to the Member; he keeps on asking us questions. We are working on it, and we are moving forward.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the department is working on it. Our beverage recycling program is one of the best in the country. We have extremely high rates of return, and it's a model for success. Does the Minister have an idea of when someone will actually be able to return some recycling in downtown Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We are very supportive of piloting an automatic deposit. We are looking at doing this with the new licensing process for 2022. We are looking at it during that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 638-19(2):
MEDEVAC SERVICES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have questions about having medevac services and delays in the Beaufort-Delta, especially my riding of Nunakput, in the last weeks. How many medevacs in a 24-hour period, how many planes are dispatched out in my riding are in the Delta at any given time, and is there a backup plane available if the pilot's times are maxed out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to take this question on notice because I have no information with me with which to answer these questions. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: There has to be a backup plan in regard to providing services when people are maxed out on timing. Is there a backup plane? She could take it as notice like she just did, but I want to just make sure. I will meet with the Minister at break and give her the questions that I do have to provide answers to my constituents who are quite concerned right now.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am taking this question on notice because I don't have the information available to answer it.

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

QUESTION 639-19(2):
ANTI-POVERTY REPORT CARD

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services who has responsibility for the GNWT Anti-Poverty Strategy. In my statement, I referred to the recommendations put forward in the first poverty report card produced by Alternatives North. Is the Minister aware of these recommendations from this report, and does she intend to respond to the report publicly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have read the report card, I have met with Alternatives North, and I am very appreciative of the effort that they put into the first ever report card. The government is not planning to provide a response to the report card. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. Look, I know that she is a passionate advocate on the issue of poverty and actually had a lot to do with the first strategy that was developed. I was a little bit disappointed to hear that response, so I might try something else. I'm aware that the work is under way in collaboration with the federal government to produce an updated northern market basket measures that would allow us to better monitor and track poverty here, especially in smaller communities. Can the Minister update us on this work including when a northern-specific market basket measure will be introduced?

HON. JULIE GREEN: This is work being undertaken and lead by Statistics Canada. What I know about this is that Statistics Canada held consultation workshops with government and non-

government stakeholders in October and November two years ago in 2018, and it's my understanding that a member of Alternatives North attended the workshop that was here. The result of that is that the Yukon and the Northwest Territories have been assisting Statistics Canada to establish thresholds for their respective territories for the market basket measure. The end result was a proposal to create a Northern MBM and provide some methodology for how that's going to be calculated. Consultation is now open on the topic of this proposal, and of course, they would be delighted to hear from anyone who has a view on this. What I do need to say, however, is that this will not be a community-level measure when it is complete. It will be a regional measure. It will be available in six regions of the NWT.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that, and I'm sure that our Bureau of Statistics is eagerly engaged in that work, as well. One of the most disturbing conclusions of the poverty report card is the state of food security or insecurity confronting one in four families here. I'm aware that the recent anti-poverty round table focused on the issue of food insecurity. Can the Minister indicate what specific action is being undertaken on the issue of food security, specifically following the anti-poverty round table, even if it means working with her colleagues, other colleagues in Cabinet?

HON. JULIE GREEN: The focus on food security is really a whole-of-government approach with several different departments contributing solutions to how to create and grow more food in the North, whether that's gardens, eggs, meat, whatever. The objective of the round table the Member referenced, which was at the end of January, was to bring together people from the Northwest Territories with people who are working on food security solutions in other jurisdictions that are rural and remote and Indigenous like ours. It's my understanding that these 80 delegates who attended had a very good conversation about this. There's a report being prepared, which will be tabled in this House, and it will lead the way forward in what more we can do to address what the Member rightly calls an appalling rate of poverty.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for that. This government's anti-poverty strategic framework dates from 2013. Many of the key indicators around income disparity, food security, housing, and more have actually gotten worse since 2013. Can the Minister tell us when there will be a formal evaluation of our poverty work and more systemic solutions put forward such as guaranteed basic

income, a living wage, or even economic restructuring? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: The strategy which, as the Member says, was released in 2013, was followed by an action plan released in 2015 and then, again, another action plan that came out in 2019 and runs until 2022. It builds on those original pillars in the Anti-Poverty Strategy. Just to remind the Member, that's children and family support, healthy living and reaching our potential, safe and affordable housing, sustainable communities, and the integrated continuum of service. What the Bureau of Statistics has done is created a special section on its website to report on poverty indicators that were agreed at the 2016 anti-poverty round table. I'm not going to list them all, but they are numerous. They include things like food security, children receiving services, employment rates, and so on. We realized that we have not conquered poverty, but we remain actively engaged in coming up with solutions that will help people to live without want. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 640-19(2):
WOMEN IN BUSINESS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I am wondering if, to start, she can tell me what percent of NWT's small/medium business owners are women? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a number on that with respect to women. It comes from national statistics naming that 24 percent of businesses are majority-owned by women. There are 3,378 small businesses here in the Northwest Territories, so I'm sure that will give her the ability to do the math that she wants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I am wondering what percent of total BDIC loan funding goes to women entrepreneurs in the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: BDIC's statistics do show that approximately nine percent of total loans go to businesses where women are the sole proprietor. Approximately, 55 percent of total loans go to those where there's a woman who is, at least, a part-owner of the business.

MS. CLEVELAND: I don't think I have to say too much to that. I think it's pretty obvious that there is some room for improvement. Mr. Speaker, I'm

wondering what supports are available to NWT women to foster successful entrepreneurship, and are any new initiatives in the works for this year?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: ITI's very proud to partner with individual communities, particularly through the Community Futures programming. I can highlight that this year, the Thebacha Business Development Services ran an Indigenous women and entrepreneurship seminar, which we were proud to be a part of. Similarly, here in Yellowknife, the Chamber of Commerce hosted women's Trailblazers Symposium. I think that's, in fact, coming up just next week. We're proud to be a sponsor of that. Similarly, BDIC, although not specific to women, does host a quite large number of support services for businesses. It is of note given the theme that's being presented, that since April 1st of 2020, 65 percent of the attendees at the learning centre sessions hosted by BDIC, in fact, were women.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to me that, as someone who grew up in the North, a number of people who decided to become entrepreneurs, whether or not they're men or women, who I went to high school with. When I talk to people from different communities, people have different parts of their life that they're passionate about, and they want to be able to turn that into a business. I'm wondering if the Minister of ITI would commit to working with the Minister of ECE in order to develop high-school-based business curriculum for NWT students? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: This actually allows me to answer the last part of the previous question that I realize I didn't get to. With respect to curriculum, that certainly falls very much within ECE's purview. With respect to the kind of programming and opportunities that are available for students in high school in a young age bracket, I absolutely will commit to speaking with ECE, with my colleague, to see what we can do so that we can find some complementary programs and ideas. One thing, Mr. Speaker, that ITI is right now at the idea stage of, and it's an exciting stage, is looking at bringing junior achievement back to the Northwest Territories. This is an exciting opportunity. It's kind of a program across Canada that really allows young people to understand business, understand entrepreneurship, and to develop some skills that hopefully will help them become the future entrepreneurs for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 641-19(2):
HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS' DISASTER
COMPENSATION

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ENR. Recognizing the unprecedented water levels witnessed across the territory and in preparation for the upcoming spring melt, will the Minister commit to reviewing the guidelines of the Hunters and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Fund? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, ENR is reviewing the community harvest support program and the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program. Members should be happy. Once those two things are completed, ENR will make a commitment to review the hunters and trappers' disaster compensation guideline, and we will have it completed by the end of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: The end of the year, a little bit late for spring, but I will ask for exceptions throughout the year if I need to. Will the Minister commit to reviewing the parameters of this funding when they are doing their review, to decrease the percentage of income required through harvesting, to broaden the support for as many harvesters as possible?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We have two reviews going on. We would have to bump one if we had to do that, and both those other reviews are very important. In saying that, the program evaluation will include a review of eligibility requirements, including the current criteria related to the income percentage. For the Member, she has reached out to me previously to talk about this. We have brought those concerns forward to the department, and we are making sure this is part of our evaluation process.

MS. SEMMLER: Will the Minister maintain the \$40,000 that he had mentioned in this House that would be eligible for compensation, put in place to support the trappers whose cabins flooded in the South Slave, for trappers elsewhere in the territories if that should happen?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: This year is a new initiative, one-time assistance to provide compensation to people who have had unprecedented damage to property and equipment. However, in saying that, when flooding situations occur in the springtime, we will look at it on a case-by-case basis, and we encourage the Members to

get people to reach out to our regional offices to bring forth their concerns.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if the Minister will be able to answer this one, but if he can provide the information, can the Minister provide what the department has allocated for this program for the past two fiscal years, how many applicants they have had, and what was paid out? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I wish I could do that for the Member, and I really hate to make a commitment to have to come back to the Member with that information. For that detail, I will reach out to the department, and we will get it to her in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Member for Nunakput.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 23-19(2):
PRACTICE OF USING POWER-LIMITING
DEVICES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The practice of using power-limiting devices in the Northwest Territories: under Section 74(1) of the Public Utilities Act, any public utilities operating in the Northwest Territories must provide any information requested by the Public Utilities Board. In light of the current practice of using power-limiting devices by utilities and power distributors operating in the Northwest Territories, I submit the following questions to the Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board:

1. What is the current number of power limiters installed in residential homes across the Northwest Territories by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, broken down by region and community;
2. What is the number of power limiters installed by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation since resumption of the use of limiters announced in the press release of October 21, 2020;
3. What is the current number of power limiters installed in residential homes across the Northwest Territories by Northland Utilities (NWT) Limited (an ATCO Company), broken down by region and by community; and
4. What is the current number of power limiters

installed in residential homes across the Northwest Territories by the Northland Utilities (Yellowknife) an ATCO and NII Company?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 20:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT
STANDARDS ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act. Bill 20 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 4, 2020, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. On February 10, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill on March 2, 2021. Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 341-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
572-19(2): ELDER ABUSE

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 572-19(2): Elder Abuse." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 342-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
517-19(2): INCIDENTS INVOLVING TRANSPORT
TRUCKS ON HIGHWAY NO. 3

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 517-19(2): Incidents Involving Transport Trucks on Highway No. 3." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 343-19(2):
UPDATED POLICY DOCUMENTS, APRIL 2021,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Updated Policy Documents, April 2021, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 344-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POVERTY REPORT
CARD, 2020

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following document: "Northwest Territories Poverty Report Card, 2020," prepared by Alternatives North, dated November 2020. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 30-19(2):
ACTIONS FOR IMPROVED HOUSING
OUTCOMES

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that this Legislative Assembly calls on the Government of the Northwest Territories to prioritize the review of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation as part of the government renewal initiative; and further, that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation update its mission statement and policies to reflect its role in social wellness; and furthermore, that Northwest Territories Housing Corporation must include referrals to appropriate government programs prior to beginning the eviction process; and furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Member for Nunakput.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 23:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, I will move that Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Securities Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; 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; Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election; Committee Report 10-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; 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, 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? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thanks, 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): Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, in the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Madam Chair. I am here to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$404,000 or 0.7 percent over the main estimates of 2020-2021. These estimates support the mandate objectives for ITI while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- Initiative funding totalling \$2.296 million, which includes:
 - \$936,000 to continue our support of tourism under Tourism 2025 towards the five-year investment strategy for the tourism sector;
 - \$400,000 to maintain funding for our Mining Incentive Program to stimulate prospecting and exploration and increase resource exploration and development in our territory;
 - \$360,000 to support the development of regulations for the Mineral Resources Act and to advance work on the mineral administration and registry system;
 - \$350,000 to invest in the creation of an action plan to develop the NWT's knowledge economy and establish regional economic development plans; and
 - \$250,000 to support an ITI position to coordinate and ensure continued

development of the fish sector and support the Tu Cho Fishers' Cooperative, a key partner in our ongoing work to revitalize the commercial fishery on Great Slave Lake.

- Forced growth funding of \$134,000 to support two regional tourism and parks positions;
- Other adjustments of \$283,000, with \$225,000 for the continued implementation of the Northwest Territories petroleum resources strategy; and \$58,000 to support the department's continued provision of communications and services in French; and
- Sunsets of \$2.067 million.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly by:

- supporting mandate priorities such as reviews of procurement practices within the GNWT;
- the competitiveness of the Northwest Territories royalty regime;
- socio-economic agreements; and
- the Northern Food Development Program.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you wish to bring any witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Today, we have Pamela Strand, deputy minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and Nina Salvador, director of finance and administration at ITI.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with corporate management starting on page 206, with

information items on pages up to 208. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. On it's page 207, purchased services has shown quite an increase, more than doubling from 2019-2020 to what is proposed for next year, or close to doubling. Can someone explain to me what is happening there? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is an increase there. That's with respect to the Mineral Resources Act implementation and also money to establish the knowledge economy and regional economic development plans.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I do have some questions about those other items. I see that they are covered through the other activities, so I'll wait until we get to those other ones. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under corporate management? Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$9,216,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now move on to economic diversification and business support, beginning on page 209, with information items on page 213. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. In the Minister's opening remarks, she talked about how there was \$350,000 to do some work on the knowledge economy, and I see, on page 211, there is a contribution of \$200,000 for the knowledge economy. Maybe I can have someone explain to me what the \$200,000 is for and where the other \$150,000 would be found to total the amount that the Minister mentioned in her opening remarks. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to suggest that that go to Ms. Salvador, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Ms. Salvador.

MS. SALVADOR: Thanks, Madam Chair. The advance knowledge economy funding, \$150,000 of that will go to contributions, and the other \$150,000 will go for engagement for the knowledge economy action plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, so now I've got a total of \$300,000. The Minister, I think, mentioned \$350,000 in her opening remarks, and then I got a figure of \$200,000 here. Look, I'm not an accountant, but something just doesn't seem to be quite right, there. Can I get a better explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the contributions section here, so this is detailing, I believe, money that is going direct to, for example, the maker spaces in contrast to the money that would be directed to a position that is there to support the work of the department, broadly speaking. Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, that would be the \$350,000. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Now I know what the \$200,000 is here, but then I heard that there is \$300,000 found somewhere else. The Minister, in her opening remarks, said that there is \$350,000 to create an action plan for the knowledge economy. It still doesn't quite add up. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's good news here, Madam Chair, in the sense that there is money both to advance projects as well as money to put forward to the work of the knowledge economy as a strategy. Perhaps I'll try a third avenue and suggest that Ms. Strand answer the question, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding which is allocated for the knowledge economy would be found under our operations expenditure summary, under purchased services.

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

MR. O'REILLY: I think I'm going to move on because I'm not getting anywhere. I want to ask about the status. Is there any money in here for there was supposed to be a new NWT Arts Strategy, and I'm not sure where that falls between ECE and ITI. Maybe I could get an update of the status of that and what involvement ITI has and whether there is any money in here for that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. ECE and ITI are, indeed, working together on this. I do not believe there is specific funding allocated at this point. If I could propose to have it go to Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, ITI's arts funding for the businesses that are in the arts sector sits under our SEED program. I can let you know that, under special initiatives, we have programming that goes out to all regions for arts and film, but it falls under the SEED budget. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me about the status of the arts strategy itself? I understood it was supposed to be released by now, and I'm not sure where it's at. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know we are partnered and working with ECE on this, and my understanding is that they are the lead. Let me see if Ms. Strand has an update on when we can expect it. I know it has gone through a review by me, but I'm not sure where it's at for its final revisions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, as the Minister stated, we are just finalizing that strategy with ECE. There were some final amendments that we wanted to make before releasing that, so I think that it is planned for the near future for committee and public release. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I eagerly await that. Can someone tell me: what is the status of the NWT Film Strategy and Action Plan? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I expect that it should be released, I want to say, this session. "Imminently" is, perhaps, a safer way of putting it.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am imminently eager. Is there any funding in this part of the budget for a new strategy or action plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know if that's in the section I'm in right now. Perhaps I will see if Deputy Minister Strand has that information at her fingertips.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, ITI has several film programs, such as the NWT Film Rebate Program. We also create partnerships with a number of other associations, such as the Canadian media film, to try and leverage the funding that we do have, but yes, we will be looking to increase that, to remain competitive and compete against jurisdictions like the Yukon that are surpassing where we are in our film sector. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I look forward to maybe a large supplementary appropriation, then, to assist with that work. I want to ask a question about the community transfer initiatives on 211. The amount there is actually declining, and I would like an explanation as to why it is declining in the time or whether, in fact, it should be actually increasing in terms of economic relief and recovery. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would propose to have that go to Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That decrease of \$94,000 was the increased funding that went to Tuktoyaktuk in response to increased tourism activity, but I would like to note that it was in addition to the current EDO, economic development officer, funding that still remains in place for the community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am concerned, then, that we are actually reducing money to a community that now has an all-weather road. Hopefully, we can reopen later this year to allow tourism to start. Why are we reducing this funding now? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a sunset, so it wasn't a reduction so much as this was the end point of the funding that was put in place when the road opened in order to help ramp up and be ready for tourism. Certainly, Madam Chair, what the intention is now is to monitor the reopening and to determine whether or not a position is still required and, if so, to, then, go back and seek that funding to have it return. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I look forward to that money being returned. While we are on the topic of new roads and so on, is there any specific funding in the budget here for assisting Whati in getting ready for a road that is supposed to open in November of this year, and if there is no specific money identified, why not? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working actively with the Tlicho government and with the Whati government to determine what, in fact, they are wanting to see in terms of programming. At that point, there are quite a number of pots of funding that already exists under SEED, under tourism, that would be available to support whatever they determine to be the projects that they need. There is not a dedicated line item to the Whati road, or to the community of Whati as a result of the road, but it is more of a soft commitment that we are available and ready to work with them to help realize proper tourism, given

the lessons learned from the Tuktoyaktuk road. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at page 211 and some of the various line items. In the last while, a lot of tourism operators took hits, I think, everywhere. It was a struggle to give people, like our tour operators and companies, assistance and try to help them weather out this storm, per se. I just wanted to ask the question for the Minister: how close their relationship is with CIRNAC to find out how funding is flowing to help out our tour operators in the NWT? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I don't have my tourism section open just now, but there is a close relationship, obviously, working with federal partners. It is our intention, much as when COVID first hit, to continue to work with them to understand what they are able to fund so that we are prepared to support their programs, complement their programs, or fill gaps if there are any. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Just kind of going down this line of questioning, if I was a struggling tour operator right now, in these line items, what programs are available? If you're a struggling tourism operator, what programs can I access within ITI? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. If you are a community, you would go through Community Futures. You might consider the Community Futures Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. If you are an individual, then you certainly may want to start, obviously, with CanNor, which is one of our great federal partners; go to NWT Tourism. There are quite a number of different pots that might apply, depending on the nature of what's being sought. Perhaps I will send that to Deputy Minister Strand to just outline some of those specifics.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member has probably realized, we did have the GRIT program this year, which was very successful and oversubscribed. We recognize that the tourism

sector is still at risk, so we did release, just last week, some top-ups for those that had reached the top with the feds. For example, on Monday, I have a three-hour call with CanNor and the three northern territories, and tourism is on the agenda. We don't know what that looks like yet. We are trying to communicate that our operators do not need more loans; they need more relief. We are alive to that, having conversations right now with what might be needed to keep them alive until it reopens. I am hoping that we will be able to provide more details when we get there. We are definitely alive to that, and it's at every conversation that we have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response. It's nice to hear there is the concern for some of our companies, our tour operators. I mentioned in my budget address that my biggest fear right now is that the direction we are going is, at some point, we are going to have to have a triage, and I really don't want to be put in the position, with my colleagues here, to have to pick and choose which companies and tour operators, et cetera, get to stay afloat and who doesn't. I really hope that we can get ahead of that. My next question is: I heard the Community Futures Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. Can the Minister just briefly describe what that fund is?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Community Futures Regional Relief and Recovery Fund: the purpose there is to fund Community Futures organizations, which are in individual communities across the Northwest Territories and specifically with respect to COVID-19 impacts on those communities, outside of the regional centres in particular, so anything from short-term stability for the communities, various economic readiness activities. It includes small, repayable loans to some of the local small- and medium-sized businesses. Again, it's an infusion of funding to those Community Futures organizations that is really dedicated to some COVID relief specific to them. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: If somebody is struggling in this area, when can they start to apply to a program such as this? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Each Community Futures organization does have a fair bit of latitude to administer their programs, and I would suggest that they immediately contact their Community Futures organizations in the community that they are in, knowing, of course, too, that there are certainly opportunities directly to ITI, that if certain things don't fall neatly within the Community Futures, there's a number of other programs still specific to COVID relief available. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for that. This is going to be important, and I'll say it again, I really don't want to be put in a position where we have, for lack of a better word, an economic triage. I'm moving along here. I'm looking at some of the other items here with film and arts. I think these are really, really important items. Arts, I think, are great. Before I went into office, I did some small film, and I did a couple of small horror films, H-O-R-R-O-R, just to make sure everyone heard me right there. It was a lot of fun. I think I encourage anybody who wants to go into the arts, and it's always a good thing to learn and for the youth, even older, to go and explore. It just seems like these two items could be a lot larger. Is there any appetite for these two line items to be larger in the future? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I assume it's the film industry rebate program and the Great Northern Arts Festival is what we're looking at now. Yes. Thank you. Madam Chair, we're definitely looking at the film industry rebate as well as the Great Northern Arts Festival. With respect to the film industry, I'm quite pleased to say that with the film strategy coming out imminently again and knowing that we have right now a fairly strong emergent film industry, of course, yes, I'm more than happy to say that we'd like to consider more money, but money does not grow on actual trees. We want to look at where the strategy takes us and get that out into the public and get the reactions to it and advance that forward. Once that strategy's out circulating, I think, at that point, we'd be in a better position to determine what type of future funding is most appropriate to achieve the goals. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just finish off with a comment. There are jurisdictions. You

look at other areas in Canada, like B.C., Alberta, you see some very cool country and western movies as of late, and you see Toronto. They really, really promote. Their governments invest money into their areas or to try to bring in foreign money. I think there should be some opportunity here, something that ITI and the Minister should consider at some point. I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's good to have the department back in the House. My question I'm just going to start with, I think, first with the BDIC on page 210. There's a \$2 million budget for the BDIC. I know that the BDIC was kind of a bit almost on hold as far as when they were looking for the CEO and wanted to wait on that to get a new direction going. I know that you're in strategic planning or they're within strategic planning within the BDIC. Can the Minister speak a little bit to where that's at, and how much of the budget for the BDIC is going towards the strategic planning at this point? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where they're at right now, there was a session before the winter break, and there's been a second session after. Sorry, by session, it's a strategic planning session that brings in all of the board members who are from across the Northwest Territories together to be at in-person meetings for the full board again. Two rounds of that, the second one was just, I believe, last month, if not maybe late in January. I am told that I can expect a summary report from them fairly soon as a result of those two sessions. I don't, however, know, Madam Chair, what the total cost of the strategic planning was off the top of my head, so I will commit to getting that information back to the Member.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be great. I would like to see a bunch of money. Just more as a comment. I would like to see, I'm not so much concerned that those businesses make money in the BDIC but that we start thinking about all the indirect dollars. I know the department knows where I stand on that, so I'll move on. My next question, then, would be moving onto the Northern Food Development Program on page 211. I note that the number is pretty standard across the board. I think it was a \$4,000 increase. Given that COVID highlighted food security issues

even more so in the North and potentially had disrupted supply chains, et cetera, as well as food supply issues in the South with the culling of animals and the pouring out of milk, does the Minister maybe, perhaps, think that there should be more money put into this area? I'm curious to know why it's been left at just this level given the importance of it and the fact that that's been highlighted through COVID? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are, right now, working with the Department of Health and Social Services as well as ENR, and I think others, actually, towards a food strategy for the Northwest Territories, and a lot of work has, in fact, been done on that recently. There's been an inventory done around food security programming led by ITI, and recently, a poverty round table hosted by Health and Social Services. All of that information is being put together through an ADM working group so that all the departments, again, continue to understand what each one is doing so that we can best respond across both the commercial side of food security as well as the anti-poverty side of food security, and respond to it.

I am expecting that there will be a fair bit more information detailing the work of the government in, again, fairly shortly order, knowing that it's coming through the system now. Once we have that, again, we're in a better position to say whether or not more funding is required at present. The actuals were actually undersubscribed from 2019 and 2020 as compared to the main estimates here, but I know there's again funding in other departments, as well, to support this. For the moment, it doesn't appear from the actuals that there's been a lack of funding. What there is happening now is better coordination between departments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Just remember, we still have our translators translating, so if you guys can slow down. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Yes. Slow down but use less words so you don't take more of my time. I get what you're saying. I don't necessarily always believe, though that an -- it's been a long few weeks -- undersubscribed program necessarily means the need is not there for it, and I would maybe have a look at whether or not it's undersubscribed in that people aren't aware of it or there's barriers to applying on it because I just can't believe that there wouldn't be a need for this program? With that and, actually, it reminded me of a question I just forgot to ask you about the BDIC was: both of these are sort of in that. You've gone out. You're collecting

information. You have either consultants or others compiling that for you, and it's coming across your desk or will be soon. Where does the committee sit in inputting on both of those situations, strategy plan for the BDIC as well as the food strategy programs? I would prefer to see that we have a chance to give input on that ahead of any finalization of those programs? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I seem to recall the last time BDIC appeared collectively with committee that they had said that we would have a draft to committee before it becomes finalized, so let me just repeat that now. With respect to food security, Madam Chair, I have only just recently received a rather large amount of information on food security and where it's at. Rather than me try to find it, why don't I turn to Deputy Minister Strand.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. For the two that the Minister spoke about, we've had an ADM working group on food security actively collecting some very important data on the existing GNWT programs, and I'm happy to say that there are a lot, over 28 programs and I think \$20 million there. Obviously, we're doing a lot, but we're not visible in this space. With respect to the next steps, there will be that inventory that will be shared with committee, and also the departments are working together to identify a series of considerations for what the pathway should be. Where is the home in GNWT or outside of GNWT because collaboration is key here? I think we witnessed it with COVID, and luckily, there were not as many issues as could have happened. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the deputy minister's comments around the collaboration. When I hear the Minister commenting that it's ENR, it's health, you know. I'm assuming and hoping it's getting to a point where someone is going to take ownership of the program because I do think that we don't want to end up in a situation where some of our social programs, it's: who does it belong to? I see the Minister nodding along yes to that, so I'll just do that one as a comment.

Back to the arts program and arts funding, I've mentioned this around other programs in different departments, but another need I'm hearing about in

this area is not a need for funding for projects, necessarily, but a need for funding for core funding, for executive director positions. When I spoke with people in the music industry, they were telling me that their equivalent music counterparts in the South are funded positions, and they are funded by their governments with at least some sort of siphon to help. Here, it's all volunteer, and as we all know in the North, as soon as that magical volunteer who runs that entire organization leaves, the entire thing falls apart. There is no transfer of knowledge between who is left and who is there. People get disgruntled; they get frustrated. I think, if we truly want to invest in our arts going forward, an economy around our arts, then we need to ensure that we're funding the administrative part of that work. I think we would find that would not only increase employment in small communities, it would increase Indigenous employment, it would increase P2 employment, and it would allow our arts and music scene to flourish. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure if the Minister wants to comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, did you have a comment?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That's a challenging one to solve, Madam Chair. No, and I don't mean to laugh to make light. I suspect most people in this room would not disagree. Right now, the ITI-focused programming does tend to be project-specific or event-specific, whether it's direct under, for instance, the Northern Arts Festival or through the SEED programming that does tend to supply funding for events. Again, ECE and ITI work quite closely in terms of the arts strategy, and we've had some discussions about we have a great strategy. What will we do to ensure that there is the funding to meet its goals? I don't have an answer right now, Madam Chair, and I'm not sure what commitment I can even give, other than to say that, again, we are going to continue to have conversations about that strategy going forward, and the point has been clearly heard, that this may well be an opportunity for economic development, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions?

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sneaking in my last one before my last minute is up. This area, when I look at the overall amounts of numbers, the line numbers on page 211, there is a \$4 million drop, which is the COVID relief that was given to us. Basically, this area has not increased in budget from pre-COVID times to now. Given that this is actually everything we need to do to more our economy forward and we don't have an emerging strongly plan at this point for us to look at, I am a little bit disappointed and surprised to not

see any further or additional funding into these programs, and I would urge the Minister and her department to go back to FMB or try to get more money here, or however she has to do her magic, to invest more money into this area because this is going to actually help us achieve a lot of our mandate priorities, including the ones I was mentioning just in my last comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I think I may be putting my other hat on a little bit, but this isn't the recovery budget, per se. It's the "keep things afloat so that we can recover" budget. This is a good example of that, where a lot of the work that was and is happening with respect to advancing the mandate does happen. For ITI, to the extent that it's happening here, it continues to happen. The budgets haven't changed; they're still there and the work is moving forward. Again, with respect to COVID recovery, I will again defer and just say: more to come on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am going to start with the Great Northern Arts Festival. I am happy to see that this is still staying here, given that it's a COVID year and it's easy in COVID to try and take out stuff like this, but I think this is such an important festival. It is something that is celebrated throughout the North and very important. What I'm wondering is if there has ever been discussion of actually increasing this line item and taking advantage of the fact that a lot of the world is back on lockdown? I think there is a great opportunity here for us to support our digital media creatives within the Northwest Territories and to take the Great Northern Arts Festival to a more virtual platform so that you still do have people in the territory who are here, who are able to participate, but able to offer kind of a pay-per-use-type platform for people who are around the world, who can participate in workshops and such with our fabulous creatives we have all around the Northwest Territories. Is the Minister willing to actually increase this line item? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, this particular year, there wasn't a conversation around increasing for the arts festival. I don't disagree that there are opportunities to pivot online, and this funding is still sitting here and available for the support of the

festival in whatever form it might be. There have been some important announcements recently from the federal government with respect to creative funding and arts funding specifically, COVID-related, COVID-inspired, perhaps. As we've often done, we want to make sure we're taking advantage of the federal dollars so that we can then fill in the gaps and support them and be complementary to what is available. For this year, again, as I say, this year, this is not changing, but as we go forward and we reopen, hopefully the future is bright. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I hear what the Minister is saying, but I do think it's a lost opportunity, especially when the rest of the world is sitting at home with chequebooks waiting to fill their days with something other than Netflix. I'm going to move on, though, to SEED funding. I am wondering how many people took part or took advantage of the bookkeeping support through SEED funding? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hoping that she will have the most up-to-date numbers, I would suggest we go to Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do have currently up-to-date numbers, and you will be happy to hear that this was a very well-uptaken program. We have funded 96 applicants for a total of \$521,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Is this considered fully subscribed for this program? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just direct that back to Deputy Minister Strand again, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I think there are only a few that are still lingering with a few weeks left in this year, but yes, it's fully

subscribed with the final processing under way. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. One of the things that we seem to hear a lot in our different committees is the need for administrative assistants or a kind of human resource capacity throughout communities and also in Yellowknife, and so I'm wondering if this portion of the SEED funding, this program of the SEED funding, will be continued into the new year and become part of a staple of SEED funding? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Sorry, Madam Chair. This portion, the business support portion? Madam Chair, that is probably a conversation to be had not in this forum with me by myself sitting here without officials. Yes, if it is a perennial problem for small businesses and certainly the fact that they didn't have their books done wasn't because of COVID, necessarily, it was probably a challenge that just built up over time, and then they wound up not being able to access funding. I think, by looking at those who have subscribed and hopefully getting some feedback as to why they wound up in that situation, we'll be better able to assess to what extent it was COVID-related and to what extent it's a long-standing and continuous problem and then make a choice going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll come back to that question, then, down the road, once the Minister has had some more time to kind of establish answers to those questions. I'm going to move on to the nomination program. I'm wondering if there are any applications in the hopper, so to speak, right now?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Again, Madam Chair, for the most up-to-date, I'm going to suggest we go over to Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The answer is yes. I know that, during the COVID year, one part of the program is that there has to be a face-to-face interview, so we have those

outstanding applications that I think will still need to be processed. I don't have the exact number, but I'm happy to come back with that number in more detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering, given that a lot of the world is turning to virtual and that air travel is getting more expensive with fewer people travelling, if there has been conversation then around turning that into a virtual rather than an in-person interview. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a conversation worth having, so I will go and have the conversation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if any of the applications are for outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know there are some, but I do not know if we have those breakdowns. Let me see if Deputy Minister Strand does, and if not, we will make a commitment to get it.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the majority have been for Yellowknife, but I can confirm that, yes, we have some applications for Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am going to switch over to commercial fisheries, please. I notice that there is an increase here in commercial fisheries over the last couple of years, and one of the things that I am wondering is: first of all, what does this increase -- oh, no, never mind; the increase was for before. It's a similar line item, then, to last year. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to any changes they are foreseeing in fisheries regulations for the upcoming fiscal year. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Fisheries regulations specifically, to the extent that there would be changes, they may well involve either ENR or the Department of Oceans and Fisheries from the federal government. The work that we are doing right now, from ITI's end, is to support, firstly, the Tlicho Fishers Cooperative, as they are getting ready to operate the fish plant that is being built as well as working with some of the other Indigenous governments or communities around the lake to build up their capacity, whether in terms of training or whether in terms of local processing, small-scale micro-processing plants, or collection stations. That is the work that is happening at ITI right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am running out of time, so I am just going to quickly say that one of the things that I am hearing from people in the riding I serve is that there is help needed for smaller fishery businesses to export fish and that they are running into kind of road blocks with the federal government and that they need the added support from ITI to be able to ensure that they are actually able to make some money off that investment that they have.

However, I want to, before I run out of time here, quickly ask about the BDIC. Today, on the floor, we had a conversation about women in business, and one of the things that came out of that conversation was that 9 percent of BDIC loans go to women-owned small businesses. I am wondering if, based on that, the new gender equity unit will be working with BDIC to help look at the way that they do business. While I was writing my Member's statement, I did some research, and in the United States, there are people who actually do research into how venture capital ends up in the hands of women. One of the things that was discovered is that, while a lot of times, when men go through interviews for loans, they are asked to talk about their successes, and when women do it, they are asked to talk about their failures. I am wondering if Finance potentially -- and maybe if the Minister knows the Minister of Finance -- would work with the BDIC to put a gender equity lens on that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to be clear, earlier, it was 9 percent went to businesses that have sole proprietorships as women, 55 percent go to small businesses that have at least a partial ownership of women, so it's not quite so dire, which is not to say

that this is not an area for potential growth. I am quite sure I have seen some other statistics around the participation of women in small and micro-business, and there is a story to be told there. Yes, let me put whatever hat on I need to to say that I am quite confident from the interactions I have had with the executive director at BDIC and the board that they are keen to be very forward thinking and creative in how they approach micro-business in the business that they do. Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. There are no further questions. Please turn to page -- oh, I just was trying to get past you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's hard to get past me. My first question is: my understanding is that the \$3,800,000 we see for SEED this year is actually quite oversubscribed and that we have found some internal money within and managed to spend more than is in the budget, for which I am very happy. I think SEED is one of our best programs and probably is some of the best return on investment we get for creating business in the NWT. Can I get an updated figure of how much we have disbursed in SEED funding over this last fiscal year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I think the most up-to-date would be hopefully with Deputy Minister Strand.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the updated numbers, it's broken into a few. For example, we have the bookkeeping; we have the pivot; we had an increased core SEED budget. I think the number is sitting at about \$4.8 million that has gone into SEED as a whole, so it's about an increase of \$984,000 that has been reallocated from within. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I recognize it's a pandemic year, and we rushed to find some money. It's good we spent an extra million on SEED. However, I note even in the last actuals SEED was oversubscribed. It's one of those programs that is consistently oversubscribed, which is a good thing. I also expect that the need for economic recovery is not going to disappear in the next fiscal year. Is the department expecting that we will find more SEED money, and if so, can we just simply make this budget a little more accurate and increase it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do not necessarily subscribe to the view that oversubscription equals good value for money. I do agree generally, though, that the SEED funding does seem to be one that does support small business, small/medium businesses, and community events and projects, so I would like to just simply say that this is clearly a good program. The direction that we are going right now in the government is that we are going to figure out which are the good programs that are delivering on what they say that they are delivering, in this case assistance to businesses and individuals. When we have that case, we can bring it back and hopefully be in a position to make an argument for why it should have an increase in funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I also have heard good things from constituents for the bookkeeping money that went out. I have also heard that it's much easier for them to access SEED than a lot of the CanNor and federal funding that went out, which is part of the reason we gave them money to do their books, to get them in line with the sometimes very onerous requirements of getting money out of the federal government. Does SEED have any sort of tracking there of how much we use SEED money to then leverage federal money? I think there are a couple of metrics you could use, but my understanding is a lot of businesses go to SEED to help with business plans and development applications and then go actually get more money out of the federal government, which is all great. I am just wondering if we have any of those numbers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank, Madam Chair. That is not inaccurate, that it is certainly a conduit to more money, and we do have metrics. I don't know if we have them with us. I know it's reported on annually, Madam Chair, and if that is agreeable, I would certainly just commit to making sure that that's available to the Member.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. That is fine. I am just trying to get some good numbers on the public record for SEED. Can I get an update on where we are at with market disruption being applied to SEED funding? I have

heard a couple of different answers over the year of it not being applied just to the COVID relief. I get that there are a number of streams and that they have been moving around, understandably, to adapt, but how are we applying market disruption to SEED funding going forward? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Broadly speaking, there is sort of an internal review of SEED taking place, where we will look at the question of market disruption, which again seems to have higher and lower popularity depending on the size of one community, but I do not have my SEED materials or this sort of material in front of me on the mains review. Let me send this over to Deputy Minister Strand to see if she is in a position to respond to that here. Thank you.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister said, we are launching a SEED review. Within the coming weeks, there will be a survey that gets put out for public feedback on a few items, the equity component and also the market disruption. We hope that there is good uptake on that because these are important questions. Also, within GNWT, ITI will look at more of our administrative and reporting parts of that, but hopefully, we will get good uptake. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an update on whether there are any plans to extend BDIC loan deferrals? I understand that that will end this fiscal. I know that there have been requests to continue that program of deferring loan payments until after the pandemic. Can I have an update whether the Minister is doing that or willing to? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a BDIC-specific item, and I know that that was one of the questions they looked at when they gathered together in January. I had emphasized to them the fact that people will need the answer to that in advance of the fiscal year. I would like to just confirm where they landed on that, and I will commit to getting back to the Member. I think I will have that answer by our next sitting dates. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my concerns is that I know BDIC has some legislative, kind of, parameters that they have to operate in, and they have a certain fund to make sure that all of their loans are intact. I believe, if they get too much into deferrals or grants, they run up against those. Does the Minister have any figures of what it costs to defer loans or if, actually, they run into the parameters we're willing to fund them? I think this is probably pretty cheap money to defer payments, and it's a good return on investment. Is there a cost to those loan deferrals? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do have all those numbers. I have reviewed them. I just don't necessarily have them in the mains document. Again, we have had some conversations. There are challenges with ongoing loan deferrals, certainly with loan forgiveness. I know there is going to be some effort to find ways to support businesses, perhaps on a one-by-one basis, depending. Again, let me commit to getting back to the Member, and again, I am conscious that we are coming up at the end of the fiscal year. I will commit to getting back to the Member fairly quickly so that we are in a position to advise all BDIC clients as to where we're at well in advance of the end of the fiscal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a comment that I would be supportive. The BDIC can't necessarily take on that money, but the GNWT can. If there is some way to make sure those loan deferrals happen, it has to happen through the GNWT, and I am happy to see that. I am very eagerly awaiting the film policy, and I have spoken previously about some sort of film producers' incentive policy. My concerns right now with the film industry rebate program is that I'm not sure it's necessarily convincing anyone to come here. It's a good program, and it does encourage a little bit of northern labour. The fact that it's kind of after-the-fact makes it a little cheaper to make a film in the NWT. With \$100,000, it's not all that much cheaper. We kind of got an answer to this before, but are there any plans to have a film producers' incentive program or to rework this program? If so, how much money could we expect to see? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is obviously not money in the mains right now for the idea that the Member is suggesting. The film strategy, if it hasn't reached committee, is on its way across the hall. Once it has gone through that process, looking forward to an opportunity to receive feedback on it and to get it out to the public and to stakeholders. The subsidy program is one part of a program for supporting film producers. ECE has funding for arts. We have other funding for small- and medium-sized businesses. This isn't a one-stop shop for film. They have other ways to access our supports. There are also staff within ITI dedicated to supporting potential producers or others who want to come north and do work here in the North supported by some of the quite fantastic film sector workers that we have in the North. It's more than just one thing, and it's more than just one funding. We have had some great success here before COVID, and I am sure we will get back to it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Seeing that there are no further questions, please turn to page 210. Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification business support, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$18,195,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we are going to continue on with minerals and petroleum resources, beginning on page 214, with information items up to 217. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I notice that, under contributions, the Indigenous mineral development support program looks like it has a sunset of funding, and so I am just wondering if the Minister can tell us if that is found in another section or what has gone on there.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. There has been a sunset of funding there, which certainly doesn't suggest that there is not going to be an opportunity to renew that funding. That is right now under a program review, so it's our hope that we will be in a position to come back and request the renewal of the funding once

that program review is done. In the meantime, Madam Chair, there is certainly an intention to continue to work towards mineral regional development strategies wherever possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am seeing that this was contributions in support of Indigenous organizations to prepare and participate in mineral development in their area. I know that the Minister said that this is under program review, but was there no other way that this contribution could have continued in this year in another format while the program was being reviewed, to continue to invest in mineral development? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the extent that it appears as a line item, this particular line item program was sunset this year, and so that is why it does then continue to sunset. A lot of what it was being used for in the past was to support Indigenous governments or Indigenous organizations or community organizations to attend functions like roundup or PDAC, national-level conferences, which this year are not happening, so it was not an urgent item to need to have funded or renewed for this year. Again, it gives us that opportunity to conclude the review. There is some funding that can be often found from within when there are items that come up through the year, and we will certainly be continuing to look at it. Again, I know I have spoken about my commitment to this area, so we will be continuing to look at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have similar questions about the MPR various contributions line item, which is contributions for the geological survey scientific research and mineral resources, so I am wondering if the Minister can speak to that. I do recognize that it has been two years now that that has been gone from the budget, but it did used to be a \$626,000 investment in resource development. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I will suggest that Deputy Minister Strand can provide some analysis to that, please.

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

MS. STRAND: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, this work hasn't stopped. We only put it in once we have the actuals because every year is different. The NTGS in 2020, of course in COVID, were not able to bring in other researchers and do joint programs, so unfortunately, there was not that funding spent last year. It is back and active for this year and will continue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I really appreciate that information. My next question is kind of a stretch, but I think it has relevance here. My next question is actually in regard to the surface rights board, which I know is a Lands line item; it is not an ITI line item. It is \$303,000 that I learned that a constituent of mine and myself almost made NWT history in almost using it, and I think that that is something that could have been mitigated by improving and formalizing a process, an internal and external process, between Lands and ITI. Right now, somebody can come to ITI, and they get a subsurface land rights; and they go to Lands, and they get surface land rights. If those two licences conflict with one another, then they go on the use of surface rights board, which, thankfully in the Northwest Territories, has not needed to be used. However, there is no part in the process where ITI communicates with Lands, or if it is in the process, it is not consistently used. I am wondering if the Minister will commit to formalizing an internal and external communication process to better educate clients on how those two licences work together. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I was wondering what the examination question was going to be here. I can certainly make a commitment that we can put something together that explains how the two work and where the line between the two is, but I am also going to take away the fact that, if there are occasions where these two programs are not communicating effectively, that is a bigger conversation that I will also take away. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I really appreciate that because, while it's not a line item here, I think it's an opportunity for us to mitigate some costs down the road in some other line items. I appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. No further questions? Okay. Are there any further questions under minerals and petroleum resources? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do we have a date for when we expect online maps to be implemented?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, let me see if there is an update. I know that was somewhat dependent on work being done with mineral resources regulations, but let me see if I have an update through Deputy Minister Strand, please.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. That project, called MAARS, was deferred and does start April 1st. We have staffing in place in preparation for that, and we're working closely with ISSS to map out the business procedures that need to be engaged. The work is starting. Don't have a fully designed plan yet, but we are aiming to have the bulk of the work done within the duration of the funding, which is for three years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an update of what the MAARS system costs? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure if Deputy Minister Strand or if Director Salvador would be a better place to answer that. Let me start with Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. It's three-year funding for \$4.2 million, which includes two PYs. It's a challenge to figure out what the program will actually end up costing. Other jurisdictions, it's been 10 years. We're trying to fast track this, and we think with the LTOS and other developments that ISSS is working on should help us. We know Nunavut just launched theirs. There're a lot of lessons learned because we have very similar mineral tenure systems, so we're going to work closely with Nunavut, as well, during that. I will have to get back to the Member when we see how

development goes over the next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I look forward for that work. I think it's a long time overdue. Can I get an update? During the last main estimates, there was quite a lot of talk of the eight members in the Beaufort-Delta under this section. I believe now we've added one more, apparently, in this budget, and I believe those were petroleum resource officers. I know there's not a lot of petroleum resource. I believe there was some talk about re-profiling them or making sure the job descriptions align better to making sure they have work to do given the decline of oil and gas in the Delta? Can I get an update, firstly, why did we add one position to that office? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I can certainly go through the details of what is specifically ongoing right now. I'm not seeing that we've added one, but let me just double check that back over with Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I am not aware of adding one. We combined minerals and petroleum into one unit, so we have actually condensed them a bit. Further to the Member's question, we will be looking at synergies with what work those staff can do up there. On top, they've helped with delivery of our prospecting programs, with the regional mineral development strategies for the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit. The office does remain active with, for example, the Husky forfeiture. They have to review all that work, and it can be quite intensive. We have them working on that, and the active tenure for a lot of the clean-up projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps, I could just get a clarification then. I'm looking at page 217, and I see we added one position in the Beaufort-Delta and three to headquarters. I believe the three to headquarters are for the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Act implementation, but can I just get confirmation of what the four positions being added to the mineral and petroleum resources unit are for? Page 217. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have, yes, indeed, some coming in for Mineral Resources Act, and one is, I believe, a permafrost scientist coming in that I would believe is being counted here, yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Stepping back, the \$16 million I see here for mineral and petroleum resources versus the economic diversification and business support, which is \$18 million, I think some things are a little out of line in this unit. I struggle to know exactly, especially the petroleum resources side, what they're doing. I heard the deputy minister say there that we're trying to get that unit in Inuvik to work on some of the Husky forfeiture and the remediation work, and I think that's great. I think that's probably the direction of where a lot of our staff have to go. Are there any plans to kind of review this unit and have it capture some of the remediation work that I think has probably a much higher likelihood of economic return for at least the foreseeable future than the petroleum resources side that all the job descriptions currently list them as. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a busy unit. It has a lot going on and across different areas of the department. This is where the socio-economic agreements reside. This will be where the remediation work, the remediation economy resides. This is where the Northwest Territories geological survey resides with all of its scientists. There's actually only a small percentage that is minerals specific. It is quite wide-ranging and quite broad. We have our client services community relations section that's here which supports, in fact, small businesses and small prospectors to take action and to be active in the Northwest Territories.

Again, in the interests of time, I think that's probably a bigger question, but one that, at this point -- again, I'm happy to kind of go through each one at more length, but simply to say that this is really not meant to be. I would not want anyone to walk away thinking that this is all petroleum focused or that the petroleum-related work is one that is dominating the budget here. It's not. To the extent that there is, there is work also happening there in LNG, up and through the Delta and supporting work that's happening there in that region, as well as in the south section. Again, Madam Chair, I'm trying to

figure out how I can be succinct on what is actually a very large question about an area that does provide supports to some pretty anchor areas of the economy. Again, I'm happy to, perhaps, do a bit of a write-up on what the details of this department does if that would be of assistance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't need to get into a very large debate about, perhaps, ITI reviewing some of its mandate and restructuring some of its departments. I'll leave that to another time. Can I just get a clarification: in the 2019-2020 actuals for the NWT geological survey, there's actually a \$1.3 million decline. Can I just get an explanation for that? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. May I suggest going to the director of finance, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Salvador.

MS. SALVADOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a decrease of 1.4 because of the sunset for the Slave Geological Province exploration development initiative. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One last comment: I actually like seeing these line items of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Act implementation and when a department goes out and creates a unit and staffs it and makes it very clear. I would encourage all other Ministers, when you have large pieces of legislation or regulations to implement, make a unit, give a manager with that title. It creates clear accountability, and it creates clear funding. It also kind of shows where a government's priorities are at. I'm not sure this aligns with my priorities, but I think this means people aren't doing things off the side of their desk. I note a number of departments are very behind in all of their regulations and probably because they haven't created a clear unit and funded it like this. I'll leave that as a comment. Good job on whoever decided to actually make this very clear who is supposed to do that work, which is a large and important piece of work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member, and I'll take that as a comment. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to continue on the line of my colleague about staff that we have that are dedicated to oil and gas. Look, I know some of these people. They are hardworking. The reality is: there hasn't been any exploration, seismic drilling, since devolution, seven years ago. I'm not quite sure what everybody does, but yesterday, we heard about OROGO having a third-party assessment done of their resource needs. Is that something that the Minister is prepared to look at in terms of the oil and gas function within ITI, having a third-party assessment to look at resourcing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are no plans right now to have any sort of extra assessment around the need for this unit right at the moment. However, what we are fairly confident in is that, while there may not have been a lot of oil and gas exploration, there continues to be a very large amount of interest in LNG production, distribution, marketing, et cetera, across the Northwest Territories. There is a lot of activity in the Delta, but there is activity in the South Slave, as well, interested in it both at a small scale and a large scale.

There is certainly that aspect of it, in addition to which there is monitoring that has to be undertaken with respect to the petroleum, land tenure system, and various other holder responsibilities. There is, again, monitoring that happens at the existing tenures. There still is a fair bit of work that goes on, and as the deputy minister already said, there are efforts to reprofile or shift. That it's not singularly for oil and gas, but that it's looking at mineral resources, as well, in the regions. Again, there is no need to worry that these folks won't be kept busy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's kind of what I expected here. The tenure system should actually be rolled into the Department of Lands. They are the ones that already do the surface. It creates a conflict when you have a department that's trying to promote the resource and then trying to manage the rights at the same time. I have made that suggestion before, but I expect it's kind of like water off a duck's back. While we are on the subject of ducks, I want to turn over to page 216, the contributions page here. I have been here for five years, and once again, there is core funding for the NWT Chamber of Mines listed here. It actually increases from \$30,000 to \$55,000, which is an 83 percent increase. Can someone explain to me the increase in this core funding? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is project-based funding. I would like to suggest I can direct that to the deputy minister to describe the changes in programming.

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

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, on an annual basis, we work on projects with the Chamber of Mines. You can see that in some years, like 2019-2020, the numbers were actually higher. These are estimates. We have different events at different conferences that the Chamber co-hosts with us; public awareness and outreach projects, such as their Mining North Works. They have helped with the delivery of prospecting programs. Every year, it changes, and all I can say is that, this year, we are working on more profile for their Mining North Works, which is a great program that is in the schools in Nunavut. We are looking to see what is in the realm of possible in the territories. Also, we meet with the chamber every two weeks in a working group. We are working on our competitiveness. We are looking at actions. They are contributing to the critical metals action plan. There is a lot of good work. It's intensive, and as Minister said, it's not core funding. It's project-by-project basis. It's ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. If it walks like a duck, talks like a duck, smells like a duck, it is a duck. This is core funding. Look, I'm sure that meeting every two weeks with the chamber is great. I wish that all NGOs had that kind of access to our departments. That's really great, but I don't see a similar sort of increase for other NGOs that get core funding. I am just going to leave that there for now, Madam Chair. I want to go over to the line item on 215, which is Mineral and Petroleum Resources Act implementation. The Minister, in her opening remarks, talked about how there is \$360,000 for this work, but the line item here actually shows \$587,000. Can I get an explanation as to the discrepancy? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I suggest this might go to our director of finance, Ms. Salvador, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Salvador.

MS. SALVADOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$587,000 is actually a reallocated budget of \$231,000 from our mineral and petroleum resources division to this new division. It includes our director position salary. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's interesting that, not only has this new division been created and we have money to help pay for studies and so on, but they have actually reallocated staff now to do this work. I agree with my colleague from Yellowknife North that this is interesting and shows the importance of mining and oil and gas to this department and, perhaps, Cabinet as a whole. I don't see other departments doing this kind of thing. Environment and Natural Resources, Lands, they have a lot of work to do in terms of regulation development and implementation of the Public Land Act, development of regulations, Protected Areas Act, those kinds of things. Can the Minister explain what the secret is here to get extra money to do this work? Maybe she can share that with her colleagues on the other side. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am obviously not here to defend the structure and organization of every other department. I would think it should be a good thing that a department is able to reallocate funds from within or reallocate staff from within rather than constantly having to create new positions.

Madam Chair, this is a major piece of legislation. It is one that was implemented at the end of the last Assembly but is waiting on its regulations. I have many times heard it said that, in fact, notwithstanding how big the act is, it is, in fact, the regulations; everyone is waiting to see how they unfold. It is a piece of legislation that we are committed, with the IGC, to go out to fairly intensive consultations with Indigenous governments. That is part of the devolution agreement and the agreements that we have now. This is an opportunity to really fundamentally change one of the anchor industries, or the anchor industry, in the Northwest Territories. I am not going to be defensive about it. I think it's a good thing, Madam Chair. I think people are excited about it. The industry is excited about it. The indirect industries that benefit, I think, should be excited about it. To the extent that it's a good thing, all I can say is that I can go and talk to the other Ministers and see how they plan to get their legislations rolling. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that response. Is there a publicly available plan or schedule or anything to do this work? I have yet to see that, and I am as anxious as the Minister to get some of this work done. I am not aware of any public plans or schedules to do this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We were really just waiting for the IGC process, the intergovernmental council process, to be concluded with the protocol there. With that done, I will commit to getting a full outline of our expected timeline on this to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that commitment. In the remaining dwindling seconds here, I see that the travel line for the department, in the current year, we only expect to spend \$361,000, but the travel is actually much higher than for 2021-2022. Is this kind of wishful thinking that the pandemic is going to be over and we are going to be able to travel all over the place? Why is it at that level? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think travel feels like wishful thinking to me right now, in general. If we are looking at what occurred in 2020-2021, Madam Chair, we did take a fair bit of the travel budget that was there and reallocated it towards tourism, and tourism and parks, specifically. That was from the travel budgets for the department as a whole that were being looked at to help to fund tourism. Madam Chair, I hope I answered Member's question in full. I am worried that I didn't, but I'm sure he knows where to find me.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I just want to comment that the Minister's description of what this section has done was excellent, and I couldn't have said it better myself. I just wanted to start off by saying that. I think, perhaps, the Minister actually just has a semantics problem, and if she takes the word "petroleum" out of the title of this section, she should no longer have the problems. I am actually really excited to see the funding in this

area because this is science. This is the scientists. As well, I've had the opportunity to spend time in the Inuvik office and see what they do and how much they contribute back into the community, including running the daycare centre in Inuvik; I think he's the board member. I just want to say I think that, perhaps, just looking at renaming might be the way to go.

When I look at this, I would actually like to know if there is going to be, at any point, an increase in funding for the geologic survey. I'm worried that, as we lock down the borders, et cetera, we're losing an opportunity for us to continue on with our research, with our scientific side, with keeping up at the forefront or forerunner of the permafrost sciences, et cetera. A lot of our work or our research depends on universities external to the Northwest Territories, including external to Canada, as I mentioned in my statement, so maybe the Minister could speak to the fact that we do see -- oh, God, I have to do math here -- a \$1.7 million drop there from the actuals of 2019. Maybe if the Minister could comment on that, that would be great. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the change in actuals and the decrease there in the actuals was reflective of the fact that there was a sunset on the Slave Geologic Province exploration funding, but more generally speaking, there is a lot of leveraging that does go on with universities and a lot of contribution agreements that go through the Northwest Territories Geological Survey so that they can, indeed, leverage opportunities with universities. I am certainly happy to take away the idea of doing more. I also agree that this is an area that has, I think, tremendous growth potential in the Northwest Territories, given the unique nature of what we have here in the North in terms of geology, geoscience, geophysics. There is not an increase in this year's budget. Again, recognizing the comments, and I appreciate those. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Again, I would like to make a comment around, during my time as a Minister, I was actually very involved in many conversations around oil and gas and petroleum, LNG, et cetera, in the Beaufort-Delta, not only with businesses but also with Indigenous governments and local governments. I do think there is a lot of interest up in the Beaufort-Delta. I would be supportive of, actually, an increase to funding in the research area. There is a lot of interest in the shipping route from the Beaufort-Delta into Asia. It would be shorter than

other sources of oil and LNG and such around the world. I'm probably not getting my science right at the moment because I am extremely tired. I just did want to say that I believe there is a lot of interest in oil and gas, and I do fully support that.

My next question is around the Chamber of Mines. While the Chamber of Mines does not have the core funding and they have been a strong advocate for the Northwest Territories, I am concerned, as well, there that their main source of revenue has always been the geoscience forum. While everybody may want to say that going virtual is great, a lot of times now, people are having to offer their virtual conferences or symposiums for free online, like NAPEG is doing next week, if you're interested. I think that the Chamber of Mines is going to continue to see hard times over the next while as we continue to stay locked down. Can the Minister speak to maybe how she is going to address some of that concern? Again, I'm really worried that the loss of exploration, the loss of our mineral sector at this point, will lead to a massive economic slump down the line, as mining is responsible for 40 percent of our GDP. We need to remember that, and we don't build mines overnight. We need at least 10 years out, and we need 10 metal mines to make up one diamond mine. While I am sitting here preaching and doing the department's work a little bit, I feel strongly and am making a statement now that I do not agree that there is no oil and gas interest in the Northwest Territories. I believe the path forward for our territory is through green energy minerals. I only support this. If you want more money, come to me, and I'll help you figure out how we get it. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I don't know that I want to take away from much that was said. I am inclined to let it stand as a comment. The one issue there, Madam Chair, that I am hearing is around support for the Chamber of Mines. They are project-funded, and one of the major projects that they are funded for is, indeed, the Geosciences Forum, which is a headline feature event for the mineral resources sector in the North and had to go online this year, which certainly does not bring in the same sorts of revenue. Let me just direct it to Deputy Minister Strand to speak to what that may have done, if anything at all. To the extent that we can speak for the Chamber of Mines, she might be able to speak to what that did to the project funding that we do put towards that project, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have all the results for geoscience, but as the

Minister said, it was delivered online. We have worked with the chamber on the virtual roundup event. We are launching the PDAC event next week with them. We have Invest Canada North with CanNor and our bordering two territories, so we have to continue to fill the space for promoting and getting the NWT message out there so will continue with the Chamber of Mines on the various promotional events. This year, hopefully, there will be a delivery of Geoscience Forum and the Max Awards, but we are filling that with different projects and deliverables that we're working on together. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I think that's all great, and while it's going to be painful for the next little while, while things are only virtual, I actually see this in the long run as opening up the Northwest Territories and access to international access. As my colleague from Kam Lake was saying earlier on, in the long run, we'll actually probably have more people participating in our forums when we can return to a normal sort of open venue. Just one last comment. Again, back to science, I like science; I like facts; and I want to invest more in this area because, just because you say something a lot, that doesn't make it true. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Are there any further questions under mineral and petroleum resources? Seeing none, please turn to page 215. Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$16,346,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now turn to tourism and parks, beginning on page 218, with information items up to 221. Any questions? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also really like tourism and parks, as well, so I am very supportive of this area, too. I'm looking very forward to the day on which I can also travel again. At times, when I've driven down the highway, like I said, it feels like you just want to keep going, right? No, putting joking aside, I'm looking at the Growth and Recovery by Investing in Tourism Fund. I've been hearing from a lot of constituents, or just people who had connections from before, regarding their concern about the borders not reopening, obviously, this summer like they had anticipated and, therefore, not seeing a tourism season in the upcoming summer. I know the Minister has already

spoken, it's been a long day, that there is a lot of conversation with the federal government, but I just would like her to maybe speak a little bit further to whether or not that fund is going to actually maybe be renewed or replaced. How much are we really going to see in relief funding for our operators? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Tourism certainly is quite dear to my heart, and I continue to hear about the impacts of COVID-19, specifically the border restrictions on this sector. Madam Chair, it was my goal to have something sort of a little more concrete to be able to get back to Members and out to the public during the course of this session. We still have a few weeks left, so my goal is not quite over yet. We are working quite diligently, I would say, right now, to make sure that whatever programs are put in place for the 2021-2022 year continue to do what we did in 2020-2021, which was to really identify areas that need to be supported from the federal programs or that can be complemented by federal programs or where there are gaps to be filled. We are still waiting to know what the final word might be from the federal government. That is a significant source of money, and it makes sense to me to not compete with it but to use it to its best advantage. Again, we are expecting to have some information back fairly soon from them and are working in the meanwhile to be ready to drop our own plans in conjunction with that, based on that estimation. I know that is not a lot of specifics, Madam Chair. I am trying to give as much as I can with where we are at, but I very much want this to be a planned approach and not just sort of bits here and there. That is why I am holding back a little bit on where I can go. I will certainly commit to getting the plan out. I just do not know when that is going to be. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. That is good to hear, and I am hoping, like before, we are seeing things that are special to us as the territories versus having to be in the same realm as Quebec and Ontario with their over-the-top tourism sectors versus ours. I just wanted to talk to you quickly about the tourism infrastructure fund. Last year, that was a great idea for keeping some small projects going into small communities, employing local businesses, building I think it was kitchen shelters, picnic tables, and such. I note that there is no increase to that over the actuals from either of the last two years, so I am just curious to know: would the department consider actually investing more there, given that again we are not going to

see the opening of the borders this summer? To me, again, this seems like a great way we can keep small northern businesses working, keep people employed outside of the centres, and I would be supportive to seeing more money being put in and maybe looking at, if an area or a park does not have a kitchen shelter in a community, looking at that. As my colleague has brought up, what is Whati going to get in preparation for their road, this being the last year of the ice road? Yes. Maybe the Minister could comment a little bit around that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, obviously, the tourism infrastructure fund still sits at \$200,000. It certainly has been oversubscribed, I think, in this last year, and efforts have been undertaken to, as I said earlier, move travel money and reallocating that to the areas that are in need, such as this one and such as some of the tourism products that have rolled out, whether GRIT or otherwise. The short answer is yes, but the longer answer is that it's coming in one project at a time right now. Right now, we are still closing out the end of this fiscal year and trying to utilize all of the different programs and funds that were designed and were set up for this fiscal year and then determine where we can go in the next year. The short answer is yes. It has been a good program. It has had good uptake, and ultimately, the goal and the vision are to position communities and tourism operators when there is a full reopening or partial reopening. That certainly does fit within that vision. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would totally support, when this comes back to us, that that money is actually moved over into this area, out of the travel budget, ahead of us all voting on it, but I will leave that as more of a comment. We can't get out of this area without talking about outhouses, so I am going to ask the Minister about the outhouses up in the Beaufort-Delta, which I heard a lot about being shot up and not in such great condition. I know that there has been conversation around the replacement of these. I do want to urge the Minister to actually start looking into the revolutions in outhouse technology in the last while and the fact that maybe we could be subcontracting these outhouses to self-contained units that could be hosed down, et cetera, to a company. Maybe that is a business development opportunity, to create a contract. I feel that, if we have a contract in place where those, I am forgetting now, but I believe it's contracted out to the parks, but I am not

100 percent sure, and I should know that. Something along that line, where it's a heated outhouse, that type of thing. However, if not, if you are not going to replace those Beaufort-Delta outhouses, will you be providing operations and maintenance funding for them in the upcoming year? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, please do not shoot at the outhouses. Madam Chair, I am actually heading to Inuvik in a couple of weeks from now, and in keeping with earlier themes this session, with respect to outhouses, there is an ADM meeting happening tomorrow morning between ITI and Infrastructure to figure out the previously promised plan around outhouse maintenance in the Northwest Territories on, obviously, highways, roadways, pullouts, parks, so that includes parks. I will kind of add this one to the list that, if the outhouse facilities in the parks in the Beaufort-Delta are not up to par, obviously, we will have to figure out a solution, maybe alongside the other solutions for outhouses that we are now actively pursuing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: May I suggest the formation of an outhouse committee, and then you could have an open-to-the-public naming contest for that committee. No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under Industry, Tourism and Investment. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am ready now. Madam Chair, I see that, understandably so, there is a drop of about \$2 million from the tourism and parks budget. I am wondering if, within that line item, ITI is still able to or they have already worked on kind of a robust domestic and international marketing plan for as soon as the borders do open so that we are ready to go and say to people, "Come back." Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the drop of \$2 million that you can see between the revised 2020 estimates and the mains for 2021-2022 relate really to the fact that there was increased funding coming through CanNor to support the tourism industry in COVID. If you kind of look at the main estimates to main estimates, there actually is not very much variance there. Sorry, Madam Chair. I am going to

have to get the second half of her question. It's gone. I apologize.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to hear all about the fabulous commercials and promotional material that is all ready to go out across Canada and internationally so that we can attract people back right away with fabulous programs and really selling our NWT tourism operators, from Fort Smith right up to the Arctic Ocean. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I am embarrassed to admit that I forgot what the question was because I love to talk about this. I had the pleasure of receiving a detailed, lengthy presentation, including all sorts of graphics, 3D things jumping out, all from Northwest Territories Tourism, who are our organization, marketing organization, here in the Northwest Territories. They have always traditionally done the bulk of the programming for tourism, and it is quite fantastic. I believe there is an outstanding offer for a similar briefing to committee to have all the same experiences of seeing 3D animals pop out that you can pet. I don't mean to make light of it. It really was quite stunning. There is a line of Northwest Territories stories that I think people were actually crying in the room when we were watching it, so it is phenomenal. I think they have, in fact, won international awards for it. They are still doing that. The programming is still happening. It's still out there. Obviously, we have directed some of the funding that would normally have gone to really pushing that back into the industry right now so that folks can stay alive so that they are ready when the time comes, when tourism restarts internationally as well as nationally. However, I really can't say enough, Madam Chair, about the phenomenal nature of the programs that they have and the marketing products that they have. It's just a question of kind of keeping the money where it can support those tourism operators now but then rolling that product out and catching what I hope is going to be a real wave of tourism coming back to the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am happy to hear that. I am wondering: this past week, the Minister and I spoke in regard to the camping season this year, and I am wondering if there was any movement or further conversation

with the department. I believe that was only two days ago, so I understand if the Minister does not have an answer to this but just in regard to a road-trip program for people doing staycations this year.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. Madam Chair, just confirming. I did certainly confirm back with the department after the discussion here in the House that there is continued interest to have some sort of a coupon once again. Hearing it on the floor of the House is an important tool that raises its profile in the department, so we are well aware, and we want to have that ready to go. As I said, again, the dates for bookings do open in May, so a bit of time, but we want the information out. I am conscious of that. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I understand if this information isn't available, but just in regard to, if the plan is to do extended stays for people, if there will be opening of showers this year? These may be CPHO questions, but I figured I would ask them now. I can come back later if need be.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, the department worked very much in conjunction, in collaboration, with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer last spring and through the season to ensure that the parks reopened safely. In some ways, that foundation is already there and the relationships are already there, and the relationships are already built. I am quite confident that everything that can be done to reopen as safely and as fulsomely as possible is and will be done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just want to switch now to page 220. On there, we have the Yellowknife Visitors Centre, which is kind of a status quo budget item, but we do have some changes to that still, which are the site of the Yellowknife Visitors Centre, the traditional site, which is still sitting there. I assume that this budget item is to support the alternate location for the Yellowknife Visitors Centre. I am wondering if there is a plan to have a budget item for the legacy site of the Yellowknife Visitors Centre, and if so, when we can anticipate that and what the plan is for that site. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I know there is quite a lot of ongoing work with the city. Let me see if I can get the latest on where that is at from Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, we have increased that funding to the city in the tune of \$186,000 on top of what you see on page 220, which is really going to enable them to look at what the new NWT Yellowknife Visitors Centre looks like. We just chatted with the city last week about some of their visions. It can be pretty exciting. They are doing that work right now. As for the old site, I actually don't know what's happening with that site, but rest assured, with the new site, they are looking at options in the core downtown. That funding that we have is for this year, and we have committed that we need to be able to find that funding ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Historically, we spend about 10 percent of the tourism product diversification program on southern operators, recognizing that 90 percent goes to northern operators. That's great, but I don't really understand why we give public money to businesses not based in the Northwest Territories to run tourism operations here. Is the Minister willing to amend the tourism product diversification program to make it only northern businesses? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Of that 10 percent, you often have businesses that employ guides locally, boat operators, airline operators locally, and certainly may use other tourist products here, such as local hotels during transfers and food operators, logistics, supplies, et cetera. Whether it's direct employees or whether it's indirectly spent, those who may be based in the South are still often very important local operators. What I would, perhaps, suggest or commit to doing is to provide information, to the extent that we have it, that outlines the spending that we are aware of by those operators so that we can see just how much the dollars that we give their support do, in fact, wind up circulating back here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have no doubt that there are spinoff economic benefits from a large southern paddle company or a hunting outfitter coming up here and running their lodge. I actually talk to a lot of the lodge owners who run them seasonally, and they're great businesses. I just question the justification for us actually giving them money, especially when a lot of them are historically quite competitive in running good programs. I look forward to seeing those numbers. I have made this request before. On to another point, though, we waived the \$500 tourism operator licence fee for this fiscal. Are we going to do that again? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Best answer I could have had. I would like to plant in the Minister's ears, perhaps, I know this isn't a lot, \$500, but it is a bit of a barrier to entry to starting a business. I know the tourism act was created to, perhaps, promote tourism, but it has quite a process that may disincentivize some of the smaller people who want to dip their toes into the waters. I don't view a tourism operator licence as the type of licence that has to generate revenue. It seems completely counterintuitive that we charge all of our tourism operators, especially the small seasonal ones, \$500 every year. Is the Minister willing to, going forward, look at completely getting rid of this fee? It just doesn't seem to make much sense to me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe, certainly for the small- and medium-sized operators, my understanding is that it's actually \$175 as a fee. Again, if that's incorrect, I will ensure that we correct that. With respect to having the licence, it is one way that we are able to assure the public that there is protection for them, that there is some control over who is offering services and often offering services that are in remote locations. Actually, you know what, Madam Chair? I am getting information in real time, so \$580 for a new licence but only \$175 for a renewal. Again, it hasn't come back to me that this is, in fact, a burden. I would expect that, if it is a burden, there is quite a number and variety of various funding tools in ITI to help support those small operators. One of the other major things that tourism licensing and its amending provisions do is allow us to go out

and consult with Indigenous governments when there are tourism operations happening on traditional lands or on settled lands.

What I will say and perhaps make a commitment, even, is that I can go back and check in with Northwest Territories tourism and see to what extent there are some barriers, if this is a barrier, or if it's a question of just filling out the paperwork. This isn't a money-making tool, necessarily. I will need to go back and have some conversations with those who are impacted by these rules. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps trying not to rehash the entire debate about the tourism act and whether it has accomplished its goals. I think the problem with going to NWT tourism is that part of the reason we brought the tourism act in was to get a lot of people licensed who weren't licensed. I know that's still a problem. I have constituents who run tourism operating businesses who are not licensed and probably don't want to go talk to ITI. As part of that view there, can the Minister look to how we are bringing people into the licensing scheme? Charging them \$500 doesn't help. s I will just leave that as a comment.

We wouldn't be complete for tourism and parks unless I talked about the opening of the campgrounds. Madam Chair, every single year, I go down to Kakisa, and I go fly fishing. Every single year, someone cuts the gate and goes camping there, or they run through the creek to go camping there. There is an insatiable demand to go camping earlier that people are cutting gates. I know we can't open the parks because we have to hire some people, but there are certain campgrounds in this territory that people camp at regardless. The way that I view this is that there are certain kinds of, I think they're operated by ITI, if you took Hidden Lake Territorial Park, these giant parks where people camp. They camp all year-round. They go to them. There are roadside pullouts, some of which are parks operated by ITI, that aren't necessarily campgrounds, but people camp at them. Is that something the department allows? Is there a way to create some of these campgrounds that allow people to go in and pull in regardless of the actual registered fixed season? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have that in my mains. It's not something I have in front of me, other than to sort of rehash what was already discussed earlier this

week about the costs of expanding the season for a month being into the tens of thousands of dollars, let alone the fact that there are contracts in place with operators and some simple physical facts about what they can or cannot do before the real thaw happens.

The question involved was towards what could be done in maybe the day parks as opposed to the camping parks. That's a new spin on the question. What I would like to suggest is that I take that away and have a conversation with the department about whether there are options for some of the other parks products that are not the formal campgrounds. I can sort of commit to get an answer on that, but it may be that I need to come back to the Member to make sure that I am actually answering where that question ended up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope one day I will be able to go camp in the winter without Lands showing up and calling me a squatter. Thank you, Madam Chair. My next question is: I see that we still have the lease commitment in the visitors' centre in Dawson. I thought we actually weren't doing that, but perhaps I was wrong. Can I just get an update of what the plan is for the continued visitor services in Dawson City, Yukon? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know we were looking at the status of that and trying to determine if, in fact, it is something that ought to be renewed. It's not at a final point of decision because it hasn't hit me yet, Madam Chair, but let me see if the Deputy Minister can provide a bit of an update on where that consideration is at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. We have asked the region to do an analysis, a cost-benefit analysis, on that visitors' centre, recognizing its location and what we can do more within the territory, so we are aiming to have that done by the end of this fiscal. This visitors' centre does have a lot of people come through it. The question is: how many actually end up in the territory? For example, in 2018, 10,000 people came through that. We recognize it's a good location in downtown Dawson. Do we want to keep it? Do we not? That will be a decision we'll look at early next fiscal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Are there any further questions under tourism and parks? Seeing none, Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$16,232,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. There are additional information items from pages 222 to 226. Do Members have any questions in regard to any of those information items, that are specifically to the information items? Seeing none, we'll continue on. Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 203. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to put some questions about the revenue somewhere because this is the only place revenues show up for this department. There are a couple of ducks here that need to be flushed out. The line on 204, licenses, rental, and other fees, the main estimates for last year showed \$2.4 million, but the revised estimates actually show \$47.7 million. Is this a typo? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, it is not a typo. It is a license forfeiture from Husky Oil that I would be happy to provide in some finer detail, Madam Chair. I'm just not getting back there fast enough. Perhaps I could suggest that Deputy Minister Strand can speak to it, or it may go over to our director of finance, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct. That is the work bid deposit forfeiture from Husky Energy. They had a work commitment. It wasn't fully fulfilled, and so as a result, under our legislation, the balance of that deposit is forfeited. That's what the amount is for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This is good news, but there is no explanation whatsoever of what this amount is. I'm kind of surprised that it's just kind of dropped in here, no footnote, nothing, so any member of the public wouldn't know what this is. Is there not a better way to present this for future main estimates? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. It's obviously a significant bid deposit forfeiture. It's much higher than what we would often see in a particular year. I think I'm certainly happy to say that, though I don't know what threshold there might be or if there should be a threshold of at what point a footnote is offered, but the point is well-made. I accept that, yes, it certainly shows as being a number that seems unusual, and yet there is actually a very clear explanation available for it. The commitment would be that, if there is going to be another significant variance of that nature, we find a way to report that publicly so that it's more clear. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I appreciate that. I just want to get a little bit more clarification of what this work bid forfeiture actually is. Does this mean that Husky has surrendered its exploration licence and that they are not going to be carrying out I think it was over \$300 million worth of work that they were required to carry out to keep their exploration licence in good standing? Is that what has happened here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, no. It's not like that, Madam Chair. I'm going to suggest, though, that this go to Deputy Minister Strand.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Husky had about \$94 million in the deposit, and they worked it down to \$45.2 million. It's when the conversion from an exploration license to a significant discovery licence happens that that is forfeited. They have spent a lot of money on this EL, I think upwards of \$200 million, if not way more than that. That hopefully summarizes it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The company, though, has applied for a significant discovery licence. This means, though, that they don't have to carry out the other commitment of, I guess it would have been another \$50 million, total of \$94 million worth of exploration work? That's not going to take place now? Is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I'll direct it to the deputy minister, please.

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

MS. STRAND: Madam Chair, yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's not good news. That's almost \$100 million worth of work that could and should have been done in the Sahtu. It's great that we get a \$45 million cash windfall, but in converting this to a significant discovery licence, is that being done under the old legislation or the new legislation? Is there any requirement for even one cent to be spent under a significant discovery licence? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it is still falling under the old legislation, which, again, I don't have in front of me. Madam Chair, I'm going to see if I can drive that back over to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Strand.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We spent a fair bit of work on this with Justice, and it is that it does fall under the new legislation. That is in place for the new SDL that is being finalized right now with Husky. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That is good news because they can only tie up the land now for 15 years, but as I understand it, they don't have to do one cent of work, nothing, which is not good news. I'm going to leave this one for now, and I do hope that people are paying attention to this because that system is still broken. I have one other question here. The next item, minerals, oil, and gas, the main estimate here for the current year was \$30.7 million, and the figure here is just a dash. Is that really that we're predicting we're going to get zero dollars from mining and oil and gas royalties for the current year? Zero? Is that a typo, again? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, I just want to make sure I'm looking at the right number. Non-renewable resource revenues, minerals, oil, and gas, I have \$1.511, Madam Chair. Sorry, for last year, yes. For last year, Madam Chair, the numbers have been updated, and I think we are now expecting some small amount of royalties for this fiscal, given that Ekati has come back online and given some of the rebounding in the diamond markets. I don't know if I have that number available. Let me see if Deputy Minister Strand or Director Salvador do.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. When this estimate was done, this forecast was at the height of COVID. That's why it has a zero number in there. We do the next forecast in August, so we are anticipating that there will be a number in there. I just don't know exactly what that is. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. We don't know how much it is, but it might be slightly greater than the dash or the zero that might appear there. It's estimated for 2021-2022 that we are only going to get \$1.5 million for royalties from diamond mining and oil and gas? Is that right? Just wondering if it's a typo again. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, typos are pretty rare in the main estimates. No, it's not a typo. Look, the mineral resources sector has had some pretty significant struggles over the last year and, we are expecting, likely will continue to have some pretty significant ups and downs in the year to come. The estimates in the forecast are perhaps a bit conservative, but I suspect the Minister of Finance would rather have a conservative estimate than have a wide variation in terms of the own-source revenues that we are expecting to have come in. If, in fact, the diamond markets continue to rebound, as they seem to be, though that's far from certain, given that there need to be significant shutdowns across Canada, I was going to say, but internationally, as well, it's difficult to anticipate what, in fact, is going to happen. There have been new sales and new sites, which have gone very well, but, in fact, again, that alone isn't going to rebound this sector. We are going to have to see how much catchup there is going to be over last year, how far it is going to get.

As far as other areas, again, commodities are coming back, but a lot of our projects are at early stages. We may or may not be seeing royalties coming in this coming year. The biggest source of the royalties was the diamond mines, and we are not necessarily able to say with strong certainty that, yes, in fact, it's going to be a complete and full rebound in the course of this next fiscal. It would be nothing more than a pleasure for me to come back and have a large number change there in terms of our revised estimates for 2021-2022 showing, in fact, a high number, but that's not the number that we projected back in the height of COVID when the mains were prepared. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate those comments. Just very quickly, I am really concerned with these numbers. They are, as I understand, based on sales of diamonds. It's not a great time to be trying to sell diamonds. I understand that there is a global pandemic, but this is not what devolution promised us. The estimates of the day were \$60 million in revenues. Moving forward, all of this was going to benefit everybody. When I see these kinds of figures, this is a real warning sign that we need to look at what revenues we actually get from resource development and how we manage the resources. That's all I have to say for now. Thanks, Madam Chair. I do appreciate everybody having to put up with 10 minutes of me doing this stuff. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have one quick question and one last concern. I won't try to drag this on too long. The \$1.5 million, minerals and oil and gas royalties, again, we used to get so many royalties. I think something we really need to look at as a government is, any time there is new development in the future, to find a way that, if there is any sort of massive ebbs, like we are having right now, to have some cost certainty or royalty certainty, for lack of better words. Any time the market has tanked, no matter what is negotiated, any time we negotiate with industry or the resources sector, to have that balance there. When times are good, yes, the royalties are going to be great, but we still have to be prepared to make sure that we don't have as low numbers as these. I think this is probably a historical low in terms of income. I will just leave that as a comment. I think that's something we need to always find ways to make sure that we get as much juice for our squeezing from our resource sector without hurting business, as well, on their end. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary on page 203. Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, total department, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$59,989,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 84-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 - INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT - DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 203),
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment at this time. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operating 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. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. The motion is nondebatable. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, and would like to report progress with one motion, and, Mr. Speaker, I move

that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Question 638-19(2), Medevac Services
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act

- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act
- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act
- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Securities Act
- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- 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
- Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election
- Committee Report 10-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
- 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(20), Main Estimates 2021-2022

The House adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

