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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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(Thebacha)

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(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

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(Frame Lake)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 11, 2021****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 152-19(2):
UPDATE ON WINTER ROAD SEASON AND
COMMUNITY FUEL RESUPPLY

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, one of the priorities of our government is to make strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy, and reduce the cost of living. There are a number of initiatives being undertaken to support this priority, and one of these is to continue to seek ways to advance the construction of all-season roads such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the Tlicho Highway.

Mr. Speaker, investments in all-season roads may take time and money. Our government will continue to pursue these projects, but in the meantime, winter roads remain an essential part of the Northwest Territories' transportation system. Communities across the North rely heavily on these roads to ensure the movement of goods and people during colder months.

Today, I am pleased to provide an update on the 2021 winter road season and fuel resupply activities. Every year, highway crews in the Beaufort-Delta, the Sahtu, the Deh Cho, and the North Slave regions build and maintain 1,469 kilometres of winter roads, ice roads, and ice crossings that connect 11 communities that are not served by our all-season roads.

The Northwest Territories' short winter-road season is critical, as our winter roads are the primary way essential goods are delivered to remote communities. This access helps to diversify the Northwest Territories' economy, allows businesses to be more competitive, and lowers costs for northern residents. I would like to personally thank our highway crews across the territory for their hard

work and dedication to opening and maintaining winter roads this past year, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. These crews overcame fluctuating temperatures and other impacts of climate change to get our winter roads operating and, in some cases, earlier than average opening dates.

To enhance the level of service on some of our winter roads, our government has also formed partnerships with the private sector. Specifically, we have an agreement with Enbridge Pipelines in which the company provides funding to the GNWT to accelerate the construction of the Tulita and Wrigley ice crossings on Highway No. 1 to support the movement of equipment.

Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of essential goods, such as fuel, for our residents and businesses in northern communities. Many communities rely heavily on diesel and gasoline for electricity generation, heating, and transportation. The GNWT is responsible for the purchase, transport, and storage of fuel for 16 communities here in the Northwest Territories that are not served by the private sector. Local contractors then sell and distribute these petroleum products to residents and businesses.

Despite the challenge of COVID-19, residents can rest assured that the GNWT will continue to deliver fuel while taking every precaution necessary to protect our communities. Our staff and contractors have put rigorous safety measures in place to minimize risks related to COVID, while following the orders and recommendations of the Chief Public Health Officer. This winter, the GNWT's first fuel delivery took place on February 1. It is expected that the fuel resupply will be completed by mid-March, with a total of 7.5 million litres of fuel delivered to seven communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the staff and contractors for keeping communities connected safely, efficiently, and reliably. Our government will continue to work with our public and private sector partners to maintain dependable supply of goods and services to our communities, while identifying opportunities to improve our operations and infrastructure. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 153-19(2):
RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: [Translation] Mr. Speaker, I am proud to celebrate the francophone community of the Northwest Territories during the 23rd Annual Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. This nation-wide initiative, held every March, is an opportunity for Canada's 10 million French-speakers and all Canadians to celebrate and promote French language and culture.

Through this year's Rendez-vous de la Francophonie theme, Acadia, at the heart of my country, celebrations will highlight the fact that Acadia is the birthplace of Canada's Francophonie, while acknowledging the presence and contribution of Indigenous peoples in North America for thousands of years.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. In response to COVID-19, they quickly adapted to provide prompt translations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their dedication has allowed our francophone residents to access important health information in French throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this month the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government have finalized a funding agreement to support French language services. This agreement provides a multi-year collaborative framework between Canada and the Northwest Territories in order to support the planning and delivery of quality French language communications and services. The agreement also ensures stability and continuity in the delivery of services to the French residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, our diverse French population adds a cultural richness to our communities. I am proud of our ongoing efforts to support our Francophone residents and to strengthen the diversity of our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation ends]

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 154-19(2):
ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY
GOVERNMENTS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Sorry. I'll be doing my statement in English; I won't be doing it in Slavey. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to update the Members on the progress that we have made with our commitment to reduce the municipal funding gap and the additional funding support that has been provided for community governments. This government committed to reducing the funding gap by \$5 million, and we have made significant progress on this goal. This past fiscal year we added \$2.5 million of ongoing funding for community governments.

Earlier this year, Municipal and Community Affairs engaged with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to identify how best to strategically invest this new funding. Knowing that the largest funding gap is in community public infrastructure, it was decided that this funding would be allocated to this priority. This additional funding, therefore, is earmarked for those 19 community governments who have capital funding gaps. In addition to the infrastructure investment, an additional \$740,000 has been approved in the 2021-2022 budget, which MACA is allocating to the environmental services fund to support community governments with the delivery of water, sewer, and solid waste services for residents.

Mr. Speaker, our mandate commitment is more than just a funding initiative. It also includes a commitment to provide communities with new opportunities to raise additional revenue. In 2021, MACA, along with the Department of Lands and the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, have been developing a process guide for municipal governments to manage lands within their municipal boundaries. As part of this process, we are also considering current Government of the Northwest Territories policies and procedures that may require amendments. The transfer of lands would better position municipal governments to have administration and control of lands within their community, remove barriers for land transfers, allowing communities to advance their own priorities for land development, and present more own-source revenue opportunities. MACA's commitment also includes working with communities to reduce or stabilize the cost of delivering core programs and services.

This summer, we will be working with communities in the Beaufort-Delta and Sahtu regions to coordinate removal of hazardous waste stockpiles within their landfills. This project, as part of the implementation of the Northwest Territories Waste Resource Management Strategy, will reduce contamination of Northwest Territories lands and extend the lifespans of community landfills. Work will continue in other regions as federal funding has been applied for to continue this work.

We are also working towards implementing the Northwest Territories asset management strategy for communities. The asset management strategy will provide communities with more information to implement best practices, improve maintenance, and lower costs due to equipment failures and emergency repairs. MACA has already trained six communities to use a computerized asset management program and have plans for up to seven more in 2021.

Mr. Speaker, with the additional investment for community governments, I am proud to say that we are well on our way to meet our mandate commitment. The department will continue to advance this mandate commitment in future years to include the remaining \$1.7 million to reach the total mandate investment of \$5 million. We know the challenges that our community governments are facing, and we will continue to advocate and support them to address their priorities wherever possible. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to talk about the welcomed news from the NWT Housing Corporation regarding new houses set to be built within the riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh and across the territories. Last week, Minister Chinna, along with MP Michael McLeod and the federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, all made a joint announcement about the allocation of funds to construct 60 new homes for several NWT communities. That's awesome.

Mr. Speaker, of those 60 housing units, 10 will be constructed within my constituency, which includes four for Lutselk'e, four for Deninu Kue, and two for Ndilo and Dettah. I am very happy to hear that these new houses will begin construction this year. I know that there are long waiting lists in all of my communities for people looking for housing, so I know that this project will help alleviate our strong housing demand.

Mr. Speaker, when I was writing this last night, I watched a show and maybe changed my Member's statement a little. I watched a show called *New Amsterdam*. It's a medical drama. There was this doctor, a real humanitarian, dealt with a homeless person. It is fictional, of course, but it made me really think about this. When dealing with this patient, they discovered this patient was homeless

and racked up a huge amount of money to this hospital, \$1 million testing, psychiatric evaluations, blood tests, you name it. It turns out, after a good visit with the doctor, this homeless person just needed a place to stay. You can't help but wonder what the unforeseen costs are for our systems, like Justice and Health and Social Services. All we need to do is just give somebody a key to go into an apartment or a home. Shelter is so important and feeling safe. It is so important for our mental health.

With this announcement, I think that we should scream this from the top of the hills here. I think this is huge, this announcement. It will take a huge bite out of our mandate items and move in that direction. It's something tangible. We sit back, and we have a healthy tension back and forth in this Chamber, but I think this is something we could really announce as a group and give people hope. I think that's so important moving forward: hope. Show the people in the Territories that we can work as a team and do some good. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAPPY EASTER

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I just want to wish everybody back home and in the House: happy Easter. Have a good weekend with our families. My son's back home in the Delta, so we are looking forward to a spring hunt and fishing. Looking forward to that, getting excited to get home. To all our constituents in the Delta and Nunakput, please have a safe spring. Enjoy your time here with your families.

I took part myself. We went down and watched the dog races last weekend. I would like to congratulate Grant Beck and Richard Beck and Brent for first, second, and third. Brent is the 150-mile champion for the NWT, so congratulations to him. I know him really well, and I know how hard he worked to get there. All the mushers who took part in that Canadian championship with even the one- and two-dog, the little kids racing, it's always good to see up-and-coming dog mushers.

It has been a long session, Mr. Speaker. This last eight weeks, we did a lot of good work. We worked together to get the session and the budget passed, and there are a lot of good things coming. I want to thank our government and our leadership. Keep moving forward and keep it up, working with our colleagues on this side of the House. I am looking forward to keeping on keeping on.

Mr. Speaker, still, we are in COVID-19 times. Please, everybody back home, get your vaccine and follow the rules of the public health officer and just be safe. Have a good spring, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to seeing you back in the Delta. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Hear, hear. Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET REFLECTIONS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It has been another long, arduous year, ending with capital acquisition plans, business plans, and the cream of the crop, the main estimates. These exercises are a necessary evil as they set the departmental budgets for the upcoming new fiscal year. What I mean by "necessary evil" is the many long hours reviewing departmental budgets and then doing it all over again in its final stages during the Committee of the Whole. This entailed all 19 Members to be present and work together to come up with the final budget that is somewhat satisfactory to Regular MLAs on this side of the House and satisfies the needs of the departments and Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great benefits of this exercise is that we can all talk the same language, working for the benefit of all of the residents of the Northwest Territories. When we can work together on budget issues and agree to provide more financial resources for programs and services, it is the residents who win. Similarly, it falls upon us all to dig deep to find the financial resources to cover those extra costs as noted by the Finance Minister.

The residents of the Northwest Territories need to know this Legislative Assembly has their best interests at heart, that this Legislative Assembly continues to investigate economic opportunities that will benefit northern businesses, which in turn benefit the residents of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Hear, hear. Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EASTER MESSAGE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is our last sitting day of this session until we return at the end of May. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the essential workers throughout all regions of the NWT. I want to thank all the medical personnel in all NWT medical facilities, which includes everyone from the

janitors, the nurses, and the doctors, to the specialists, patient advocates, and social workers, among others.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all of my colleagues, both the Regular Members' side and on the Cabinet side, for understanding what I am about and for putting up with me and my sometimes-harsh line of questioning. We may not always agree on issues, but we never let personal animosity get in the way of getting things done. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to once again thank all of the staff here at the Legislative Assembly as well as my own staff, my constituency assistants, Priscilla Lepine and Pascal Erasmus. Staff play a key role in functions of good governance, so I thank them for their work and their dedication. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to wish everyone a very happy Easter, and as always, I thank the amazing constituents of Fort Smith for the honour of being your MLA for Thebacha. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO PETROLEUM RIGHTS INFORMATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. While attempting to drill down into the Husky Oil significant discovery licence, pun intended, I was astounded at how difficult it is to find any useful and accessible information about how our government actually administers oil and gas rights.

ITI does not seem to have implemented its new responsibilities with the changes to the Petroleum Resources Act. While much of the secrecy surrounding rights management was supposed to be fixed, it is virtually impossible to get any coherent information on specific oil and gas rights holdings. There are three separate listings or web pages for information on oil and gas rights rather than a user-friendly integrated database or public registry. There is a series of web pages on monthly oil and gas rights activities, which is little more than a listing of licence numbers and their disposition, no maps, no company names, no actual dates, just a lumping together of licence numbers. A second and unlinked set of pages has listings of the licences and the actual documents. The listings are searchable by disposition type and the name of the company, but there are no data associated with the listings, such as dates, areas covered, work performed, or whatever. Lastly, there is a series of dated maps that have tables of licence data that are not linked or user friendly. These come from the previous calls for expressions of interest in petroleum development. Those have all failed to raise any interest since devolution. Elsewhere, you can find the annual oil and gas reports, that have

very busy maps in them, but none of this is linked in any way to the licence or activity listings.

Mr. Speaker, there is no searchable, user-friendly, integrated public registry for petroleum rights. Surely to goodness, seven years after devolution and 19 months after the transparency provisions were passed in the House to provide stronger accountability in petroleum rights reporting, we can and should be able to do a lot better. There are lots of good examples out there that show how transparent and well-organized public registries can be set up, for example the ones managed by the Land and Water Boards or the Mackenzie Valley Review Board. I will have questions for the Minister of ITI on how we can improve public access to information on petroleum rights. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN STUDENTS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Employment within the public sector is one of the main topics I hear about from my constituents after housing. Recently, I heard from a student who after receiving an offer of employment was being told that she now had to prove that she is "the right type of Indigenous" as she was born in Nunavut. An indigenous engineering student on the path we encourage our youth to take and still she is asked to "prove herself" for a summer job. This is not okay. Speaking with other northern students and recent graduates, I'm bombarded with stories that detail the barriers to gaining employment by one of the largest northern employers, our government.

One such story is that of Kerri, born and raised in Yellowknife, who graduated from Sir John Franklin High School and studied graphic design. Kerri was a product of the Student Financial Assistance program and studied design for four years, when she maxed out her SFA benefits. During her post-graduate design studies, she was recruited by CBC National News, working with them for a time before coming home. Shortly after returning to the North, a position was available in the GNWT for a graphic designer. Kerri applied for this position but was not successful. Upon appealing the decision process, she learned that this position was awarded to a Southerner by direct appointment. This is a perfect example of a qualified Priority 2 Northerner being passed over for a position within the GNWT and failing to be protected by the system that had been developed to ensure qualified Northerners have meaningful employment.

SFA needs to work hand in hand with human resources, proactively advising them of graduates and their professions. The GNWT is paying for this education, and our talented northern students must be viewed as an investment in our future. We often hear from Cabinet that the North does not produce educated people in fields that can be utilized by the GNWT, leading to southern hiring. We only have to look at several current and past deputy ministers to see that we don't make northern candidates a priority when developing our human resources.

While hiring from the South may not hurt the GNWT fiscally as every new resident means more in federal transfer payments; however, what are the indirect losses: the historic knowledge that's lost each time someone leaves a role; the impact on staff with each new manager or employee; or the impact on project work as southern science and methods are applied out of ignorance or lack of experience. Additionally, many southern hires only stay between two and five years. How much do we lose paying fees for recruitment, relocation costs, administration costs, et cetera? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT needs to take a hard look at our employment strategy, to incorporate not only our northern graduates upon their return, but to ensure that Northerners and people committed to the North are able to advance in the public sector. An integrated strategy is needed that involves not only HR, but incorporates the input of and data collected by ECE and SSA so that we are proactive about our work force. This strategy should identify future employment trends and identify pathways to help Northerners work towards their employment goals and include cross-training, mentorship, and networking and job shadowing opportunities, as well as succession planning. Only when we invest in our people will we have a successful North. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIRE SERVICES ON THE INGRAHAM TRAIL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In October 2020, the City of Yellowknife voted to end fire services on the Ingraham Trail. The most frustrating part of that decision was that residents were only given six months to find an alternate solution. I implored the Minister during the multiple city council votes to send someone from MACA to ask for more time, knowing full well that the GNWT could not find a solution within six months, but

GNWT bureaucracy doesn't move quickly and the idea of someone approaching city council to pitch a case without going up and down eight levels of bureaucracy first was an impossibility. Additionally, it seemed that finding a solution before April 1st was an impossibility, despite the best intentions of the Minister.

I have repeatedly been told that a solution would be found before April 1st. In this House on February 23rd in this session, the Minister said, "I made a commitment that we will find a solution by April 1st." Well, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is April 1st, and if your house is on fire on the Ingraham Trail and you call 911, no one is going to show up.

Mr. Speaker, the solution that has been presented was an options paper last week, where it has \$1.7 million up front and \$1.2 million annually to be paid completely by residents of the Ingraham Trail. If this is the solution the Minister had in mind the whole time, I could have saved the department a lot of time by saying that no one was going to go for that. If this was a multi-million-dollar problem, I could have said to the department and my residents that this wasn't going to happen back in October.

The department is now asking residents of the trail to pay \$4,000 a year for fire services. This would be one of the highest taxes in the Northwest Territories. The department is of the position that all of this money must be recovered directly from residents. I can't think of a single tax in this territory that is completely recovered by residents; 85 percent of our budget comes from the federal government.

The majority of our communities' government funding comes from ours, yet this one issue is to be completely recovered at a cost of \$1.2 million for one fire a year, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know that solution the department had in mind. Mr. Speaker, rather than prepare for the incoming loss of services, residents trusted the Minister at their word and waited on the government when they said they would solve this problem. I am disappointed in the options paper and in this outcome. I was confused about what MACA was thinking was going on the entire time, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed we broke the trust of our residents. I will have questions for the Minister of MACA about what can be done going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement will be in English. I have received numerous concerns from residents in Hay River with respect to the illicit drug trade and drug use in the community. Throughout the pandemic, we have heard stories of persons travelling back and forth across the border who are known drug dealers or persons known to be running drugs. How do we know? It is because our community is small, people talk, and most everyone knows everyone. With enough information, one is able to cut out the fiction and put together some semblance of truth of what is really happening on the ground.

We have heard how, throughout the pandemic, this government has been providing these dealers and runners with repetitive 14 days of free accommodation and meals while they worked their trade. To add insult to injury, with support from the NWT Housing Corporation, these dealers are provided with public housing. Why? Because they are on the housing list and we have to be fair with allocation of units. Input from housing board members with local knowledge is not taken into account because policy trumps general knowledge.

These dealers are targeting our Indigenous youth. Why? Because Indigenous youth are more exposed to recruitment and organized crime. All we have to do is look at the court docket and see who is filling our correctional centres. If this is to change then we have to provide Indigenous youth with positive role models; with a positive home life; with a positive learning environment; with safe places to participate in extracurricular activities; with protection from dealers beyond no contact orders; with timely access to mental health and addictions support; and with meaningful jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the local drug trade today is much different than that of the past. It is organized; it has financial resources; it has weapons; it has an effective recruitment process; it is not troubled by authority; and it does not care who it hurts. Why do our youth want to belong in such an organization? It provides a false sense of acceptance, an acceptance not received at home, among peers, or by society. It is a need of belonging which we, as family and society, have failed to provide.

The community of Hay River has lost a number of its youth to drugs and the drug trade, and we continue to let this happen. As families mourn, they ask: what are the police doing? What are the courts doing? What are our local and territorial politicians doing? Where are the supports? If there was ever a time to get serious about this issue, it is now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ADDICTIONS CENTRE REQUIRED

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my statement will be regarding we're losing a lot of young people in the Northwest Territories and also in the Tlicho Nation. There is a lot of young people that we lost. Some of them, I may mention, but I might not mention all. Just recently, this person is our brother, our uncle. His name is Freddy Bishop from Whati. Not only him, Justin Tutcho, as well. He was living with someone from Behchoko. Lastly, they have passed on, but just recently a young person, David Sangris. His funeral is today. When we look at this situation, we also lost Kelly Washie, a young man, and just recently I lost my brother, as well.

Why I am mentioning all of this is because alcohol and drug use is related to that. We lose a lot of young people because of alcohol and drug addiction. We need a treatment centre. If we had a treatment centre, do you think these people would still be alive? We need an addiction centre where people can work on themselves and start healing themselves. There are a lot of people who work for Health and Social Services. They need to go out to the community to reach out to these people. Would we have all these people alive today if we had more people reaching out to the people?

As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we can make a powerful statement. All the time, we make these powerful statements, but when we look out the window here, we see a lot of people that we're losing that are passing on. I really disagree with that. When we talk, we need to walk our talk. As a government, I want to send them a message. We want to prevent these things for our young people. Let's reach out to these people. Let's make available any kind of addictions programs that they can use. There are many resources out there that they can use. We can't keep on talking. I don't want to stand here again and talk about who has just passed on because it's very difficult to do that. All these young people, we want to pray for them and pray for their families that are grieving. We want them to have a healing process. That is my Member's statement. Thank you. [Translation ends]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 638-19(2):
MEDEVAC SERVICES

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Nunakput on March 4, 2021, regarding medevac

services. In the 2020 calendar year, there were approximately 180 air ambulance transports for the communities of Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok.

Mr. Speaker, the med-response program has bases in Yellowknife and Inuvik. There are three crews and planes in Yellowknife and one crew and plane in Inuvik. When med-response receives a request, it is triaged to determine need and severity. The team looks at available resources and dispatches planes and crews as required. If there are two situations at the same time and only one resource available, there are a number of possible solutions. The team may redirect a current plane that has been dispatched to a lower priority patient; dispatch a plane from Yellowknife base if the Inuvik plane is not available; or, in extreme cases, contact a partner air ambulance service in another jurisdiction, such as Edmonton, to dispatch a plane.

Med-response does have a contingency plan when there is a need to access additional pilots or crew. The med-response team can work with the air ambulance provider to pull in staff who are not part of the regular rotation. This is very rare, but it has been done in the past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 3 on the agenda, Members' statements, to allow our colleague from Kam Lake to make her statement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**Members' Statements
(Reversion)**

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Today, American President Joe Biden announced a transportation-focused, long-term economy recovery plan. During the Great Depression here in Canada, the federal government funded highway construction to stimulate the economy. In anticipation of our federal government's plan to unveil its budget on April 19th, I would like to talk about roads, specifically the Mackenzie Valley Highway, or what I like to call "the forgotten leg of the Trans Canada Highway."

The Trans Canada Highway runs through all 10 Canadian provinces from Victoria to St. John's. At 7,821 kilometres, it is the fourth longest highway and the second longest national highway in the

world. Construction began in 1949 under St. Laurent's Liberal government. According to history books, the Trans Canada Highway was complete in 1962 under Prime Minister Diefenbaker, but here in the NWT, I disagree. Like it or not, Canada's shores touch three oceans, not two, and the northern territories are, in fact, located in Canada.

In 1958, the federal government actually acknowledged this and committed to completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway as part of the Roads to Resources strategy. This construction began in 1972, but in 1977, was stopped, as the Berger Inquiry began a subsequent 10-year moratorium on oil and gas. Over the past 15 years, we have picked away at this highway through cost-sharing agreements with the federal government.

Completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway is an important economic and social development driver for the Northwest Territories. It stands to decrease cost of living, increase food security, increase housing opportunity, create safe passage for survivors of domestic violence, connect families, stimulate economic development, and connect southern Canada to the Arctic.

The federal government needs to understand that 25-cent dollars don't work in the NWT. Our infrastructure deficit and social needs are too far behind to compete against one another. Asking us to choose between economic stimulus and the social supports needed to heal our territory is a cruel continuation of a history already marked by tragedy.

While the Canadian government looks to revive the national economy, we in the North are asking, "Pass the AED and give us a chance to join the fight." Mr. Speaker, today, I challenge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to finish what past Liberal governments did not, which is a true Trans Canada Highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 696-19(2):
ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The drug trade is real. Drug use is real. People are dying. Families are being torn apart. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice: what is the Department of Justice doing to respond to increased illicit drug and substance abuse in our communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been asked about this a number of times in the House. Generally, I say that, when there is a demand, there is going to be a supply. The war on drugs has never been won. We have seen it played out across the world over the years. Obviously, what we need is we need people to be able to access help.

That being said, I can't just pass the buck. As the Minister of Justice, Justice does have a role in policing. One of the things that Justice does is work with communities. They create community action plans to identify priorities. However, I think there is more that we could be doing. I am from the same community as the Member. I get those calls from constituents who point out which houses have drug dealers, which ones just got new trucks and when they are going over to the border to grab drugs and bring them back. I am aware that there is an issue, and we need to do more to address it.

I am having those conversations with the department now. I don't run the RCMP; the RCMP are in control of enforcement. What can we do to work more closely with them, and what can we do to support them to help address those issues? I will leave it at that for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: It's time to stop discussing the issue. We need to see some action. I ask the Minister if he agrees that people need to speak up more in the communities. What are we doing to provide opportunities for people to report issues related to drugs?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: We have Crime Stoppers in the territory. It's a civilian non-profit organization that brings together police services, the media, and the community. It's a place where community members can report crimes that they see and provide this information to police. I know that, when I drive in Hay River, I see a little Crime Stoppers sign. However, I think, like I said, we could be doing more.

When the Health Department runs a new program, you see ads on every single social media platform. You see it everywhere you go. What are we doing to get the word out there that there is this avenue and that people need to participate in crime prevention and reporting crimes? We have lots of comments in here about drug dealers and bootleggers, but the police need evidence to make arrests and, ultimately, convictions. Those are just some of the things that we are doing. What we need to do is make the NWT a worse place to do business for drug dealers.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: If somebody reports suspected drug traffickers or drug dealers, one thing they do is they fear for their life, not only for their own life, but for the lives of their family members, as well. What supports are there for people who speak up and are worried for their safety?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I don't have that particular information on hand, but I would be happy to get that back to the Member. It's an important point. If we are asking people to speak up, we want to make sure that they know that they are going to be supported.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that the drug trade is organized, so what is the department doing specifically in response to organized crime? What are we not doing that we need to do? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In 2018, the NWT and the federal government signed an agreement, and that was to develop -- it was under the Public Safety, Canada's Guns and Gangs funding initiative. Since that time, money has been coming into the territory that has been funding research for one thing. There have been subject matter experts who have gone into the different communities in Fort Smith and Hay River. They're going to be going to Behchoko, Inuvik, and Yellowknife to examine the issues so that we can help come up with some of these solutions. There's also a budget for community-based crime prevention projects this year, in 2021-2022, and all the communities have been notified that they can submit proposals to create some of these projects. A lot of crime prevention is really community-driven, and we need that community support. We need things to be sustainable. Often, there's one or two people in the community who are really gung-ho, and if they leave or something happens, programs can fall apart. We really need full community support, and through this fund, we're hoping to provide that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 697-19(2):
PUBLIC ACCESS TO PETROLEUM RIGHTS
INFORMATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I described in my statement the lack of a coherent public registry when it comes to our management of petroleum exploration and development rights. Seven years after devolution and 19 months after changes to the legislation

passed, I think the public and operators deserve a lot better. Can the Minister tell us whether she agrees that we can and should be doing a lot better with regard to public access to petroleum rights information? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think this is the first time the Member has raised this concern. I can say I'm right now on the ITI website. I'm searching it and finding that process to be fairly simple. That said, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to continue in circles. I have, after hearing the Member's statement, contacted the department. What I'd like to suggest is that we have the Member sit down with members of ITI to actually look at this website, determine what's not working, determine what could be more clear so that we don't have to keep coming back and having this conversation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I think I've got a pretty good memory, but I don't think I've raised this issue on petroleum rights before. I'm always happy to talk to the Minister. I don't like how there's at least three separate sets of information about petroleum rights on the ITI webpages. Can the Minister tell us whether it's her intention to set up a coherent public registry, and when that might happen?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I was listening earlier to some of the other examples given. I've tried to use some of the other resources that were named and found them very difficult. As I've said, I'm right now looking at the section on oil and gas licences and finding that it meets the needs that I have. I'm in the same situation. Yes, I think this issue has come up generally, that the ITI website doesn't provide sufficient transparency to meet the regulation requirements or the legal requirements that we have. We want to achieve that. We want to be useful to the public. Again, I'm going to suggest that I'll connect with the Member to make sure that we are doing what we can to have a registry that achieves all of the goals that the public needs and that the public has for us.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. As part of the first-round changes to our petroleum legislation, we thought we plugged holes like the significant discovery licence giveaways and flipped the secrecy onus to make information public. Further changes were promised including an examination of royalties and perhaps even a legislative requirement for a public registry. Can the Minister tell us when the second round of legislative changes will actually take place and whether a requirement for a public registry for petroleum rights will be part of that work?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There is work, obviously, happening with respect to royalties, more on the mineral resources sector. We're always looking for, obviously, opportunities to ensure that the systems and processes that are in place are working effectively. There's not an intention to review the Petroleum Resources Act again. I recognize that there've been some comments from committee at the end of the 18th Assembly about other improvements that might be available. Again, I'm somewhat in a situation of saying: there's no planned review of the act at this moment. There is work happening with respect to royalties. There is work happening with respect to improving that system, looking at socio-economic agreements, et cetera. If there's more that can be done, again, it may well be that there are ideas that the Member has that would be helpful to hear directly so that I can answer that in a way that is more useful than me saying what is or isn't already happening since I suspect there's more to it than what I may be aware of at the moment.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I recognize I've got a bit of an advantage as I was in the last Assembly. All you have to do is turn back to the original discussion paper on this topic, and it was put forward as a set of targeted changes, that there was going to be a broader review later. I'm happy to talk to the Minister about that.

I was never really in favour of ITI administering subsurface rights when the department has a conflicting mandate to promote resource development. That's exactly the kind of situation the public reviews of the Gulf of Mexico oil drilling disaster said should be avoided. You shouldn't have a regulator also in charge of promoting a particular resource. Subsurface rights administration should be transferred, in my opinion, to the Department of Lands, which is already in the business of managing the surface rights. Can the Minister say why having the same department managing the rights and promoting the industry is not a conflict of interest and when she expects the rights administration will be transferred to another more suitable agency? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The GNWT is certainly not alone in the way that we administer and manage all of the responsibilities of government, including both promotion of the sector, as well as regulation of the sector. The three territories, to my understanding, have all three very similar approaches in terms of structuring this work. Similarly, at least certainly on the minimum resources sector, Mr. Speaker, there's a similarly even split, between different jurisdictions and managing, again, on the mineral resource sector. I

haven't had a chance to review it today for the petroleum resources sector.

Again with respect to having a finance department or an economic development department or a national resources department administering both, that is not an uncommon thing to have a shared responsibility of resource experts doing that work but not necessarily the same people. At the end of the day, though, Mr. Speaker, it's one government, so the entire GNWT is going to be here doing that work, whether it's a different department or a different division within that department, there should be rules and laws in place to ensure that there is no conflict, that we are transparent, and that we are providing accountability in a public forum, whether it's within one department or within different divisions of the same government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 698-19(2):
MEDEVAC SERVICES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to ask any questions today, but I got my answers back from the Minister in regards to medevac in my riding of Nunakput. I'm looking for the Beau-Del. With med-response aircraft and teams, I did ask for the tag numbers on those, identifications for the aircraft that provided services for medevac service. I'm wondering: why do we only have one aircraft in Inuvik and three down in Yellowknife? Usually, they had three into Yellowknife and two in the Delta. We always had a spare aircraft in Inuvik capable of flying patients out when they're called upon. Where is that aircraft, and why don't we have it because time is of the essence in medical problems that we've been having. I know that some of my residents in Nunakput have been waiting eight, sometimes six to seven hours because duty time for the aircraft pilots have maxed out. Starting off, where's the second aircraft for Inuvik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. Sorry, I don't have an answer to the question about why there isn't a second aircraft in Inuvik. I do want to say that the average response time is four hours and 31 minutes, so I'm not sure what six or seven hours is about. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, average time, four hours, four-and-a-half hours. I had some constituents who had been waiting six to seven hours, so I guess that's one of the long waits that they're having to stand by for. Why isn't there a second aircraft in

Inuvik? We have three down here that are used to bring patients to Edmonton. We need a second aircraft in Inuvik. Aklak Air usually had two aircraft when they had the contract. I don't know where med-response comes into play in regard to who owns the aircraft, or are they leasing them. There should be more clarity in regard to where is the second plane.

HON. JULIE GREEN: This is the second time the Member has asked this question. The answer is that I do not have the information. I will find the information and get it back to him in the next session.

MR. JACOBSON: Would the Minister reconsider having a second aircraft sitting in Inuvik, either Aklak Air or whatever aircraft provider? They should be looking into having a second aircraft for the safety of our constituents in the Beau-Del as a whole. Would she consider talking to med-response and getting a second aircraft?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I will take that question on notice.

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

QUESTION 699-19(2):
NORTHERN STUDENTS RECRUITMENT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of human resources. First question: is there a system in place to connect Student Financial Assistance and human resources in order to help post-secondary students identify viable career placements within the GNWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Finance as well as ECE do, right now, work together in order to promote the internship program that we have as well as to promote the summer student program that is right now open and to which I am hoping summer students are actively putting their names forward. For post-secondary students who are currently using SFA, they do receive that information about the internship programs and the summer student programs. Again, I'm happy to have any opportunity I have to promote that those programs are now open and taking names. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: I am happy to help the Minister promote her programs. Can the Minister speak to what career options or programs that are available within the GNWT that are made available to high

school students in order for them to plan their careers in the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Human resources staff do attend career fairs that happen across communities and attend at different schools in order to promote and make students aware of opportunities in the GNWT. There, of course, are now going to be career counsellors coming out through ECE in the new year to also help promote and assist with different options and make students aware of their different career opportunities. There is the Indigenous Career Gateway Program that looks specifically to Indigenous candidates who might need some support to breach a gap between what is in a job requirement and what their skill set might be coming out of high school, but that's a program that, right now, as I understand, in the last few years, in fact, has grown and is doing very well this year. I don't have the numbers in front of me, but it has been a continuous improvement in order to support the continual training and education of students.

Again, the summer student program is open to students who might be going into post-secondary in the fall. I list all these things, and yet I do want to acknowledge that I heard the story that was told by the Member. I am receiving my own inquiries from constituents. We can always do more to promote our programs, so I am still actively looking at what else we can be doing to better improve awareness and involvement of students in our summer student program.

MS. NOKLEBY: Those were somewhat ECE-related questions, so I think it speaks well to the Ministers breaking down their silos that the Minister of Finance could answer some of that. I appreciate that. My next question is: what incentive does the GNWT have to hire Northwest Territories graduates when the federal funding formula actually encourages the GNWT to hire from outside? I believe we were all told when we came in that one of the best ways to increase our revenues was to encourage more people to move to the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister speak to how this conflicts with our priority to hire more northern students?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I enjoy this question. It's not dissimilar to one that I think the Member has asked previously, and what's interesting about it is trying to figure out whether or not, in fact, the incentive of having more people in the territory should be the thing that we are looking, the \$30,000-some that we get from the federal government, when we consider that, for every resident who is here, we have to still provide education and sometimes housing, healthcare services. It's not that we get the free money; we get the money to be commensurate with the programs

and services that we need to provide. I certainly don't, in my role as Finance Minister, look at it as a one-for-one connection that, for every person who comes, we get pure, simple money.

That said, growing the population of the Northwest Territories to bring upon economic diversification is a good thing. Growing the population of the Northwest Territories to support our residents is a good thing. Having opportunities for northern graduates to be part of the public service is a good thing. I kind of want my cake, and I want to eat it, too. I want to make sure that we are supporting our northern residents, ensuring that they are having those opportunities, but I don't see that as being a reason to not also bring people to the North to expand and diversify whether it's the economy or our communities.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, like cake, so I hope I get to spend some time with the Minister eating that cake with her. My last question is a slightly different tack. How many employees within the GNWT are on transfer assignments, and while those transfers are taking place, how is human resources and Cabinet ensuring that the backfill is being done correctly and that client service isn't suffering? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I was able to find the first answer, which is simply a number, which is that, as of I believe in February, there were 708 staff on various transfer assignments. As for sort of the more general sense of what are we doing in terms of managing those employees and ensuring that the backfills are done properly, certainly, I have confidence in the people of human resources to be doing exactly that, to be monitoring and managing those systems. As far as being able to provide some background on how backflows have worked and on the numbers, that is one where I would offer to get back to the Member. I suspect there are actually tracking mechanisms in place that I simply don't have access to here, so I will gather that information up and provide it accordingly. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 700-19(2):
FIRE SERVICES FOR INGRAHAM TRAIL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is consulting with Ingraham Trail constituents and they are giving them the option of paying \$1.7 million to start up providing fire services

and, thereafter, \$1.2 million annually. I'm a little confused, and in the resources provided, there is no real explanation of what these numbers are, where they came from, or what they're going to get. Can I just have some explanation of what that \$1.7 million and, thereafter, \$1.2 million would actually be paying for? Is it buying a fire truck? Is it hiring staff? What is that doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for his question and his constant advocating for the Ingraham Trail. I want to make it very clear to the territory, as well, that Ingraham Trail is located outside of a municipality. It's a cabin built-up area designated now as a recreational area. It is not designated as a hamlet, charter community, municipality, so extending our services outside of the boundary, I'm not familiar with the agreement that they may have had with the city for the years to come. Now, the city has decided to discontinue that agreement for Ingraham Trail.

I want to also just comment and say that, throughout the territory, we do have built-up areas such as these throughout the territory and are looking at providing services to Ingraham Trail. I am very mindful of the time that it would take from Yellowknife into Ingraham Trail to fight a fire. I take all of that into consideration, as well, but just to get back to the Member's question about the funding that he had requested, the \$1.7 million, that was a number that was provided by the City of Yellowknife in, exactly, looking for staff and supports and training and equipment, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I think the unfortunate reality here is that the residents who built their houses and have lived out there for decades with fire services kind of expected them to continue. Now, the city and the GNWT are in some sort of fight over jurisdiction, and it seems the city wants \$1.7 million to accommodate. The loss is really to the people, to my constituents, while this kind of fight between governments occurs. However, I never viewed this as a \$1.2-million-annual problem. I thought the city was more in the hundred-thousand-dollar range, that we were going to get this to continue. It is one fire a year. Has the GNWT gone back to the city and made a lower offer? Perhaps we could start this engagement and this conversation at a much more reasonable figure.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, the department did go back to the City of Yellowknife to look at the reduced number and what it would cost for fire services. I also want to elaborate, as well, that we

did speak to the community of Dettah as they were interested in providing fire services, as well. However, I just really want to emphasize the distance. The distance, this is a cabin built-up area. I know there are residents at Ingraham Trail, but this is not a community. It is not a disagreement between a municipality and the GNWT. It's finding a solution, an adequate solution, and looking at who are we going to train, who is going to actually offer the services. If we do come to an agreement and if the government had said, "Okay. Here we are. We have money to fund the fire services," there is nobody who wants to provide that service right now. Looking at the City of Yellowknife, it's almost putting them under an obligation, saying this service is required. We are continuing those conversations with the City of Yellowknife, but we are in a really different scenario right now. MACA provides funding to the municipalities. We do not provide funding to cabin built-up areas.

MR. JOHNSON: This is stemming from the larger long-standing issues where the GNWT and federal government gave a bunch of people fee simple, they started allowing more and more leases, and they created a cabin built-up area, as the Minister refers to it. However, it is not designated as anything, and people on the trail pay taxes every year and receive no services. They live off grid. They do not receive power, water, or sewer, so it has fallen into this area where, the Minister is completely right, it's confusing who exactly is responsible for what.

However, one of the concerns I have is that the department is going out, and they are consulting that this \$1.2 million annually would have to be paid completely by the residents of the trail at a rate of \$4,000 a year, which would be higher than the average property taxes in Yellowknife. It will be higher than any other community pays in property taxes. It's a figure that has no basis in how any of our built-up areas work, designated or not. Is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs willing to pay for any part of an agreement that could be reached going forward?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Short answer: no. We are looking at a possibility and an agreement with Ingraham Trail and continue talks with the City of Yellowknife. We are going out there. We are talking to residents. We are making an effort. However, it is a built-up area; this is a cabin area. We have areas throughout the territory that -- what are we going to start doing? Are we going to be going out to each cabin lease, and are we going to be starting to fight those fires? Looking at this, Ingraham Trail, it's very unique. We are conducting conversations with the residents at Ingraham Trail, and we continue speaking with the City of Yellowknife. I appreciate the Member bringing this up, and I hope that we are able to come to a solution.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it was the department's position that at no point was the GNWT going to pay for any of this service, it would have been very helpful to know that in October because it completely changes the whole conversation if they had to approach the city and completely fund this with their own taxes. Currently, residents on the Ingraham Trail, they pay taxes every year. They receive zero services for those taxes. Is the Minister willing to take some of the taxes that residents pay and use that, those taxes that already exist, as a portion of any agreement that could be reached going forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is responsible for the assessment. We are not responsible for collecting the taxes. However, I just note: I want to let the Member know that the conversation that would have happened in October, November, December, this is the result of the conversation and looking at the \$1.7 million. That was not identified before Christmas, and now we have numbers. We are trying to work with the residents. We are getting out there. We are doing the assessments and trying to come together to find a solution. This is going to continue, conversation that is happening between my department and the residents of Ingraham Trail and also continuous conversation with the community of Dettah and with the City of Yellowknife, so there is a lot of effort that is being made to come up with a solution for Ingraham Trail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 701-19(2):

HOUSING COMMUNITY RESIDENCY POLICY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I have spoken numerous times in the House before about the community residency policy. That is a policy that demands that NWT residents live in an NWT community for varying times up to one year before they can add their names to the public housing wait list. Can the Minister of housing speak to the goal of this policy? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through this policy, we have to display fairness and

consistency throughout the territory. If we do not have this residency policy, we could have people throughout Canada coming into our territory and sitting on our wait list and having us not being able to properly and structurally, I want to say, allocate these units. We do have a strong and a long wait list, but the one-year policy that has been created for residency for the Northwest Territories is for the people of the Northwest Territories and newcomers coming into the territory, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I appreciate the Minister's reference to fairness. I think that that is a fair comment, and I think that fairness is important. I think that fairness needs to be extended to the residents of the Northwest Territories, where we really do struggle with housing and people want fair access to safe and secure housing. This policy does not only prevent people from the rest of Canada putting their names on housing wait lists. It prevents Northwest Territories residents from putting their names on wait lists, from other communities. I think that that's why I keep asking these questions, is because I think this policy really needs to be revamped.

I think of different people across even Canada. When we look to our history, there are people from the Sixties Scoop who were adopted out to other families and might be living in other regions of Canada and might want to return home. There are people living in Yellowknife who might want the opportunity to return to their birth community, as well, and people living in communities who might want to be able to move to Yellowknife. I think that we need to look at this. However, I am wondering if the Minister can speak to what issue the community residency policy was originally trying to address and what was the original purpose of it.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The policy is to address the housing needs in that specific community. Since being Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, I have had several enquiries coming forward. We had families fleeing domestic abuse who we have had to relocate, and with that, we were able to work with those communities and the local LHOs that had created bylaws to address those unique situations. Also, we have students who are returning back from school, back to their home communities, where we are able to hold their unit for them, being able to house them upon their return.

However, then, I also really want to stress that we need a residency policy throughout the Northwest Territories. We need to show fairness and consistency. If we did not have this policy, we would have people and the waiting list exaggerated to a point where we were not able to work with that strongly. I want to be able to just really display that

or really acknowledge that I do see that, where people are moving around throughout the territory, they have very unique, different situation, but we also have a wait list of people who are local, who are from the community, who have been on the wait list five, three, six months, it doesn't matter. We need to address the home community first.

MS. CLEVELAND: I appreciate what the Minister is saying about addressing the home community first and about making sure that people from the community have access to housing in that community. Sometimes, what happens is people end up living in other communities for one reason or another, and I think there are other ways that we can address this policy and make it achieve both of our ends. I am wondering if the Minister would be willing to look at community membership or land claim beneficiary membership in lieu of a community residency policy to ensure that even people who have moved away, who are still land claim beneficiaries of the region, are still able to be prioritized within the public housing wait list.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The policy has created, as I said, fairness. Public housing is available for everybody. Looking at the residency requirements, I don't want to create silos, and I don't want to create division amongst that waiting list and amongst decisions being made at the local community level. Looking at that, I just want to also elaborate that the Housing Corporation works strongly with Indigenous groups throughout the territory. We just announced a \$60 million co-investment fund that has been exhausted for the territory, and we do have Indigenous applications, people and groups who are coming forward wanting to address their wait lists and housing needs in their specific communities.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just as a final question today, I am wondering if the Housing Corporation has ever reviewed the unintended consequences of this policy. If yes, what have they found, and if not, why not and would they be willing to look into that? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, we have been speaking about this policy. Like I had said, I want to make sure that the policy is fair. We travel throughout the Northwest Territories. I see the wait lists myself, and I see the community residents. They are homeless, and they are travelling, and they are house to house. There's overcrowding. That is what I would like to address first. Then, when we have community members who are wanting to move back into the Northwest Territories, we need to work with that. Already, if

they are entering into one of our smaller communities, we already have a wait list that is significant. The need for housing, I hear you, is pretty much a crisis in the territory.

I just want to elaborate and speak about the co-investment fund. That was a strong relationship that we did have with the federal government to exhaust that co-investment fund when the expiry date for that was 2028, we were able to exhaust it in three years. That displays what a housing crisis we have in the Northwest Territories. It is significant. We need more money to put houses on the ground. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 702-19(2):
FLOODING SUPPORT FOR HAY RIVER

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hay River is preparing for spring breakup and possible flooding. It could be happening while we are sitting in May. Can the Minister of MACA confirm what supports the town of Hay River and residents can expect from her department during this breakup, if any supports at all? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The town of Hay River had experienced this just last spring. Municipal and Community Affairs did provide assistance in working with those residents and looking at the affected areas. I will follow up with the Member. I was briefed at my last briefing for the town of Hay River that they were working on a federal application for the disaster fund to work with those affected residents by the high water levels. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I think she misunderstood my question; it was what they are going to do for breakup this year. In the fall of last year, due to high water levels and high winds, businesses and residents experienced loss and damage to infrastructure and property with little support and little to no financial support from this government. Can we expect the same treatment, or are we going to show some compassion if the same thing happens during this breakup?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Just to comment on my reply, the application was supposed to be submitted to deal with the rising waters in Hay River, to deal with the residents that would be affected by the high water levels. MACA continues to support the community. We have just had a meeting with the Town of Hay River. I will follow up with the Member.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm if MACA will have any representatives in Hay River during breakup to ensure that decisions are timely and that support is there?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: My staff will provide support as we do have a regional office in Hay River, and we do have one in Fort Smith.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues that came up last year is that any residents who were relocated during breakup, I think most of them came to Yellowknife. We have Fort Smith with accommodations close by. I would like to see us utilize those services, as well. I like to keep things in the South Slave, if we can. I am hoping that the Minister will allow people to have an option of where they want to go if they are required to evacuate. If she could just comment on that, thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Municipal and Community Affairs works very closely with communities with their emergency management plan. If this has been identified, we will be working closely with the community. I have been given a briefing that we are going to be experiencing high water levels throughout the Northwest Territories, so we will be working closely with the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 703-19(2):
SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY LICENSE FOR
HUSKY OIL

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have some questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment on significant discovery licence for Husky Oil. There was supposed to be a notice issued under Section 18 of the Petroleum Resources Act when the Minister issues a new significant discovery licence. I can't see such a notice for this licence that might have replaced exploration licence EL494. It is also supposed to be published in the Gazette. I looked at the most recent for March; it's not there either, but there seems to be kind of a placeholder document on the ITI website that indicates that significant discovery licence 153 may have been issued on March 16th. Can the Minister confirm whether significant discovery licence 153 was issued to Husky Oil on March 16th? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Significant discovery licence 153 does cover a portion of the former EL494, which is for Husky Oil Operations, and that was issued on March 16th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It came about a week after I first raised the issue in the House. Can the Minister tell me whether there are any terms and conditions in that significant discovery licence, because it is not posted to the website, that require any work to be undertaken as part of that significant discovery licence or any rental fees?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Again, when the request is made, there is no discretion on the Minister to issue the licence. I did, in fact, what was required, which was to shall-issue the licence. That was what was done. As far as the rental fee structure, as previously noted, again, in this instance, the advice was received in the context of, again, a situation where I have no discretion to issue the licence. With respect to a rental fee structure, there was none in the original call for bids or exploration licence documents. As such, the advice I have received and that I have relied on is that we will not be putting any one particular new rental fee structure in on this particular licence.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for clarifying that. There are no rental fees required in this new significant discovery licence. She referenced how she couldn't do it back on March 9th, and I want to quote from Hansard: "There is not a fair opportunity at this stage to be imposing items that weren't there previously." Saying that, gee, we didn't ask for it or it wasn't asked for during the call for bids, so we couldn't include it now, well, Mr. Speaker, I actually went and did some digging. I found the call for bids, and I want to quote from this. I'm going to table the document, and I did provide it to the Minister ahead of time. There is one quote from the call for bids for this area, and it says as follows: "Rentals may be payable on lands included in a significant discovery licence."

There, we have it, Mr. Speaker. The call for bids that went out included this clause that said, "You might have to pay some rental fees." The Minister had an opportunity to carry this through from the exploration licence into the significant discovery licence, and she didn't do it. Why didn't the Minister include this rental fee in the significant discovery licence that was just issued?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Again, the issuance of the licence is non-discretionary, so there was no discretion to issue the licence. With respect to adding terms or conditions, under the new act, there are some provisions where there may be some additional conditions required, with

the agreement of the proponent, and that was not an approach that was decided to be used in this case. Again, this is a situation that will not be occurring in the future. This is one of the last, if not the last, occasions where a proponent that existed under the previous regime is being brought into the new regime. I sought the expert opinion of the department, which included them seeking legal opinions from the Department of Justice, so in part, what I think I'm hearing is that I should go back and get a second opinion or a third opinion or a different legal opinion. At this point, the opinions that we've received in this context, again, unique at this stage and unlikely to be repeated, were to proceed as we have, and that is what we've done.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. The difficulty is our government now is going to lose \$21 million in potential revenue because the Minister would not carry forward the rental fee from the exploration licence into the significant discovery licence. That's \$21 million that we could have collected on this that we just gave away. The Minister talks about how she got some kind of legal opinions that told her she couldn't do it, so I'd like to ask whether the Minister can share that legal opinion, even if it has to be shared on a confidential basis, with this side of the House. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I am not going to be in any position to share a confidential legal opinion. Typically, sharing one's legal opinion waives legal privilege over it, no matter what efforts one might make to say that it's confidential or otherwise. My understanding is that that is a fairly common position to take, and that's the position we'll be taking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 704-19(2): VISITS TO COMMUNITIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have one question. I would ask the Minister of Infrastructure if she agrees that it's important, especially for her department, to visit all the communities, to talk to businesses, to talk to residents, and find out what's going on. I would ask her if she would be willing to come to Hay River for more than an hour, spend a couple of days there, and go around and meet with some of the businesses in Hay River? I know that the ones that she did meet with previously were very appreciative, and I know there are a lot of them asking me when she's coming back. I'd like to be able to tell them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, on my way back from Fort Smith, I took the opportunity to drive Highway No. 5 to be able to have a look at the highway from Fort Smith to Hay River, and I was able to spend the night and fly out the next morning. Within that hour, I was able to spend time with the Member and his buddies there having breakfast, so I see where the Member is coming from in terms of going back to the community and being able to speak with some of his constituents. I will work with the Member to come up with dates to be able to come back to the community. I just came from there a couple of months ago. I spent a couple of days, and I spent some time with the Member, toured MTS, went and looked at some of the Power Corporation facilities. Yes, I will work with the Member to be able to figure out a time when I can go back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 29-19(2): VACANCY RATES IN HOUSING PROGRAMS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and relate to vacant housing units.

1. Can the Minister provide, as of March 31, 2021, the number of vacant housing units by program, by community; and
2. For each vacant unit, as of March 31, 2021, can the Minister state how long each has been vacant?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 25-19(2): MEDEVACS IN NUNAKPUT

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to Written Question 25-19(2) asked by the Member for Nunakput on March 10, 2021, regarding medevacs in Nunakput.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a breakdown of air ambulance transports, by community and calendar year, for the last four years. Please note that some numbers may be different than previously indicated as they have been updated to ensure appropriate patient outcome and transport outcomes were included. These totals do not include scheduled, non-emergency transports.

The Northwest Territories health and social service system does not report on specific event-related delays. An inter-facility patient movement transfer matrix guides the triage and prioritization of patient movement between facilities within the NWT. This matrix takes into consideration:

- Facility capacity issue: a transfer that is given preference depending on medical resources available at sending site;
- Deterioration risk: a transfer that is given preference as deferral or delay of treatment/intervention could have significant impact on patient's health; and,
- Weather considerations: a transfer that may require earlier intervention depending on upcoming weather systems.

In the Beaufort-Delta, the response time between confirmation that a medevac will be activated and medics arriving at the patient's side for transport varies depending on the final destination. It takes a median of four hours and 31 minutes to transport a patient to Edmonton; three hours and 39 minutes to transport a patient to Yellowknife; and two hours and 55 minutes to transport a patient to Inuvik Hospital, including the time it takes for the plane to arrive in the community. If there is a concern about medevac response times or the transport quality, the NWT Health and Social Services system has quality risk managers in each region who report issues and review quality assurance processes.

The air ambulance service provider has been contracted to provide coverage for the entire NWT. The provider has bases in Yellowknife and Inuvik. The contractor provides medics and planes to support patient transports. In addition to these daily operational resources, there is a contingency plan for additional resources to ensure critical transports are fulfilled when needed. To protect the privacy of our air ambulance providers, we are unable to release the information related to tail registration numbers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special

committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 374-19(2):
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING
\$250,000 (APRIL 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2020)

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Inter-activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1 to December 31, 2020)." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 375-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
509-19(2): MENTAL HEALTH

TABLED DOCUMENT 376-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
518-19(2): EHEALTH SYSTEM AND ONLINE
PATIENT PORTAL

TABLED DOCUMENT 377-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
590-19(2): MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS IN
SMALL COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 378-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
677-19(2): INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR SENIORS

TABLED DOCUMENT 379-19(2):
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BREAKDOWN
OF AIR AMBULANCE TRANSPORTS AS OF
MARCH 2021

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following five documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 509-19(2): Mental Health"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 518-19(2): eHealth System and Online Patient Portal"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 590-19(2): Mental Health Concerns in Small Communities"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 677-19(2): Independent Living for Seniors"; and, further to my return to written questions, "Health and Social Services Breakdown of Air Ambulance Transports as of March 2021." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 380-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 24: AN
ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 381-19(2):
2021-22 CORPORATE PLAN – NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HYDRO CORPORATION AND
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 382-19(2):
LETTER DATED MARCH 30, 2021 FROM
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HYDRO
CORPORATION AND NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION
PRESIDENT AND CEO TO MINISTER ARCHIE
REGARDING 2020-21 CAPITAL SPENDING
BUDGET

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: "Plain Language Summary for Bill 24: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act"; "2021-22 Corporate Plan – Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Northwest Territories Power Corporation"; and "Letter dated March 30, 2021, from Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Northwest Territories Power Corporation President and CEO to Minister Archie regarding 2020-21 Capital Spending Budget." Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 383-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 25: AN
ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Plain Language Summary for Bill 25: An Act to Amend the Education Act." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 384-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION 2021-22 CONSOLIDATED
OPERATING BUDGET

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Northwest Territories Housing Corporation 2021-22 Consolidated Operating Budget." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 385-19(2):
2010-2011 CALL FOR BIDS - CENTRAL
MACKENZIE VALLEY

TABLED DOCUMENT 386-19(2):
2010-2011 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS - CENTRAL
MACKENZIE VALLEY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I am very pleased to table two documents. The first one, "2010-2011 Call for Nominations - Central Mackenzie Valley" dated December 21, 2010. The second document, "2010-2011 Call for Bids - Central Mackenzie Valley" dated February 19, 2011. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 387-19(2):
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR THE
PERIOD OCTOBER 15, 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2,
2021

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances, and Expenses Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the "Summary of Members' Absences for the Period October 15, 2020 to February 2, 2021." Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Motions

MOTION 32-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
MAY 27, 2021,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 27, 2021;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 27, 2021, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Let's take a quick break for the other motion. Motions. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 33-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE HUMAN
RIGHTS ADJUDICATION PANEL,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 48(1) of the Human Rights Act provides for the establishment of an adjudication panel composed of at least three persons, appointed by the Commissioner on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Section 48(4) of the Human Rights Act provides that the members of the panel hold office, during good behaviour, for a term of four years, with the exception of the first members appointed;

AND WHEREAS there are currently three vacancies of the adjudication panel;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management is tasked with recommending individuals to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation to the Commissioner;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Mr. Sheldon Toner of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories be recommended to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for appointment as a member of the Human Rights Adjudication Panel, effective immediately for a term of four years;

AND FURTHER, that Lou Sebert of Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, and Jay Sengupta of Hamilton, Ontario, be recommended to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for appointment as members of the Human Rights Adjudication Panel, effective immediately for a term of four years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the 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. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent bills? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret Thom):

[Translation] It is good to see you again and all of my people. We're on the First Nations land. We all are very thankful for that. [Translation ends]

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. First of all, I'd like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories and the sacred lands of the Chief Drygeese and the Yellowknives First Nation, and we are honoured and blessed to be working on their traditional land, keeping in mind that we honour that. Mahsi.

It is great to see you all and a long time, and I am honoured to be in this great House to address our government. We find ourselves 12 months into a worldwide public health crisis with the COVID-19 virus, since last March the 11th when the Pandemic was declared. There is now a vaccine to fight it, which will save countless lives if we all do our part to get vaccinated and continue to be vigilant with the public health recommendations and protocols.

My husband and I have both received the first and second doses of the vaccine, so we encourage our family and friends to get vaccinated, as well. I, as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, was the first in our community of Fort Providence, followed by the First Nation chief, hamlet mayor, Member of Parliament, and Metis representative to receive the first dose of the vaccine on January 18, 2021. I was anxious to receive the vaccine not only for my own health and peace of mind but to be a role model to some reluctant community members, to show them that it is okay and safe to get this vaccine. Never in my life was I so eager and grateful to get a needle in my arm.

We need to continue to be extremely diligent in taking all public health precautions set out by our Chief Public Health Officer for the NWT, Dr. Kami Kandola, and her dedicated staff. The public health precautions and getting vaccinated will ensure the safety of our health, the health of our families, our friends, and neighbours across our territory. We must be aware, accepting, and vigilant about how serious this pandemic is and of its very severe and dangerous potential consequences to our people and to our economy. Not many people are aware

that several retired northern nurses have returned to work and are working extra long hours to help with the public vaccination clinics across our territory. Their dedication to the profession of nursing and to their communities is so greatly appreciated. Mahsi cho.

I want to thank all the government departments and, in particular, the Department of Health and Social Services for all of the research, preparation, and updated information provided to us on a regular basis to keep us all informed so that we will make sound decisions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Tough decisions continue to be made so that we can all be safe and healthy. Mahsi cho.

Yes, the time will come when we can gather, hug, celebrate, and dance again. Spring is in the air. As we welcome the sunshine, longer daylight hours, and activities outside of our homes within our respective social bubbles, we must take extreme safety precautions as we travel and play on this great land of ours. Having said that, know that you all need a well-deserved break, to breathe and to ground yourselves. May you be blessed with safe travels to your homes, families, communities in your ridings, and enjoy a happy, blessed Easter season with your loved ones.

Assent to Bills

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation 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
- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act
- Bill 26, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021
- Bill 27, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021
- Bill 28, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2021-2022

Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Quana.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, on behalf of this House, I thank the Commissioner, the honourable Margaret M. Thom, for being here today. It is

always a pleasure to have her in the Chamber. I also thank our interpreters for their hard work and dedication throughout this sitting. It is through their hard work that we are able to do our part to use, preserve, and revitalize our languages.

Colleagues, I know that this was a long sitting, and I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your hard work and professionalism. Although you didn't always see eye to eye, you we have been able to work together respectfully and collaboratively for the benefit of our residents and our territory. Members, this is consensus government in action. Mahsi.

We would not be able to complete our work without the contractors and staff of the Legislative Assembly, as well as staff throughout the government. Their efforts enable us to be successful in our work, and I want to thank this time to thank them all for their contributions.

Colleagues, the cold days of winter are behind us. As we head into spring, our days are getting warmer and longer. Many of us and many of our constituents will be heading out on the land to participate in our spring hunts. If you will be out on the land, I encourage you to be safe, be sober, and to harvest respectfully.

Finally, I want to remind all residents to continue to be vigilant in terms of the ongoing situation with COVID-19. As a territory, we have been very fortunate. I encourage all Members and residents to continue their diligent efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. Thank you, colleagues. Safe travels home. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):
Orders of the day for Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Question 698-19(2), Medevac Services
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions

10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Before we leave, I would just like to wish you all a happy Easter and safe travels home once again. Mahsi. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

