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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, June 1, 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. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Finance.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 163-19(2):
BUILDING CAPACITY WITH INDIGENOUS
GOVERNMENTS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to strengthening relationships with governments. We are also committed to providing opportunities to create a more diverse, inclusive, and representative public service.

Today, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Finance is launching Building Capacity with Indigenous Governments, a new program to support up to ten two-way secondment arrangements between the GNWT and Indigenous governments each year.

The program will support the secondment of employees between governments for immersive experiences about how our respective governments operate.

Mr. Speaker, this program was developed collaboratively. Representatives from the Department of Finance worked with officials from Indigenous governments over a series of engagement sessions to learn more about the unique needs of their organizations, including human resources.

[English translation not available]

At its full potential, the program will provide opportunities for more direct exchanges of ideas, deepen relationships, and build greater trust and understanding as partners.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to building on our relationships with Indigenous governments and learning from their experiences as this program

progresses. I would like to express my gratitude for the collaboration in developing this program and look forward to reporting on the success of this program as it advances. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 164-19(2):
NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK AND
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESSIBILITY
AND INCLUSION AWARDS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many NWT residents are living with some form of disability. They are our neighbors, co-workers, family members, leaders, and friends. We are grateful for the contributions that persons with disabilities make in the territory. For this reason, we continue to advance work to ensure all residents are able to participate fully in all communities, without barriers.

National AccessAbility Week runs until June 5th this year. It is the week where we celebrate the contributions of persons with disabilities and recognize the important work being done to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion in all communities.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme in the NWT is Inclusion and AccessAbility; Nothing About Us Without Us!

What does this mean for us as a territory or as individuals? It means it is the responsibility of each of us to work with, and include people who have disabilities, to ensure equal access to all the rights and freedoms each member of our society enjoys.

Working in partnership with multiple GNWT departments, the Department of Health and Social Services is currently fulfilling the objectives outlined in the NWT Disability Strategic Framework. The shared vision is to increase financial security and reduce poverty; to build awareness and knowledge through education and training; to improve transition planning and options; to encourage universal design and living options, and to improve access to and the quality of caregiver supports.

This is a significant undertaking, Mr. Speaker, and one that requires thoughtful insight into how best to create inclusiveness within the public realm, while also providing individual supports that assist in creating a foundation for success for persons with disabilities. For that reason, we just put out a call to hear directly from people with lived experience by creating an NWT Supported Living Review Advisory Group.

This group will be comprised of six to ten members of the public who either have a disability or who is the caregiver of a person with a disability. It will give NWT residents a voice to provide knowledge and advice during the review of our Supported Living services for persons with disabilities. This is an important step toward the government embracing the “nothing about us without us” approach that is so important to residents.

Mr. Speaker, while we as a government continue to work hard to achieve accessibility for all NWT residents, we also rely on others to provide assistance for persons with disabilities.

Every year, we have an award ceremony to recognize NWT individuals and organizations who contribute to making the lives of persons with disabilities more accessible and inclusive. At this year’s Persons with Disabilities Accessibility and Inclusion Awards event, I will present awards as the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, along with representatives from the NWT Human Rights Commission and the NWT Disabilities Council.

Due to COVID restrictions, this event is being presented in the form of a video which will be made available on June 4th on the Department of Health and Social Services website, as well as on social media.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate this year’s award recipients.

Laurie McLean of Yellowknife is the recipient of the Minister’s award for Accessibility and Inclusion. Samantha Morandin of Yellowknife is the recipient of the NWT Disabilities Council Community Champion Award. And the Zhati Koe Friendship Centre in Fort Providence is the recipient of the Human Rights Commission Accessibility Award.

These individuals are all deserving recipients. They have shown a true inclusive community spirit and their impactful work removes barriers for persons with disabilities in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we all have roles to play in promoting inclusion and accessibility for every member of society and the government will continue to take meaningful steps toward a vision of equity,

accessibility, and participation for persons with disabilities in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 165-19(2):
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS YOUTH
INITIATIVES

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, the youth of today are the strong, future leaders of tomorrow. Through initiatives like the NWT Youth Ambassador program, youth are provided opportunities to develop life and job skills while building the confidence to deal with complex issues.

I am pleased to inform the House today that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is now accepting applications for the 2021-2022 NWT Youth Ambassador Program – Virtual Edition for youth ages 16 to 22.

The NWT Youth Ambassador Program is being offered virtually for the first time to fill the gap that the cancellation of major games events has created. By offering the NWT Youth Ambassador Program virtually, MACA is hoping to reach a broader group of youth and still provide valuable learning experiences while being safe and eliminating travel.

Mr. Speaker, elements of the program include online learning modules that focus on leadership and life skills. These modules include: Goal Setting; Healthy Eating and Nutrition; Resume Building with the NWT Career Centres; Learning Leadership Skills with Rec North; and Getting to Know Your Community with Rec North. In addition the program includes facilitated volunteer projects within each participant’s home community, and the program is open to youth from all communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs also has additional programs that can assist with youth initiatives whether they are led by youth or youth supporting organizations.

I would like to highlight a few Youth Corp Projects MACA is supporting this summer. Organizations in the Deh Cho, Sahtu, North Slave, and South Slave will be participating in wilderness canoe trips designed for youth to explore and develop leadership skills in a safe environment. These trips are following the successful pilot project in the Deh Cho, where it is provided for youth with a strong foundation in wilderness and canoeing safety and skills for on-the-land trips.

FOXY/SMASH are a new and supported staple for youth programming across the Northwest Territories. Their Peer Leader Retreats use visual

arts, traditional beading, traditional ceremonies, photography, digital storytelling, Northern games, and performing arts to educate and facilitate discussion about sexual and mental health, healthy relationships, and positive choices through a harm reduction through a trauma-informed lens.

Northern Youth Leadership works to empower and inspire a generation of courageous leaders. Their camps have many positive outcomes including inspiring confidence, supporting youth to engage in positive risk-taking, cultivating independence, building emotional resilience, developing leadership skills, promoting environmental stewardship, and instilling healthy relationship and lifestyle behaviors. They are currently accepting applications for their summer camps.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage youth and youth organizations to reach out to any Municipal and Community Affairs Office for more information on the opportunities available. Together we can lift youth up and create opportunities for our future leaders. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 166-19(2):
SUMMER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION SEASON

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our territorial economy has suffered the impact of COVID-19 like every other jurisdiction in the country. Bouncing back stronger means investing in areas that provide for the immediate participation of our communities and maximizing benefits for our residents. Investments and improvements in transportation infrastructure is one of the areas we know can have positive impacts on our economy. These investments connect our communities and ensure access to essential goods and services.

Regular maintenance of the Northwest Territories highway system creates the safest possible driving conditions, increases our territory's resiliency to climate change, and creates employment and training opportunities for residents.

Mr. Speaker, we can expect another busy construction season this summer. In fact, a total of \$110 million in improvements will be made to our highway systems this year.

In the South Slave Region, rehabilitation work is planned for Highway No. 1 on 18 kilometers of highway. This work will include highway widening, replacing culverts and replacing chip seal. This will be part of a multi-year project, with work expected to be completed by September 2023.

On Highway No. 5, work is currently underway to repair chip seal surface on a 6-kilometer section of the highway, which will be followed by a granular crushing program this summer.

In the North Slave, Mr. Speaker, crews have already resumed work on the Tlicho Highway. Construction is on schedule to be completed this fall - with 52 kilometers left to be surfaced, one last bridge to be completed. This two-lane gravel highway will provide year-round access from Northwest Territories Highway No. 3 to the community access road to Whati. This year 168 kilometers of Highway No. 3 will be chip sealed and two kilometers of rehabilitation work will take place. This work will include right-of-way clearing, roadway strengthening, culvert replacement, and line painting, and is to be expected to be completed this fall. Residents will see construction zone signs along the highway where crews will be resurfacing the road, stockpiling materials, and conducting asphalt and chip seal repairs.

On Highway No. 4, the Ingraham Trail, roughly 5 kilometers will be rehabilitated. Work will include repair dips, widening the embankment, replacing culverts and chip sealing.

On Highway No. 6, the Fort Resolution Highway, chip sealing will be carried out roughly 20 kilometers.

In the Deh Cho Region, rehabilitation work will take place this summer on Highway No. 7, the Liard Highway. Crews will focus on widening the embankment and replacing culverts. This work is expected to be completed in September 2023.

Mr. Speaker, in our area, in the Beaufort Delta Region, some construction will take place on Highway No. 8, the Dempster Highway. The rehabilitation work including embankment, widening, and brush clearing will take place along three to four kilometers along the highway. Additionally, the marine bypass highway widening will also take place along the 3-kilometer highway.

As temperatures rise and construction season begins, I would like to thank dozens of dedicated workers who are maintaining and improving our highways every day. Your work is essential in the North. I would also like to remind drivers to watch for highway crews, slow down in construction zones and obey signs. I want all our Infrastructure employees and our contractor employees to return home safe to their families.

Mr. Speaker, the government will continue to work closely with our public and private sector so we can continue to build a transportation network that meets the current needs of our citizens and the

needs of generations to come. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Member's Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUNDING OF THE HAY RIVER SKI CLUB

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Ski Club has been receiving financial support from the Hay River lottery terminals for the past 30 years. For the last five years, the Hay River Ski Club's share has been \$33,655 annually. This funding is vital to the club. The maintenance and operation of the current facility is the sole financial responsibility of the Hay River Ski Club, which is operated entirely by a group of volunteers using proceeds from the lottery fund.

Mr. Speaker, this funding came through the Legacy Retailer Grant Program Agreement that was in place with NWT Sport and Recreation Council from 2016 to 2021. What started as a change to address a potential tax liability issue in 2014 and now, with government involvement, has caused a situation where the club will lose 100 percent of their operating grant that has been provided through lottery proceeds collected in Hay River. With this agreement now expiring and, going forward, if the Hay River Ski Club is expected to survive they will require continued and ongoing funding.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the dedicated executive, board of directors, and volunteers, they were able to successfully host many different events, including learn to ski lessons, waxing clinics, social ski and snowshoeing, educational programs, Pat Bobinski memorial ski races, Biathlon Polar Cup, Arctic Winter Games trials and Arctic Winter Games events.

Mr. Speaker, the group of volunteers were able to reopen all of their trail system for the first time in several years. This included the Brendan Green Olympic Trail. Yes, the Hay River Ski Club helped develop an Olympian, something that must not be lost in all this. This system includes 15 kilometers of groomed trails of which seven are lit and opened at the end of October to mid-April. This past winter, the Hay River Ski Club had approximately 260 members on top of youth programs in biathlon, Jackrabbits, and Ski Bunnies.

There has been a significant growth in membership, which includes many youth and families. The GNWT promotes a healthy lifestyle for children and NWT residents. The Hay River Ski Club, on a

limited budget, which may now disappear, is trying to support that ideal.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government would be remiss not to support an opportunity to promote sports and healthy lifestyles, of not only Hay River youth and residents, but those residents from around the NWT who continue to benefit from trails and programs managed by a volunteer board and workers of the Hay River Ski Club.

Mr. Speaker, if this government truly wants to support the mental and physical well-being of our youth, then it is important we find the funds to support the Hay River Ski Club this year and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS WITH THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Fire Marshal, where dreams go to die. Whether you or the GNWT's building a health centre for your patients in Norman Wells or you're the North Slave Correctional Centre who built a beautiful healing room that the fire marshal won't let them use or you're an Indigenous government trying to open a remote lodge in your newly established protected area or you're simply a private business trying to sink your hard-capital to retrofit a building up to code, the Office of the Fire Marshal is sure to make your life difficult, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are the only jurisdiction in Canada without a Building Standards Act. And after decades of MACA reviewing the Fire Prevention Act, I'm not confident we're going to end up with a Building Standards Act. But in the interim, Mr. Speaker, there are some things we can do to improve the Office of the Fire Marshal. I understand that code compliance has to be arm's length. We need experts to make decisions on the National Building Code. They need discretion when to apply the code to more stringent standards or to make exceptions for the old decrepitating infrastructure we have in the North and issue occupancy permits. But that discretion does not mean the process has to be unpredictable and lack transparency.

Mr. Speaker, there are things the Minister can do to tomorrow to make sure the GNWT stops taking

itself to court. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, customer service standards for the Office of the Fire Marshal to make sure they respond to their emails on a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, previously, the Office of the Fire Marshal had a number of bulletins on the different interpretations of the National Building Code that they will take. Not only did they stop issuing bulletins, they removed all the old bulletins. Jurisdictions across Canada tell you the different interpretations they will take of the National Building Code. Many have annotated National Building Codes which are great and excited to have documents to work with that provide everyone in the process predictability.

Mr. Speaker, for years people have been asking for an appeal mechanism to an independent tribunal. Right now, those Ministers, if made at a lower level, go to the Office of the Fire Marshal or the Minister. We need an independent panel of experts to review National Building Code things.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Fire Marshal, for whatever reason, does not like to work in draft construction documents, yet this is good enough for the architects, the contractors, the gas inspectors, the building inspectors, who are all involved in project management from the start. But it's too much to ask the Office of the Fire Marshal to look at a fire evacuation plan until the building is already standing.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister about what we can do to get the Office of the Fire Marshal to serve the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT SMITH EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, Fort Smith is home to the oldest school infrastructure in the NWT. Both Joseph Burr Tyrrell elementary and the PWK high school are each over 60 years old. JBT was built in 1958 and PWK was built in 1956, making them 63 and 65 years old respectively.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with various community members, including residential school survivors, elders, teachers, parents, and students about the condition and health of JBT and of PWK high school. Overall, the sentiment is that both schools are quite old and require constant maintenance to address routine issues such as ventilation, mold, and asbestos, and even a yearly insect pest problem for one school.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I acquired a document not long ago titled "NWT Schools Capital Needs Assessment Summary", dated April 22, 2003. It lists all schools in the South Slave Region, their construction year, their last year of major renovations, and the year each building should be reviewed to determine if further renovations are worthwhile or if a replacement building will be necessary.

In addition, one notable fact about both of these schools is that at one time for many years, they were both used as an Indian residential school. JBT served both Grandin College and Grandin Hall students of that residential school. This facility was operated by the Roman Catholic church. When Grandin College closed, the government transitioned one of the Grandin College resident buildings into the PWK High School.

Mr. Speaker, according to information from Historica Canada, there are only nine residential school buildings that remain standing in Canada, and Fort Smith is home to two of them, and both are still in active use. This is a unique situation, especially since both buildings have continued to operate as modern schools for our community. This presents a number of challenges. Besides the ongoing maintenance issues and increasing age for both buildings, there is obviously the historical legacy of residential school that still lingers as well.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker, numerous people have told me over the years that it can be hard sometimes to enter or even go in these buildings because it is a constant reminder, living reminder, of the personal and intergenerational trauma from residential schools. Educators have tried their best to make JBT and PWK as welcoming as they can but no matter how hard they try, they can never change the feeling and the trauma that is associated with these buildings.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I am asking our government to help Fort Smith construct two new schools, help Fort Smith turn the page and end the chapter of this historical legacy that we see and carry every day. Our children deserve it. Our community deserves it. I will have questions for the Minister of Education later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ARCTIC COUNCIL

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am bringing up Arctic Council. A few weeks ago, the Arctic Council passed the torch, I guess, from Iceland to Russia. It was planned rotation each country spends two years to chair before passing it along. But what makes it concerning that is Russia's increasing aggressive towards its northern neighbours. The Russian foreign minister was quoted, Mr. Speaker, as saying that all resources under the Arctic belongs to Russia. They've claimed the entire Arctic sea bed.

Russia has been investing heavily in the Arctic, both in industrial military facilities and backup to back up its claim. They've also been clamping down on their Indigenous people. Some Indigenous leaders have been living in exile. Other Indigenous organizations have declared foreign agents, Mr. Speaker, in their own land. That's not right.

This government now is responsible for chairing the Arctic Council, the forum meant to our vote, cooperation, coordination, interaction among the Arctic states and Arctic Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, my region is the front lines of the Arctic in this conflict. Canada has to step up, Mr. Speaker. Our economy has, for a long time, been up and down with the oil and gas industry, since the '80s -- '70s, '80s, '90s, which Canada is putting a ban on our offshore, and I'm hoping that gets lifted so the oil and gas development, we could start working towards it with Indigenous governments to start extracting our -- doing something in trying to get our Arctic oil and gas into market. Our own resources, offshore resources, are going to the Russians.

Mr. Speaker, we have to invest. Our government has to take the lead on this. Getting Canada to invest into the North on the Western Arctic port, invest in the Arctic heavily.

Mr. Speaker, we did that investment, investing in our people, investing in for what we have as our natural resources, as oil and gas, we sure wouldn't be going to Ottawa looking for handouts. We'd be able to take care of ourselves. So, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EVALUATION OF ENERGY INVESTMENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Monsieur le President. We don't have to look far to see the mounting impacts

to climate change. Extreme events such as high water levels, sea ice disappearing at unprecedented rates and new species arriving in the NWT, like magpies and cougars, are all signs of the need to change the way we use energy. The latest modelling shows that to prevent the worst climate effects, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

It's not clear how our government is evaluating our investments in energy projects. The Social Environmental Justice Organizational Alternatives North recently released a study: "Evaluating NWT's Renewable Energy Technologies". The report asks the three central questions for evaluating energy projects and emission reductions. Which source of emissions should we act to cut first? Well, greenhouse gas emissions from electricity production get a lot of airtime. This source is only five percent of NWT emissions. Adding in community-based heating and transportation emissions still only totals 25 percent of our emissions.

The biggest source of NWT emissions is resource extraction and transportation outside of communities, accounting for 75 percent of total emissions. That's where we may need to start.

What technologies to select? We can't be banking on technologies of tomorrow or projects without funding that will take years to construct, if ever. The crisis today is to avert an emergency tomorrow. We need technologies and options that are ready to go now, such as reasonable diesel and biomass.

How do we choose where to get the biggest impact for the dollars spent? We must evaluate the basis of lifecycle cost per ton of emissions saved. Each stage in the introduction use and disposal of a technology comes with a cost. Options that use less funding to achieve greater lifecycle reductions are where to put our money. I'll have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure on how our government is evaluating energy investments and emission reductions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DOULA SERVICES AND THE NORTHERN
BIRTHWORK COLLECTIVE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past budget session, regular Members negotiated \$600,000 to implement phase 2 of the NWT Midwifery Program. While the GNWT works to expand safe options for community-based birth, it's important that this government also consider how to expand culturally-safe

trauma-informed family supports. Healing our territory and supporting the health and safety of Northerners starts before a baby is born, and for some, it starts with a doula.

A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support through significant reproductive experiences, like childbirth, miscarriage, induced abortion, or stillbirth. In their most common capacity, they're a source of calm support, information, advocacy to the parent during, before, and after birth.

Mr. Speaker, in the NWT, many Northerners still leave their home communities to give birth. This creates a break in consistent care and takes people outside of culture, tradition, and support networks for childbirth, potentially amplifying the trauma carried by many Northerners. In June 2020, NWT Birth Work Collective acknowledged the potential harm of the health care system to queer and racialized people. The collective formed a plan to support the power of culturally-safe and trauma-informed birth in the NWT. Today is a focus on training and creating space for Indigenous doulas in all NWT communities. But a doula isn't exclusive to the birthing process. In the NWT, where almost 100 percent of children in the care of Child and Family Services are Indigenous, doulas serve as a tool for prevention right from the start. Trusting the same system that apprehends children to offer culturally safe healthcare and support is a big ask, Mr. Speaker.

Today, a handful of NWT communities have doula services. And to expand the NWT's doula network, this service needs the support, recognition, and value of the GNWT. Health supports and advocacy cannot be a service reserved for those with disposable income.

The First Nations Authority in BC, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and the BC Ministry of Health currently work together to provide \$1,000 grants for doula services for Indigenous families living in BC.

Mr. Speaker, it crucial this government continues to increase healing spaces for Northerners and tools that help keep families together. Doulas connect people, tradition, information, power, and safety. Supporting doula acknowledges our history by supporting independent safe spaces for NWT families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO SPRING FLOODING

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday I spoke about risk aversion and the lack of planning that seems to be the hallmark of this Cabinet. Nothing speaks more to this than the flooding situation in the Deh Cho. As early as November, we were told this would be another exceptional year for water levels - in November. But what I have seen over the last few weeks shows that while people may have been informed, I'm not sure anyone did anything about it.

Were emergency response plans pulled from the shelves, dusted off, reviewed and updated? Was training provided to community employees on their roles and responsibilities? Were municipalities contacted and their duties clearly explained to them? From what I've read on social media and heard from those contacting me, I think the answer to all my questions is "no".

It's my understanding that the plan was to bring everyone to Yellowknife and put them up in hotels, however the outbreak made that impossible. So I have to ask what was Plan B? We always knew there was a possibility of an imminent outbreak in the NWT - it's this Cabinet's excuse for everything - so why did this not come up when plans were made for evacuation.

To me, the easiest solution, even more so than bringing people to the capital in the first place, was to have brought in one of the multitude of camp facilities that many northern businesses could have provided.

As water levels rose to historic highs and the Mackenzie River broke, regular Members watched while community members themselves, clearly impacted by what was happening around them, struggled to organize in order to house and feed each other as temperatures continued to drop below freezing overnight. This disorganization continues today as we moved out of emergency response in this region into the recovery phase. With only one approved assessor, I question how this government is going to be able to help our people in a timely manner.

The Q&A provided by MACA states that residents can apply for the Disaster Assistance Program. This means it will take three to four weeks just to assess the initial scope of damages. Residents will be expected to pay for costs upfront and how long will they wait after for reimbursement? I know that I couldn't afford to pay for major repairs on my home upfront, and I question how many others could either.

Mr. Speaker I have many questions for this government on the relief program as well as the flood response. Where were the Army and the Rangers? How is Cabinet getting money into the hands of victims now - not in six months or a year? What does this mean for our housing plans and stock? Are we thinking of relocating critical infrastructure out of the floodplains? Where are we at with federal relief funding.

While I have a multitude of questions, I won't be holding my breath waiting a clear, concise answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS WITH HEALTH CENTRES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I brought up health centre concerns numerous times in emails, in Assembly meetings, and on the floor of the House. Mind you, these were all serious concerns having to do with misdiagnosis of ailments which most times were serious in nature with patients medevaced out to Yellowknife or Edmonton, many concerns with misdiagnosis of ailments and patients receiving wrong medications or placebos to tide them over, many instances of unprofessional conduct and concerns with confidentiality and patient records. Not many people would know of these issues at health centres unless you are a patient or have relatives or friends who have been there for whatever medical reason.

Everything looks fine from the outside. But for most people that set foot in the health centre, it could be a traumatizing visit, not only to find out a serious medical condition but to find out there is no compassion. It's like, why are you here? This is unbelievable treatment of our people who have gone through so much racism not only in life but also in our healthcare systems and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have found through my personal experience visiting the health centre and hearing so many complaints that health ministers, health department heads, don't want to hear nor do anything to assist the communities in addressing their concerns and complaints. I have brought forward many times the need to do annual evaluations of health centres which would include evaluations of staff, evaluations of diagnostics and medications administered, the availability of programs and services, especially for diabetics.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is in charge of running her ship. So I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACTS OF COVID-19 AND EMERGING WISELY

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the news of the soon-to-be-released updated NWT's Emerging Wisely plan, I am hoping to see clear measures that we need to meet to reopen. For example, vaccination rates to be reached with an actual number to move into the next phase by a certain date, kind of like Alberta and BC just released. This may assist in those who are all for getting the vaccine but just have not made it a priority or some are feeling it's no rush as nothing much will change as nothing much has changed in the past 12 months. I would like a plan for residents to travel between each territory even with a vaccination verification which residents can carry their own record of proof.

As well, we've all mentioned that it's been a tough 14 months and there has been an increase of mental health issues and the need of increased support for those who may have never needed it before. There's also been an increase of alcohol use and I have recently seen an uptake in a report Canada's uptake in marijuana. Is it because it's legal and people are just getting more comfortable with it or is it because it's just a way to cope? Like I said, it's been a long 14 months, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that during a public health emergency, as we heard it in this House before, that the Chief Public Health Officer is handed over the power. But, Mr. Speaker, it's up to the Minister as per the act to extend that power. As per the act, the Minister, on recommendation of the Chief Public Health Officer, may, by order, extend a declaration of a state of public health emergency of a period not exceeding 14 days if the Minister is satisfied that (a) a public health emergency continues to exist, (b) the extension is required to protect the public health.

Mr. Speaker, what information is the CPHO providing the Minister to continue to extend this public health emergency so that we in the Northwest Territories can also be aware of all the risks that still remain? I would like to be able to know so I, too, can understand, and I'm sure that the rest of the residents of the Northwest Territories, after 14 months, would like to know in plain language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FORT SIMPSON FLOOD RESPONSE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday May 8th, as I was sitting in my living room, we heard the siren that we did not want to hear. It was the siren to advise residents it was time to evacuate the island as the water level had reached the 15-meter mark. At this point in time, the community called a local state of emergency and kicked in the plan. As residents started leaving the island, the fire department and volunteers started going door to door to see who was going to leave and who was going to stay.

Mr. Speaker, we saw more than 400 residents pack up their necessities and move to the mainland. We were fortunate that the residents of the long-term care facility and home care were moved off the island earlier. The long-term care residents and four staff were evacuated to Norman Wells and home care residents were moved to a B&B on the mainland before the siren went. Some of the evacuees were flown to Fort Smith, almost 700 kilometers away, because alternative places in Hay River and Yellowknife were not available. These evacuees ended up staying at the town recreation centre and later moved to the college housing. The Town of Fort Smith was outstanding and did a great job hosting all the evacuees. I would like to thank them for opening their homes and being amazing hosts. A week later, we moved people to evacuate other people to Hay River and they got the same treatment. Others ended up staying at Tent City that the village set up, others camped at friends' and family's yards or stayed within their own homes. It was amazing to see how the community pulled together and helped each other.

On Sunday, the mayor and the EMO team had the EOC set up at the town garage. This is where the food, water, donations, and supplies were available for the people that remained. On Monday, the first load of donated food, water and supplies arrived. I witnessed volunteers and staff work to get these things organized and ready for residents. I have attached a list of volunteers, staff, and businesses to this statement which I would like to deem as read. I realize I may have missed some people and business and for that I apologize. All the help offered was greatly appreciated. Like the old saying goes, many hands make light work.

On Thursday, we felt the water was going down. Unfortunately, like Jean Marie River, it was short-lived as we seen the water raise to levels we had not see on Friday. It was worse than the 1963 flood. We saw at least 40 percent of the island under water. However, in saying this, the community was able to get through the flood and now we are in the recovery stage and this is where it's going to take some time. Residents have many

questions and are looking to us for answers and support during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to say thank you to all the tremendous outpouring of help, assistance, kindness, sacrifice that was shown to us from Northerners and Southerners alike during this difficult time. In a future statement, I am going to try and thank them.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the village leadership, their staff, volunteers, and the regional EMO team on the work they have done. You are all heroes in my book. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome those with us today from the media. It's good to have an audience for once.

Reports of committees on the review of bills.
Reports of standing and special committees.
Member for Thebatcha.

**Reports of Standing and Special
Committees**

COMMITTEE REPORT 14-19(2):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-2020
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INFORMATION AND
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on the review of the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and recommends to the House.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Information Privacy Commissioner.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The committee normally reviews the Commissioner's report and then makes recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. This year's report contained no recommendations on the effectiveness on the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the committee's consideration.

The Committee thanks Mrs. Keenan-Bengts for her long service as Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Mrs. Keenan-Bengts served in this position from 1997 until 2020 and prepared the 2019-2020 annual report. The committee welcomes

Mr. Andrew Fox, who was appointed on November 23rd, 2020, as the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Committee members look forward to working with Mr. Fox in his new role.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION TO RECEIVE
COMMITTEE REPORT 14-19(2) AND MOVE INTO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Committee Report 14-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be received and adopted by this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Motions and order to the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Member for Thebacha.

COMMITTEE REPORT 15-19(2):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE AUDITOR
GENERAL'S 2020 AUDIT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on the review of the 2020 report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education and commends it to the House.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2020 audit of early childhood to Grade 12 education in the Northwest Territories.

Introduction

The Auditor General of Canada is also the auditor for the Government of the Northwest Territories as set out in the federal Northwest Territories Act.

The AG is a statutory officer of the Legislative Assembly. This means their responsibilities are set out in legislation. The Office of the Auditor General operates independently from the Government of the Northwest Territories. The OAG conducts an annual performance audit of one of the

government's departments, boards, or agencies. A performance audit looks at how well a department has met its own policies and legislation while delivering a particular program or service. These audits are paid for by the federal government and the subject is chosen by the OAG. This ensures the OAG's independence.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviews the reports of all statutory officers. When the committee reviews a compliance audit report, it holds a public hearing with representatives of the OAG who explain their audit findings. Representatives of the audited department also attend and explain their response to the audit. The committee's main focus is how the department has responded to the audit findings and how it intends to address problems identified in the audit report. The Speaker tables the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly 2020.

Audit of the early childhood to Grade 12 education in the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment on February 6th, 2020. Normally the committee tries to hold its review as soon as possible after the OAG's report is tabled; however, like many things, this review is delayed due to COVID-19.

The committee held its review remotely on November 6, 2020. This is the Committee's report on that review.

Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements for their appearance before the committee, Members thank Auditor General Karen Hogan, Principal Glen Wheeler and Director Maria Pooley, from the OAG. The committee also thanks Deputy Minister Rita Mueller, Assistant Deputy Ministers John MacDonald and Sam Shannon, and Director Katy Pollock from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for their appearance before the Committee.

I will now turn the report over to MLA Bonnetrouge.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Background

Education system in the Northwest Territories

ECE is responsible for the Northwest Territories' education system from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12. The system is made up of the department and 10 regional education bodies. These are similar to school boards.

The regional education bodies deliver services directly to students. The Education Act requires that

NWT students have access to education programs that meet the highest possible standards and are based on the cultures of the Northwest Territories. Students may receive their education in any of the NWT's 11 official languages. The act also says that students have a right to access their education programs in a regular instructional setting in their home communities, and to receive the support services they need to do so.

Daycares are also licensed and supported by ECE, but are separate from the education system. High-quality early education programs delivered through daycares can help prepare children for success when they enter the school system.

About the Audit

The purpose of the audit was to find out whether, to improve student outcomes, ECE planned, supported and kept track of the delivery of fair, inclusive education programs and services that reflect Indigenous languages and cultures. The audit covered the period from April 1, 2015 to May 31, 2019.

The OAG looked at whether ECE met key responsibilities related to inclusive schooling, Indigenous languages, and culture-based education. They also looked at fair access to quality education, daycares, planning for and measuring the effectiveness of the education system, and putting in place key elements of the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework.

The audit looked at 10 years of departmental documents and data. The audit also tracked all students who enrolled in Grade 10, in a given year, to assess 3-year graduation rates.

During the regular audit process, the OAG works with management of the department under review. They get confirmation of management's responsibility for the subject being audited, an acknowledgement that they are using suitable criteria to do the assessment, confirmation that the department has provided all relevant information and that they agree the audit is factually accurate. For each of the recommendations made by the OAG, the audit report also includes the department's response. Mr. Speaker, I now hand over to MLA Cleveland. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Audit Findings

The OAG found that ECE "took steps to plan, support, and monitor the delivery of equitable, inclusive education programs and services that

reflected Indigenous languages and cultures, to support improved student outcomes. However, we concluded that these actions were insufficient for it to fully meet its commitments and obligations. Providing sufficient support in key areas, such as Indigenous language and culture-based education, and monitoring the outcomes of its education programs, is necessary to help ensure that students in the territory are being given the best chance for success."

The OAG made 9 recommendations as a result of this audit. ECE has agreed with all of them.

ECE Action Plan to Improve Student Outcomes

Independently of the audit, ECE evaluated the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework. They also identified recommendations for improvement. ECE drafted an Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes in the NWT from 2021/22 to 2023/24. This Action Plan responds to both the audit and the evaluation recommendations. There are 30 specific actions grouped under seven themes: Quality Early Learning and Child Care; Workforce Development and Capacity Building; Curriculum and Student Assessment; Student Supports; Training, Developing and Support for School Employees; Governance; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Action Plan identifies which recommendations from the OAG and evaluation framework are addressed by each theme. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass it over to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Performance Measures

A key finding of the audit is that while ECE took steps to support student outcomes, the department did not know whether these efforts were improving student outcomes. ECE did not determine what was needed in small communities to improve access to education, and did not make enough of an effort to collect and use data to learn what changes might be needed to address the ongoing gaps in student outcomes.

Therefore, the Committee recommends,

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment develop performance measures for each area highlighted in the compliance audit and the corresponding ECE

action plan to achieve specific outcomes, and to report annually on these measures.

Indigenous Languages

The use of Indigenous languages and the ability of residents to speak in the official languages of the NWT has declined over the last 30 years. The Committee hopes to see progress through the Our Languages curriculum, the pilot project for the Indigenous language revitalization, and the assessment tool to measure student use of Indigenous languages. While the Committee supports these initiatives, regular reporting is needed to be able to ensure progress is being made. Therefore, the committee recommends,

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment report annually on each action related to revitalizing official languages, including on the oral proficiency assessment tools, the Indigenous Language revitalization certification program and the mentor-apprentice program.

Members have also heard concerns that the division leading the work on Indigenous language revitalization does not list the ability to speak an Indigenous language as a priority. Therefore, the Committee recommends,

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment include Indigenous language proficiency when hiring positions in the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat. I will now hand it over to MLA for Yellowknife North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON:

Inclusive Schooling

In 2016, ECE issued a Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling. Its vision: To ensure access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive.

A key principle is that learning is individualized, meaning "education programs and decisions focus on the individual student's strengths and needs, and are based on the student's best interests." It also means that students have access to education programs, and supports, in their home community.

The audit found ECE's 2015 action plan ambitious, and that the department did not have a way to track progress on implementing the plan. There were not enough efforts to track whether schools were creating, monitoring and updating individualized learning plans. The monitoring that did take place did not allow ECE to know whether students with individualized learning plans were receiving the supports they needed, nor whether there were improved outcomes.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment conduct greater oversight on inclusive schooling practices, including through spot checks on individualized learning plans, and report annually on the outcome-oriented performance measures.

Schools in Small Communities

The audit confirmed that students in small communities are less likely to graduate from high school. Department information shows that graduation rates in small communities is less than 40 percent for Indigenous students. The committee supports the Northern Distance Learning Program, but is concerned with the finding that even students with a normally good rate of attendance could miss up to 30 percent of classes due to differences in school calendars.

Schools in small communities face numerous challenges, with multi-grade classrooms, limited opportunities for professional development, higher costs and the need for greater supports for teachers and principals.

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment bring forward a plan to better support schools in small communities, to ensure students across the territory have an equitable learning experience. The Committee further recommends that the department work with the District Education Authorities to minimize the impacts of differing school calendars on Northern Distance Learning.

I will now hand it over to the chair, MLA Martselos.

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

MS. MARTSELOS:

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations report on the Review of the 2020 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 15-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Committee Report 15-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2020 Audit of the Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Motions in order to the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried. The report will be moved into the Committee of the Whole.

---Carried.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 734-19(2): FUNDING OF THE HAY RIVER SKI CLUB

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have four simple questions for the Minister of MACA and the "yes" answer works out to 72 cents per day per person.

Can the -- I'd ask the Minister what -- or if she can confirm the amount of lottery funds received from Hay River retailers goes to the Hay River sports clubs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is currently completing the accountability requirements for physical activity and sports recreation fund. To date, with the three retailers in Hay River, they generated approximately 660,000 in that revenue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I use that 72 cents because, you know, we're look -- for the last five years, the Hay River Ski Club has received \$33,655 per year, and they got roughly 260 members, and they run about 180 days. So, you know -- and that's what it costs, 72 cents a day. Yet if we do nothing with sports, we're going to -- just to give you an idea of what incarceration costs, \$75 to \$200 a day, where a hospital stay might be \$2,000 a day. So, you know, for a minimum amount of money, we can give youth the chance to, you know, to evolve and to, you know, pursue their dreams. So I would ask the -- can the Minister confirm, I guess, if the legacy funding agreement between the Hay River Ski Club and the NWT Sports and Recreation Council is to be renewed as it expired in March of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Legacy Retail Grant Program was created by the Northwest Territories Recreation Council to mitigate the loss of revenue to sport organizations because of the possible tax implication. The program was provided funding for five years and in those five years, they were to create a transitional plan. And we -- at this time, we notified the ski club that we would no longer be renewing the funding for the ski club. But we do have a one-time contribution for the ski club under our volunteer organization development program that is available to the ski club since the agreement has now been discontinued. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And can the Minister confirm the amount of that one time, I guess, contribution or is -- are they required to -- is the ski club required to actually apply for it and possibly get turned down? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is an application-based program for the Legacy Retail grants. But they are eligible -- I just want to say that, you know, the eligibility, it is a -- it is an application based program, but there is the Western Canada Lotteries program that we do have. But I don't want to discourage the ski club from discontinuing what services that they have provided in the community, and that MACA is available to look at different programming that

would best suit the ski club since the elimination of the five-year agreement between the ski club and MACA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you know, the ski club, they're really concerned that they might not be able to operate this year, and if a funding arrangement of the GNWT is not forthcoming, I guess I'd ask the Minister if she's just willing to let the Hay River Ski Club cease to operate?

But before she answers that, I would offer her a solution. I would ask her to seek funds from Health and Justice because some of the -- because without options, that's where some of our youth are headed, if we don't get that support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would not like to see the ski club close their doors, but, you know, through the department, we have -- you know, we do operate, and we do look at the revenues for the Western Canada Lotteries. So through that program and also the additional program fundings we do have for nonprofit organizations and youth, I would like to follow up with the member to provide those funding opportunities that may be able to provide additional support to the ski club in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 735-19(2):
ARCTIC COUNCIL AND ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions, Member statements on Arctic Council. The concerns I do have going forward. Can the Premier give the House an update on what her government has done to allow the NWT to take full control of our Beaufort and Arctic Ocean? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it's important that -- I'm not so sure if I'd want the GNWT to take full control of everything within our Arctic lands and waters. I mean, there is a benefit to having many parties at the table. With the Arctic Circle, we're a member of the Canadian delegation, and I think there's power in having Canada at the table with the offshore. I mean, we're partners with the IRC and the Yukon government. So I think it's important. There is strength in partnerships, Mr. Speaker. So at this point, I haven't contemplated taking it all on the

NWT. I think it's important to work in partnership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have a Pacific Northwest economic group that we do work with with our territorial government, that we work with Yukon and Alaska and Nunavut with our pan-territorial I guess working together. Can the Premier advise, you know, for the offshore resources that we do have, can the Premier advise that if she or her official concerns with Canada and about the Russian claim in the Arctic seabed. Is our government worried about that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the federal government is responsible for international relationships. We work closely with the federal government. I think, in fairness, Mr. Speaker, that all nations that have -- that are in the circumpolar are looking at the ocean and the opening of the waters and have concerns. So, yes, Mr. Speaker, all of us have concerns about the opening of the Arctic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that. Mr. Speaker, the federal government, has the Premier been invited to take part in any Arctic Council meetings coming up or invited from our federal counterparts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, within the last year with Iceland being the chair and COVID, all of the meetings were put on hold. There was one just the other day and, unfortunately, it was at three in the morning and I had prior commitments in the morning and in the evening so we did send officials. It was the inaugural one for the Russian -- Russia taking over the chair. So it was more of an identifying the priorities, et cetera. But I do have -- we had officials at that meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, our oil and gas in Beaufort Delta, we have a lot of it. And it's quite concerning when you have another country trying to claim it. I guess, with the Arctic Council and stuff, we have to start discussions with Canada, with our Prime Minister in regarding in investing in the North, investing in the Western Arctic to have a port, a deep sea port, or able to bring in their ice breakers that they're building right now for the Arctic. We

have two icebreakers that are -- that's happening. And, you know, getting our military more to the west with -- and it's not -- everything's in the east. We have nothing in the Western Arctic. We don't have no port, no -- nothing. We have the Rangers. That's it. We need to start looking at investment, Mr. Speaker, and I would like the Premier to bring that up with the Prime Minister and to work with our IRC and Yukon and to try to make something like that happen, because with the oil and gas jobs that we're not going to be Ottawa to ask them for handouts anymore, we'd be able to pay our own way. And people would have jobs. And we need jobs, Mr. Speaker. We're going through tough times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be able to say yes to the Member, that I will begin discussions with Ottawa but unfortunately, I can't. And the reason I can't, Mr. Speaker, is because I've begun those conversations over a year ago when we started. So those are conversations regularly at the federal table, and other governments as well are very conscious of it. It is a common theme throughout the northern jurisdictions that we often ask for this, and we are hopeful that -- we know that the Prime Minister is hearing us. So, Mr. Speaker, we're already doing that work so I can't say that we'll begin it because -- but we will carry forward with that work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

ORAL QUESTION 736-19(2):
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my statement, I did mention that, you know, it is the Minister's responsibility to extend the public health emergency. And so my first question for the Minister is what criteria information is the Minister using to measure risk of a public health emergency to be -- to extend the order? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a process laid out in the Public Health Act. The CPHO is an independent health official, a medical doctor. That person evaluates the situation and determines the risk of the disease to the public. That person then creates public health orders that would mitigate that risk. And that advice comes to me, and I declare a

state of emergency to give force to the orders that the Chief Public Health Officer has made. So I am taking advice from the Chief Public Health Officer who is looking at the technical risk assessments, which I do not have a level of training to assess myself. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that answer. And I'm sure it's very technical. I'm sure even myself, I wouldn't be able to understand a lot of the information without support. So I'm just wondering, also, my next question is, is this decision just the decision of the sole Minister with this information, or is it a group Cabinet decision to extend this public health emergency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you. I would anticipate consulting my Cabinet colleagues on declaring the state of emergency in the first place. But the extensions that happen every two weeks, I make that decision alone. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I know in this jurisdiction, like in the Northwest Territories, our act is different than the Yukon; it's different than other provinces. And some of them, they work collaboratively to come up with decisions. But we, as in Northwest Territories residents, we need to know what risks are left. We were told -- like, in my Member statement the other day, we were told -- you know, we crushed the curve, like I said. You know, we've got vaccinations now. We've got -- you know, we've got public health contact tracing for an outbreak. We've got many things in place now. So I, we as Northwest Territories residents, my constituents, probably many of your constituents need and want to know what more do we have to do? What are the measures that need to be reached in order for us to come out of this public health emergency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's frustration but what we learned in Yellowknife in the month of May is that everything can change overnight, where one case at a school ultimately became 71 cases with a thousand contacts and 43 households in isolation. The key thing there was we had a large unvaccinated group who are not eligible for vaccines because of their age, and we had 40 percent of the people there, the youth, were asymptomatic. So they didn't know they had COVID. They had no symptoms of it. And another -- something like 20 percent had only one symptom, and a minor symptom like a runny nose, not a major symptom like problems breathing. And so I think what's really important to know is that we are still at risk for the importation of COVID from travellers in particular. And as long as the cases continue to be high in Alberta, that will be a

consideration. The vaccine rates will be a consideration as well. So the end goal here is not to frustrate people but to ensure that our effective public health measures continue to be effective to keep us safe. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my last question will be will the Minister commit to providing some type of information or working with her Cabinet and with the CPHO to come up with a list or something for us as residents in the Northwest Territories to know how much longer we're going to be in this public health emergency, what needs to happen to get out of the public health emergency, because we all know that we could live with this forever and we may never reach immunization rates that want to be reached, you know. So I would like to know some kind of documentation, some information for us to know what we need to meet before we get out of this public health emergency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think what the Member needs to take a look at, and I'm certainly very interested in seeing as well, is the Emerging Wisely revision. It's my understanding that this is the purpose of that document, is to show us the path forward out of the restrictions that we're in now - how do we get there, what are the benchmarks. And so as we know, that's going to come at some point in the first part of June and I certainly hope to see the answers to the Member's question at that time. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 737-19(2):
CONCERNS WITH THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE
MARSHAL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently the Office of the Fire Marshal's industry guidelines set out that the Office of the Fire Marshal can't act in the capacity of an engineering or architectural consultant or else the plan review function would be in a conflict. This is a fair rule, but it seems the Office of the Fire Marshal has taken a very strict interpretation of this whereby they won't give anyone any advice on the interpretation they'll take of the building code. The default response seems to be, go hire a code consultant, which is often thousands of dollars, to a southern consulting firm, and delays projects by a matter of weeks.

My question for the Minister is I don't know how to get rid of this very strict interpretation of their own guidelines but will the Minister at least set out some service standards that the fire marshal has to respond to their emails in a timely manner, has to answer questions about how they will interpret the

code, and you know, maybe even that service standard could set out how long it takes to go through the plan review function. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To date, I haven't received any complaints about the fire marshal's office and the responses that have been supposed to be received. But I will follow up with the department. And also that, you know, the other thing that MACA is under review right now looking at our Fire Prevention Act, and it's very unclear for the Northwest Territories looking at the building code. I know the Member has brought this issue up several times but this is something that my department is currently working on. And looking at the client service standards for the Office of the Fire Marshal, I will bring that back to the department and we will take a look and a review on that as well too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another issue is presently the Office of the Fire Marshal has taken the position that they will not review any documents unless they are released for construction or final drawings. And the problem with this, Mr. Speaker, is that everyone else and along the process is the contractors GNWT has hired, the procurement we've lined up, all of our capital budget has worked together to get final construction documents. And then those documents are sent to the fire marshal, and it becomes this black hole before any work can start. And, Mr. Speaker, architects are willing to work in draft documents before they stamp them because they change the fundamental nature of the project if the fire marshal's going to make a change. And for some reason, due to that fear of the Office of the Fire Marshal becoming consultant, they will look at nothing but the absolute final documents when already thousands and thousands of dollars have been spent. I know this is delaying all of our GNWT projects. So my question is will the Minister change the guidelines and require the Office of the Fire Marshal to review draft documents first, just like everyone else involved in the building process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Office of the Fire Marshal and looking at the draft documents that have to be reviewed prior to the construction for the Northwest Territories, this is, you know, been brought up to my department several times. But I will bring this back to my department as well because of -- you know, we do have a number of construction projects that are happening right now. We do have -- one of their regions as well, too, we're down one fire marshal as

well and this is quite concerning to the department. So I will have to follow up with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suspect -- I would ask the Minister to also look at the capacity. I suspect the Office of the Fire Marshal is overworked. I suspect the GNWT capital budget requires them to review far too many plans and they could probably use some more staff, which I would fully support. And along that, perhaps a staff member could create some bulletins, some guidelines on the code interpretation. Right now, there are only three advisories on how the Office of the Fire Marshal will interpret the code. The last one was in 2016, Mr. Speaker. Despite the fact that the Office of the Fire Marshal is making hundreds of decisions on code interpretations, decisions that end up in court. And once a decision is made, there's no transparency for the next builder to know what the code interpretation actually was. So my question for the Minister is: will the Minister direct the Office of the Fire Marshal to create some bulletins and provide guidance on how they interpret the National Building Code that creates a transparent process so we're not restarting for every single project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I will bring this back to my department as well to -- because looking at the 2014 bulletin that was provided to the general public and also that was to be maintained, and as we worked with the Department of Infrastructure as well too, but it's -- this is something that we need to work within our department. So I will get back to the Member and look at the bulletin as well too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. As I've stated many times, every other jurisdiction in Canada has a Building Code Act. The work that our fire marshal is conducting is not inherent to the offices of fire marshals. Fire marshals are for training firefighters, for providing fire safety. They are not always code compliance officers. That usually lies with building inspectors under building code acts and those acts appeal to an independent body. Nunavut's Building Code Act, for example, has an advisory council made up of experts who hear building code appeals. In NWT, those go to the Minister, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe the Minister is an expert in building codes. Mr. Speaker, so my question for the Minister is will we create an appeal mechanism for decisions of the Office of the Fire Marshal to an independent body? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Fire Prevention Act is under review by Municipal and Community Affairs. And the comprehensive work is being conducted as well.

And we need to find a mechanism as well, too, that would best suit and be in compliance for the Northwest Territories and for the needs of the construction that is happening in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 738-19(2):
REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
AND EVALUATION OF ENERGY INVESTMENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure who is also responsible for the NWT Energy Strategy. I've indicated that there are three basic questions to apply to all GNWT energy investments, where to cut first, technology and projects ready to go, and evaluating lifecycle emission reductions. Most of our greenhouse gas emissions are from the resource sector and transportation outside communities. Can the Minister tell us what specific off-the-shelf shovel-ready options are being pursued to reduce emissions from resource extraction and transportation? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one option is electrification of transportation. We have introduced a rebate through the Arctic Energy Alliance for the light-duty road vehicles, and we also have applied for federal funding to install some of these electrical charging stations along some of the Northwest Territories highways. The electrical vehicle technology is advancing. It won't immediately solve all of the problems of the heavy-duty transportation emissions. I can tell you that the GNWT is investigating the use of some liquid biofuels, like a renewable diesel for use by the trucking industry. And at this point, it's not an off-the-shelf ready-to-use solution for the Northwest Territories. This doesn't mean that renewable diesel doesn't have promise; however, we can solve the issues with the global supply limitations and suitability for cold weather use and storage in the Northwest Territories so it will remain a future solution for now.

The GNWT was pleased to hear that the federal government recently announced the federal funding to support the production of liquid biofuels in Canada. The existence of suitable and reliable supply of renewable diesel will help advance the additional evaluation for use in our northern climates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. Actually, you can actually drive up to pumps many places in BC to purchase renewable diesel right

there. It's not a stretch to bring renewable diesel up here in the Northwest Territories.

But I want to move on, Mr. Speaker, to clearly renewable diesel is an easy and fast win whereas Talston expansion has no funding, no buyers; it would take years to build to diamond mines that would be closed. So could the Minister tell us what proven technologies with projects ready to go are being pursued by this government? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully disagree that renewable diesel is an easy and fast win. There is a limited global supply. No one makes for our climate conditions. And there's significant cost premium over traditional fuels. However, as I previously mentioned, we do see some promise and be able to work to continue to evaluate liquid biofuels.

So in regards to the projects - so here's where I get to the Member's question - the GNWT is advancing in a number of energy efficiency renewable and alternative energy projects for heating, electricity, transportation, and industry across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, our recent energy initiatives report provides details on the work and projects that we are currently advancing to be able to meet our goals for the under the 2030 Energy Strategy. So much work is underway and continues to, you know, work away at our energy strategy.

So as to -- as this report highlights, we did invest over \$25 million in energy products to ensure that the energy system is secure; it's reliable; and it's affordable. So this report is publicly available on our government Infrastructure website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for detailed response. The last question to be asked to ensure our energy investments are efficient and effective is to make sure that we actually conduct lifecycle emission reduction analysis. Can the Minister tell us whether this type of analysis is done to evaluate energy investments before Financial Management Board and Cabinet make decisions? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all emission reductions related to projects are assessed in terms of costs versus greenhouse gas reductions. You know, this is a fairly typical assessment method and also a very useful way to be able to assess projects against each other, assuming all other factors are equal. Unfortunately, it's not often the case that all other factors are equal. For example, the GNWT must balance having an energy system that is secure,

reliable, and affordable. For example, one project may have solid community acceptance and have a likelihood of success, have relatively short development timelines, and provide reliable energy. This type of project may be given priority over other projects that have significant better greenhouse gas reductions per dollar invested, and that is something that our Cabinet and, you know, our departments will continue to look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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, again, another detailed response. I'd love to see this analysis, because I've never seen it. I keep asking for it. But I welcome the Minister providing that kind of analysis.

So, you know, great to hear that systematic evaluation is taking place; I've never seen it. If I was listening and I was the federal government, I would not be giving GNWT any money without such analysis. So how could -- you know, how can we be sure that this analysis is actually being done when it's not been shared with the Regular MLAs or the public. So can the Minister tell us what analysis, if any, does the federal government require in providing funding to GNWT for use in energy projects? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, you win some, you lose some. You know, if we give detailed information, it's too detailed. We don't give enough detailed information, it's just not enough. However, getting back to the Member's question, so we have different federal programs that have different requirements but they generally require an estimate of greenhouse gas emission reductions. Some programs like the ISA program, which is the Investing in Canada Infrastructure program, require a climate lens assessment, which is a limited lifecycle type of greenhouse gas reduction estimates for each project. So every project, through the federal government, has different -- different parameters, and that's something that we look at when we apply for specific federal funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 739-19(2):
FORT SMITH EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I said earlier I acquired a document entitled NWT Schools Capital Needs Assessment Summary dated April 2003. It states that by 2018, JBT shall be reviewed to

determine if further renovations are worthwhile or if a replacement building is necessary. Can the Minister tell us if a technical evaluation was done to JBT Tyrrell in 2018 or any time since, or if one is being planned any time soon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last technical evaluation for JBT was done in 2005. And I'm not aware of plans to do another one. There have been no major issues identified with this school. Issues are identified by the regional Infrastructure staff who regularly work with the school and maintain it through reports from the staff at the school, through observations from ECE staff when they're in the school, and Infrastructure has a database that produces a rating of schools, and the rating for JBT is based on its deferred maintenance and its condition, and the rating for JBT is .52, which is really right in the middle of the pack when it comes to all of our 49 schools. I think it's in better shape than about 21 other schools. And no major issues have been identified with this school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the consensus I received from the constituents of Fort Smith is that JBT is the biggest priority to replace first because of the age of the school, the whole idea that it served as residential schools for the residents of Grandin Hall and Grandin College. Would the Minister take this into consideration when assessments on priorities are done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT uses a capital planning process when looking at what infrastructure to replace. It takes into consideration the following criteria: In order of importance, protection of people, protection of access, protection of environment, financial investments, and program needs or requirements. That being said, the fact that this school was a residential school is definitely something that we take into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the Department of Education has ever received any concerns about -- from people about the fact that JBT Tyrrell is a former residential school and is still being actively used as a school today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the Member just brought concerns to me, and she's a representative of the people so I have to say yes, I've heard concerns from the people. The South Slave Divisional Educational Council has

also reported they have occasionally received similar concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, PWK and JBT Tyrrell are the oldest schools in the Northwest Territories. Their increasing age, along with the historical baggage they carry as former residential schools, is becoming more challenging for Fort Smith as time goes on. For these reasons, Fort Smith is in need of a brand new school for both elementary and high school students. Does the Minister agree with these reasons that Fort Smith needs new schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, we can't ignore the fact that the schools were residential schools. But in terms of the age of the facilities and the technical status of them, they are in very good condition. You know, they -- what the -- what we don't do well is we don't keep up appearances well. So we don't refresh schools with new paint and those kind of things to make them look new but, really, the school itself is solid. And, you know, any new school would likely be, you know, significantly smaller. You know, the two schools might turn into one school based on the fact that they're both at about 50 percent utilization and that back then schools were built much bigger. So there's a lot of things to consider when we talk about whether or not, you know, we want to replace schools. But right now, technically, there's no need to replace the schools. They're solid pieces of infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 740-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO SPRING
FLOODING

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of MACA. Can the Minister tell us what is the process for the review, updating, and training on emergency response plans for communities; when was the last time this occurred? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Emergency Management Act requires communities to prepare and adopt and maintain emergency plans and programming. MACA did support the communities through these -- through workshops, exercises during -- to prepare for these

emergency, public alert testing was also conducted, public awareness and information. Starting in 2021, community emergency planning workshops were temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic started and refocused on updating community emergency plans to increase capacity to respond to the flooding. Due to the emergency response required for the spring 2021 flood season, some communities have deferred progress on their COVID-19 surge plans.

But then going back to the question, I'm just reading off of the notes, but you know, that during the flood season, I did travel over to Fort Simpson, and I did work with the MLA from the riding as well too. These were questions that I was asking - how did the community respond, how did they prepare, what does this look like, how could we have further determined what these water levels would look like.

I was soon to discover that, you know, we do have surveys that are done, conducted through ENR, that would be able to determine what this flood season could possibly look like. But the magnitude of the flood this year was nothing that was to be expected. But prior to the flooding in the affected community of Fort Simpson and Fort Resolution that were severely affected, there was EMO training that was provided prior, and there was workshops that were provided as well and also the support from the regional office, from the headquarters office, to support those emergency management plans.

And then it's -- this is going to be a long answer, but then I also further had to discover that, you know, did the community have the capacity? Did they have the capacity to work with the -- to work with the individuals? I soon came to discover that the community was under a lot of stress. There was a lot of people that had lost their own personal items, their homes, and that, you know, should we go back to that time? You know, there's always going to be lessons learned through the response as well too. So looking at that, we are going to be working with the communities once the flood season is completed. We are going to be travelling into the affected communities of Fort Simpson, Jean Marie, Fort Good Hope, and Aklavik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot to unpack in there so I'm going to have to go back probably and listen to the response again. Without getting into a big debate with the Minister, I would say that this high level of flood and water levels this year was anticipated. So I do not agree with that statement that it was higher than expected.

Moving on, can the Minister tell us what or if anything is being done to get cash into the hands of

people now, not in a month or two's time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working with the flood risk communities. We did provide and -- but no, we directed them to the financial -- I don't want to say grants but programming that is available to possibly the flood victims that are there. But to date, we haven't received a lot of requests for that, requests for financial assistance from the communities. We did provide the accommodations for the evacuees. We did provide them with places to stay, with food and shelter. So the request for basic needs, I haven't received that. We are working with the claim to the federal government. We do have navigators on the ground that are identifying what items that each of these flood victims have lost during this time, and we are collecting that information, and we are going to be working with the communities.

And just as a note as well too, we did have -- MACA and Housing are actually in the community as we speak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm at a bit of a loss as to how the Minister can say she has had no requests for money on the ground. Perhaps she needs to friend some people on Facebook, including the mayor of Fort Simpson who has been all over social media asking for money in the hands of people now. So I just find that to be kind of a ridiculous answer.

Moving forward, can the Minister tell us what she is doing to get the federal government to provide more flexibility for the disaster assistance programs? What are you doing to -- sorry. What is she doing to impress upon her federal counterparts that the Northwest Territories is already behind the 8-ball when it comes to our extraordinary circumstances here and we need better assistance from the South, not just the typical that's afforded to the rest of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to go back to the question as well too, that, you know, MACA did provide food hampers to the communities. We did provide the evacuation centres as well too. And we also did provide the navigators that are on the ground that are looking at what may be required for the residents, for the flood victims, what can we further support. And looking for the financial contribution, we have provided it through assistance through looking at home repair for these individuals, looking at the environmental assistance. But right now, the department is concentrated on how do we return these individuals back to their homes and how are we going to further repair those homes.

But going back to the question that the Member had asked, preliminary discussions have taken place between the GNWT and federal officials on the GNWT's needs related to the 2021 flood season and the experience. We need to do a full review of our experience with this summer and the engagement more fully with the federal government when we have this information, and we are currently in the middle of the emergency and our attention is focused on the response and working recovery.

I'm committed to be doing a full review of the actions that we have taken this summer and where we could have done better. That work has already started and will continue as we recover. Community governments and their input will be a key part of this work, finding the related -- what's related to the federal funding programs will be discussed with them as well too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear the Minister commit to a lessons-learned type exercise. I would ask that actually a third party look into the handling of our flood response and providing an independent analysis of what's happened here.

I'm also glad to hear the Minister bring up the navigators. We all expressed that we would like to see more people in the communities interacting with community members and being interpreters, for lack of a better word, between the GNWT and community members. However, it's my understanding that only two people have been hired, and they're likely out of Yellowknife.

So will the Minister commit to contracting a community member in each affected community to act as a liaison with the assessors? And I would prefer that that person be someone who has construction or building experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, there are two people on the ground this week, and that, you know, we call them "pathfinders", but I don't know what they're -- if we've actually given them the flood response officers or whatever, but to meet the residents and answer the questions. But also MACA is hiring contractors as well to look at preventing further damage to the structures. And one of the examples is removing wet siding and drywall and to decrease

the amount of mold that could be evolving from the water damage.

The assessment services also have started this week in Jean Marie and are supported by MACA. And I just wanted to be clear that the assessment that is being done right now, this is a team of people. It's not just one individual. So they do come with the expertise, and it's information that we are going to be relying on as a department and looking at their technical experts as well too and also supporting the construction and the rebuilding of these units that may be required.

And that's -- and any further information as well. I did provide information to the MLAs as well, and I look forward to providing any additional information as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 741-29(2):
DOULA SERVICES IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I get started, one thought that came to mind of a few people over here is that we do have GSOs in communities, that we've got them in 23 of our 33 communities that might be able to provide some assistance to getting information out and helping people access funds hopefully.

But further to my statement today on doula services, I'm very excited to ask some questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services today about the NWT Birth Work Collective and the work that they're doing to make doula services more accessible in the Northwest Territories.

So my first question today, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, and I'd like to know, during the 18th Assembly, then Minister of Health and Social Services, Glen Abernathy, made reference to a pilot doula training course in the South Slave and indicated that an evaluation of the pilot course would be the department's next step. So I'm wondering what did this evaluation find? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. In February 2019, the Department funded an Indigenous doula maternal support training session that had a number of Indigenous governments as well as the Health and Social Services Authority involved, with a total of 16

participants. The key findings from the participants from this pilot were, first, participants want to support Indigenous women and their families to reclaim their identity, their health, and exercise greater control over their own childbirth and parenting experiences.

Second, doulas and birth work can contribute to the healing and strengthening of families and communities.

Third, locally developed doula training should be tailored to meet the needs of Indigenous and NWT communities.

Fourth, professional certification and credentialing needs to be clarified.

And, fifth, supportive infrastructure needs to be in place for mentorship, funding, connection with community resources, and integration with existing programs and services. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that's great news, and I'm really excited to hear the synopsis of the evaluation from Health and Social Services. I think that's all really good news, and I think it lends well to the direction and the support that we as an Assembly would like to provide to the people of the Northwest Territories.

My next question for the department, which kind of plays off that, is does the department recognize doula services as a viable prevention tool for the people of the Northwest Territories to support healthy families? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, doulas and Indigenous birth workers are welcomed now in the maternity care setting as an important support for expectant parents and families. They're sometimes -- doulas are members of the family or extended family. Sometimes they are contracted by the parents to be there to provide the support service. So they, it's important to note, are nonmedical personnel. They are not regulated. But they are hugely respected for the role they play with birthing in the North. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northern Birth Work Collective is all about accessibility. The First Nations Health Authority, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and the BC Ministry of Health, currently work together to provide \$1000 grants for doula services for Indigenous families living in British Columbia.

To make doula care accessible in the Northwest Territories, the services needs the financial support of Health and Social Services here at home. So will Health and Social Services provide financial grants to NWT residents to support doula services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to take a step back from that question, the department first needs to learn what services are going to be provided. So in the last fiscal year, the department funded the Northern Birth Work Collective to create an Indigenous doula and birth work training program. And we see a lot of potential in this, and we're looking forward to the results of this training and development. And once that's in place, then the department will be in a better situation to learn what the service model is, how communities are going to access the services, and then make an informed decision about what kind of support to provide for families. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just I guess a very selfless plug. Today on the NWT Birth Work Collective's Facebook page, they did advertise a course that will be taking place this summer that will be available over Zoom. And so I would like to invite all of my colleagues to share it with people within their constituencies and the cost of the course is on a sliding scale for what people can afford. So it's a wonderful opportunity.

Given the potential, Mr. Speaker, for great benefits of doula care, I'm wondering if there is a mechanism for how low income NWT residents can access the funds necessary for doula services today in the NWT, and would Child and Family Services assist with this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we're a step back from that. We're trying to develop the model of care for doulas within the existing health and social services system that builds on the work that they're doing now and develops models that support collaboration between different partners in the birthing setting, including, of course, communities, families, and health services. So once that's in place, then how low income people can access this with grants would be the logical next step. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 742-19(2):
CONCERNS WITH HEALTH CENTRES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are related to my Member's statement in which I voiced displeasure with the health department ignoring our pleas for help in regards to ongoing issues at our health centres. And it could be for many other health centres in the small communities.

I'm trying to get a sense as to why there is no will from the health department to address our health centre issues and complaints. I ask the Premier to enlighten this House and the residents of the Northwest Territories as to the mandate of the Department of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those questions are pretty specific, and in that case, then I do not have the answers. I have to defer it to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has been consistently critical of the services in his community, and we have paid attention to that. There is staff turnover in his community at this time. There are two nurse vacancies that will probably not be filled right away because nurses are in very short supply. Complaints about staff conduct have been relayed to the Nurses Association and to the GNWT. The Health Authority Management went to meet with staff in the community in April to understand their concerns. There was an audit conducted of programming within the health centre on March the 19th. The COO has made numerous attempts to meet with the leadership in the community, and the most recent information I have is that the community is now willing to meet with him, and that will happen this month. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I know the health centre, they're aware of all the problems, but they haven't been doing nothing for the longest time. Nobody's ever ever reached out to me from the department.

Mr. Speaker, I note the vision of the health department is for best health, best care, for a better future. One of the values is caring, which states we treat everyone with compassion, respect, fairness, and dignity. Another value is accountability, which

states system outcomes are measured, assessed, and publicly reported on.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asking the health department if they would consider conducting professional evaluations on the operations of health centres, especially in all the small centres, but to no avail. I asked the Premier, as the leader of her Cabinet colleagues, and the leader of the Minister of Health and Social Services, if she will give direction to the department to begin to develop a system to conduct professional evaluations of all small health centres and that these be conducted on a yearly basis. Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the distinction between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Health and Social Services Authorities. The Department of Health and Social Services is the policy arm of the operation. The implementation on the ground in the health centres is the Health and Social Services Authority. I haven't received a request from another health centre for a program audit. But one was done at the health -- at the Fort Providence health centre on March the 19th. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when there are problems with nurse practitioners or a nurse-in-charge, the health department sends you to speak to the Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Although the department directs you to them, the department does not follow up with any issues of concern that was brought to their attention. They have basically washed their hands of any issues at health centres. This is a far cry from a health system that is measured, assessed, and publically reported on. Will the Premier please intervene and fix the health system that is broken? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the number of times the authority and the department have been up and down the highway to speak with the leadership in Fort Providence about the issues in their health centre, I don't think it's at all fair to characterize us as ignoring the situation. We are fully engaged. I am really pleased to hear now the community is ready to meet with the COO of the Deh Cho Region and start working on the specific issues that the Member has raised and I encourage them to go forward with the meeting that is planned this month. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

ORAL QUESTION 743-19(2):
VACCINATION FOR EDUCATORS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Round 2. I have a question for the community of -- we have our teaching staff that are being -- I guess school year is ending in 17 days. We have some people in our communities that haven't been vaccinated yet. I'm just wondering if we could get an updated list of when are we able to get the vaccinations prior to the 17 days, prior to the teachers leaving. So it would have to be done sooner rather than later so they could go home for the summer, Mr. Speaker. So that's the first question. Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been vaccinating teachers along with the rest of the population, 18 plus, since March. There have been three trips in to Tuktoyaktuk to provide vaccinations. If there are people who still require vaccinations, they should call the health centre and make that need known so that another trip into Tuk can be planned. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are -- people are calling to get vaccinated. The reason why the holdup is you need ten people to go through one of the vials of the vaccine. And I think people are starting to get really frustrated. I had to go to Inuvik for my second shot because I need to get that done. So we need another go-around in Tuk or in my other communities as well for the teachers, just to make sure that they're vaccinated prior to them leaving for the summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a limiting factor, until yesterday, was that there was no nonessential travel in and out of Yellowknife. And communities made it very clear to us that they did not want to see people from Yellowknife in their communities. That, fortunately, is now over. So we are in a position where we can go back to Tuktoyaktuk and the smaller communities.

One of the reasons that the department wanted to acquire the Pfizer vaccine is because there are six doses in a vial rather than ten. So that means there needs to be fewer people on the waiting list in order to make wastage a very small consideration in making a trip like this. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, we want Moderna, not Pfizer. You know, we're worried about what's been happening with the blood clotting with that. I'm not a professional, I just hear people's concerns

about it. So I really would like to make sure that our Minister is telling the Beaufort Delta health committee to get people in to get the final shots for the professional and then for my -- the constituents that never took it, because a lot of them were pretty, not -- like, more concerned about seeing what's happening before they get -- everybody else gets their needles. So now that everybody else is doing good so now they want to get their needle. So we need it done as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the same kind of adverse effects with the Pfizer vaccine as there have been with the AstraZeneca vaccine. They are different kinds of vaccines. And I don't know a lot about how they're different. I just can tell you that they are apples and oranges in terms of vaccines.

But what I can say is that we are very interested in going back to communities and providing more vaccinations. Just as the Member said, this is what we hoped, that people would see that those who got vaccinated did great, they have a lot more freedom, they can isolate for less time and so on. And so I encourage him to encourage his constituents to get vaccinated as soon as the schedule has the Tuk and Nunakput communities on it. And I'll make sure to send him a notice when that schedule is developed. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really want to urge my constituents in Nunakput to go and get vaccinated when it's provided by the health authorities in the communities and just to make sure that, you know, get it done, and it's going to shorten up your medical travel; it's going to shorten up your time for isolation, and keeps everybody safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. I take it as a comment, unless the Minister would like to respond. Thank you. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. In the future, we'll have to keep our preamble and answers to the point just to give other Members a chance to ask questions. Thank you. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's Address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 415-29(2):
ROLLING, ACTION! THE NEXT 5 YEARS: NWT
FILM & MEDIA SECTOR STRATEGY AND
ACTION PLAN 2021-2026

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Rolling action! The Next 5 Years: Northwest Territories Film & Media Sector Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2026. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 416-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
544-19(2): MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE
PANDEMIC

TALBED DOCUMENT 417-29(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
696-19(2): ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 544-19(2) Mental Health During the Pandemic, and Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 696-19(2) Illicit Drug Trade. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 418-19(2):
NWT SCHOOLS CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT, APRIL 22, 2003

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: NWT Schools Capital Needs Assessment Summary, Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, April 22, 2003. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 35-19(2):
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 3rd, 2021, I will move the

following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2021, is hereby established; and further, that the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that the Honourable Ted Richard of Sydney, British Columbia, be appointed Chairperson, and Mr. Glen Abernethy of Yellowknife, NWT, and Mr. Jack Rowe of Hay River, NWT, be appointed members of the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 36-19(2):
GUIDELINES FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION, 2021

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 3rd, 2021, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following guidelines are set down for the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2021:

1. The commission shall review the existing electoral districts using the most recent and accurate census and other population data available.
2. In keeping with Canadian constitutional conventions, relative parity between electoral districts shall be sought, to the extent possible, except where special circumstances warrant exceptional deviation.
3. For greater certainty, relative parity means that the percentage variation between the number of persons in a riding and the average mean should be within plus or minus 25 percent.

In addition to whatever recommendations the commission may propose, the commission shall recommend how the Electoral Boundaries commission should be drawn if the Legislative Assembly were to be comprised of a minimum of 19 members.

5. The commission shall prepare an interim report with proposed electoral district boundaries for review by the public and discussion at public hearings.

6. The commission shall establish a website or other publically accessible mechanisms, in addition to public hearings, to receive submissions on the existing and/or proposed boundaries.

7. All submissions to the commission shall be considered public documents.

8. Simultaneous translation of official languages shall be available at public hearings where the use of an official language in a particular community or region is sizable enough to warrant the employ of translation services.

9. If the commission is not in a position to establish its mandate within the existing budget allocated, it may return to the Legislative Assembly for additional funds.

10. The final report of the commission, complete with recommendations, shall be submitted in English and French to the Speaker and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly no later than twelve months after the Commission is struck.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Madam Premier.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 33:
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 3rd, 2021, I will move that Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills. First Reading of Bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 30:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE AURORA COLLEGE ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake that Bill 30, an Act to Amend the Aurora College Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 30 has had first reading. First Reading of Bills. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

BILL 31:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PHARMACY ACT

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 31, an Act to amend the Pharmacy Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 31 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 32:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHERN EMPLOYEES BENEFITS SERVICES PENSION PLAN ACT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 32, an Act to amend the Northern Employees Benefits Services Pension Plan Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 32 has had first reading. First Reading of Bills. Second Reading of Bills. Member for Frame Lake.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 29:
RESOURCE ROYALTY INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATUTE AMENDMENT ACT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the following statutes to allow for the disclosure of confidential information respecting resource royalties for use in the development and evaluation of policy for the Government of the Northwest Territories to a Member of the Legislative Assembly or to an

Indigenous government, Mineral Resources Act, Northwest Territories Lands Act, Petroleum Resources Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. This is a private members' public bill that would change existing legislation to allow for the sharing of mining, oil and gas royalty information with Regular MLAs and Indigenous governments. A private Members' public bill is a bill that seeks to establish a new act or amend an existing act but is introduced by a Member who is not in Cabinet.

This bill which is the second private Members' bill brought forward by myself during my time as an MLA is designed to allow the Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment to share royalty information, subject to any confidentiality restrictions on its further disclosure. The information could be made available to regular MLAs and Indigenous governments for their use in the development and evaluation of policy.

The private Members' bill does not seek to create new powers with respect to mining and petroleum activities, nor create any new regulatory structure to government performance. The private members' bill does not allow MLAs or Indigenous governments to access any proprietary or financial information held by the private sector that has not been disclosed to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The bill does not require or allow for the public disclosure of royalty information. With passage of this bill, MLAs and Indigenous governments would finally have access to information essential to development of regulations under the Mineral Resources Act. This is a first step towards greater transparency in reporting of the monies paid to our Government for resource development. Much more work remains to be done to ensure NWT residents know what the revenues are from development so we can better manage these resources for today and future generations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Government House Leader.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Cabinet is unable to support Bill 29. This bill proposes to amend three pieces of land and resources legislation. However, to date, there's been no consultation with Indigenous governments, industry, or the public on proposed amendments. Provision of the three acts without engagement does not align with the public's expectation of how the Government of the Northwest Territories should

operate and is contrary to our agreements with Indigenous governments.

If the bill is referred to a Standing Committee, there will be opportunities for public engagement, but that process does not replace the thorough process that the Government of the Northwest Territories is currently undertaking to address this exact topic as part of a comprehensive policy and regulatory development.

The Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment is developing the Mineral Resources Act and regulations with input from all impacted parties, including the intergovernmental council, other Indigenous governments, the industry members that bear the risk from information disclosure, and other interested stakeholders.

Included as part of this holistic process, ITI has already begun an extensive review of the royalty regime which will include an examination of the level of transparency under the current regime.

In addition to our concern regarding the process for creating new law in this base, there are practical concerns, including the introduction of legislative changes without an analysis of potential policy implications and the potential efficacy of the changes.

Currently, royalties are reported collectively as an aggregate of revenues received. This information is made publicly available and can be used to understand how royalties impact the NWT fiscal situation.

Confidentiality clauses similar to the NWT's can be found in virtually all Canadian mining jurisdictions. We are not unique in this regard. That said, all extractive sector entities operating in Canada are required to publicly disclose payments made to all of governments under the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act.

Mr. Speaker, allowing this issue to remain together with the whole of the Mineral Resources Act to regulatory development is not only more practical and efficient, but best reflects the commitment of this government to meaningful consultation and engagement.

The GNWT is committed to a thorough, fair, and respectful legislative process. This includes respecting the processes and forums we have agreed to with Indigenous governments, including the intergovernmental council, and the continued sharing of information and engagement with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet cannot support this bill. We will be abstaining from the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to respond to some of the comments the Government House Leader made. This bill is not requesting public disclosure of royalty information, which is already something you can access through the federal legislation, although there's some issues in how that's reported, and -- but the Standing Committee on Economic Development working with the department wants to be part of that royalty review. I'm sure the Indigenous governments and the intergovernmental council want to be part of the royalty review and the work ITI is doing. But right now, the government is not allowed to share royalty information with Indigenous governments or standing committees.

I don't know how either of those partners are supposed to be meaningfully engaged in that process if we can't know the royalties for projects, Mr. Speaker. I don't view this as some sort of step that's going to completely change the regulatory framework or completely change the disclosure of royalties. The Member's bill is not asking for public disclosure. I think that step would be best done through the processes that the ITI is currently conducting. But to ask that information be shared with Regular members and Indigenous governments as part of the review is not too much an ask.

And furthermore, the government can simply go to the royalty payers and ask for consent to share that information right now. And if they do that, then this whole bill would be pointless. But to date, we do not have that information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 29 has received second reading and is referred to standing committee. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Committee Report 13-19(2). Ministers' Statements 161-19(2), Tabled Document 411-19(2), Tabled Document 412-19(2) with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I know call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of Committee Member for Frame Lake?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to discuss Committee Report 13-19(2), Report on Review of the 2019-20 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Committee agree? Thank you, Committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the item.

---Short recess

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 13-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening remarks.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our report is read into the records. So I do not have any substantive comments to add. But I would like to thank the committee for their work on this report, and individual Members may have comments on the record and its recommendations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Committee Report 13-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report. I see no comments. Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 122-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT – DEFINITION OF AUTHORITIES IN
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this Committee recommends that the definition of "authorities" and the schedule be amended to use language similar to that found in the Ombudsmen Act Yukon and that a further subclause expressively include the Housing Association as established with the Societies Act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Ombud Act was drafted, it appears the drafters went and took a schedule out of the Financial Administration Act, which sets out a number of public bodies. But for some reason, that doesn't include -- well, it doesn't include housing associations, which are not formed under the Societies Act. They're nonprofit societies that are agents to the Housing Corp.

I guess this is a larger problem, and I've asked the Housing Corp a number of times why we have housing associations and why we have housing authorities and the difference in the roles, and they've never been able to give me a clear answer. But they serve very much the same function, and people should be able to go to the Ombud when the Housing Association makes a decision that is not procedurally fair. So that simply does that.

And I guess the second thing is that by using the schedule and the Financial Administration Act that there is always different public bodies being created with various arm's length from government. But the most jurisdictions -- and we specifically pick the Yukon -- just provide a broad definition of government authorities that gives the Ombud some flexibility in deciding, you know, what public agency falls under their authority to investigate.

I really don't think there's any sort of floodgate issue here, and I think the Housing Association example is a prime example of why it's easier to just have a broad definition of who the Ombud can investigate. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, someone who was here in the 18th Assembly when the bill was being reviewed, I think this was just an oversight on the part of folks that were looking at the reviewing the bill and the draft of it and so on.

The advantage of the Yukon definition is that it basically captures those organizations that are set up through legislation or -- and I'm not going to get all of the exact criteria right. But basically they are in one way or another almost an arm or a creature of GNWT. So I think the principle here was that -- and this was identified by the Ombud as something that was problematic. So when we set up agencies, associations through our legislation, that the Ombud should have the ability to review them. And that's what this does. So it just fixes an oversight from the last Assembly. Thanks. And I do support it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in

favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 123-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) - STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT -- AMENDMENT OF SECTION 17(3) OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Section 17(3) be amended to April 1st, 1999, and, further, that in use of clause being included that notwithstanding the temporal restriction if a complaint has records prior to this date, the Ombud has the discretion to investigate the new complaint in full. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This was a major point of discussion and debate in the last Assembly. I think it's fair to say that Cabinet had to be convinced that this was something to move it forward, the Ombud legislation. And we had to pick a date. The Regular MLAs tried to push this back to April 1st, 1999. Cabinet wouldn't accept it. And so there was a stalemate of these -- I guess some Regular MLAs did side with Cabinet. I'm not going to go into those details. But this has become an issue. The Ombud has identified this as an issue in some of the investigations she has carried out, that she would like to have the ability to look at the entire record relating to a complaint. So that's why she suggested that her ability to look at records needs to go back in time.

And this recommendation would actually allow her to even go back beyond April 1st, 1999, if it's a longer termed dispute. Look. We want the Ombud to make, I think, the best possible recommendations for improving public service and fairness. So giving her the ability to look back in time is something I think that's essential. She's already identified this as a problem. I think we just need to fix this. So I support this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 124-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT - AMENDMENT OF SECTION 23 OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Section 23 be amended to remove reference to the Director of Human Resources, and, further, that the reference to the conflict of interest commissioner be amended to Integrity Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Sorry. Ms. Martselos, can you please reread the motion.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Section 23 be amended to remove reference to the Director of Human Rights, and, further, that the reference to the conflict of interest commissioner be amended to integrity commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 125-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT - AMENDMENT OF SECTION 22(2) OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Section 22(2) be amended to only require notice to an authority of a refusal to investigate in the event that notice has already been provided to the authority, that an investigation will take place under Section 24. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 126-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT - AMENDMENT OF SECTION 25 OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Section 25 be amended to specifically impose an obligation on anyone receiving confidential information from the Office of the Ombud to maintain the privacy of that information notwithstanding any other legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam chair, I move that this committee recommends that Clause 24(1) be amended to exclusively provide for notice to be provided to the Tlicho Government or any equivalent agency established by an Indigenous government, and, further, that Section 33(1) be amended to include a reference to or applicable the Indigenous government referenced in Section 24(1). Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 127-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT - AMENDMENT OF SECTION 24(1) OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Clause 15(1) be amended to read: 15(1) The Mandate of the Ombud is to investigate any decision, recommendation made, or any act done or omitted by an authority, by any officer, employee, or a member of authority in the exercise of any power or duty conferred on that person or body by an

enactment that, A, relates to a matter of administration or the implementation of policy, and, A, aggrieves or may aggrieve any person or body of persons in the persons or its personal capacity. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This, again, was a matter of a lot of debate and discussion in the last Assembly. The wording in the bill as passed was not ideal. The regular MLAs attempted to amend it. That motion failed. Cabinet attempted to amend it. That motion failed. We didn't do a good job drafting this portion of the act as it became law. And now the Ombud has pointed this out as well. The current wording is just not very clear. It's rather awkward.

And this wording would make it clear that, you know, matters of administration and implementation of a policy can be investigated by the Ombud when someone alleges that they've been aggrieved. So this is, I think, once again, some housekeeping matters that can and should have been fixed up in the original legislation. So I expect that our side of the House is going to be able to work together with Cabinet to fix this within the lifetime of this Assembly. That's what I expect of my Cabinet colleagues. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Martselos.

COMMITTEE MOTION 128-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 13-19(2) – STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2019-20
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD ANNUAL
REPORT - AMENDMENT OF SECTION 15(1) OF
OMBUD LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

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

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you. The motion is in order. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just to be crystal clear, you know, Cabinet is going to have an obligation now to respond to these committee

reports. There's some clear recommendations in here for legislative change, and I expect that our Cabinet colleagues are going to adopt and endorse some of these recommendations without having to necessarily consult with Indigenous governments. But I look forward to them actually bringing forward the required changes in the lifetime of this Assembly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you. I guess the Ombud Act is an interesting piece of legislation, in that the responsibility seems to lie both with the Department of Justice and the Board of Management. It's a shared piece given that they're a statutory office, similar to the ATIPP Act or similar statutory positions.

But I guess so that's -- I give the heads-up to Board of Management to take this one, and I guess I would ask the Department of Justice in their response to consider why exactly the GNWT has any control over this legislation. I'm a little confused as to why this isn't just solely within the Board of Management. But these are now motions of the House. So whoever does it, I very much look forward to some legislation coming forward and having the Ombud Act amended. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded Consideration of Committee Report 13-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report?

Thank you, committee. We have concluded Consideration of Committee Report 13-19(2) Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report.

Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (MS. SEMMLER): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 13-19(2) and would like to report progress with eight motions carried and that Committee Report 13-19(2) is concluded. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nahendeh. All those in favour? All those opposed? No. Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Third reading of Bills. Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day

Orders of the Day.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' statements
3. Members' statements
4. Returns to oral questions
5. Recognition of visitors in the gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral questions
8. Written questions
9. Returns to written questions
10. Replies to the 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
 - Motion 34-19(2), Referral of Tabled Document 413-19(2), Emerging Stronger: Planning the NWT's Social and Economic Recovery Together

17. Notice of motion for first reading of bills
 18. First reading of bills
 19. Second reading of bills
 - Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act
 - Bill 31, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act
 - Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
 20. Consideration and Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters
 - Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Ministers' Statement 161-19(2), Emerging Stronger: COVID-19 Social and Economic Recovery Plan
 - Tabled Document 411-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022
 - Tabled Document 412-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No.1, 2021-2022
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third reading of bills
 23. Orders of the day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.
- Adjournment

The House adjourned at 4:49 p.m.