



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 79

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Pages 2819 – 2866

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Monfwi)

Ms. Frieda Martselos
(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby
(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson
(Hay River South)

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(Hay River North)
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Minister of Education, Culture & Employment
Minister of Justice

Hon. Shane Thompson
(Nahendeh)

Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek
(Yellowknife South)

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Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
Minister responsible for the Status of Women

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, June 3, 2021****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. 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 (Honourable Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 170-19(2):
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS
WOMEN AND GIRLS**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, June 3rd marks the two-year anniversary of the release of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and its demand for a world where First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families can raise their children in an environment that offers the same level of safety, security, and human rights as non-Indigenous families.

To mark this date, I will be tabling the first annual report addressing the government's actions to respond to the calls for justice.

Mr. Speaker, following the release of the final report by the national inquiry, the GNWT committed to review and analyze the 231 calls for justice and assess the current programs and services they offer. In the past 18 months, we have conducted a careful and thorough review of existing programs and services, and we are currently finalizing the details to carry out preliminary engagement with key stakeholders and partners in advance of the development of the GNWT's action plan to respond to the calls for justice.

While we work towards developing a comprehensive response to the calls for justice scheduled for release in the fall of 2021, the annual report I am tabling later today describes some of the steps already being taken by the GNWT to begin to address these actions that are called for in the calls for justice.

Some of these actions include: increased core funding to the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories and the Northwest Territories Status of Women Council; the establishment of a new gender equity division in the GNWT to expand the work of the women's advisory unit to address gender equity, gender-based violence, family violence, and women's economic empowerment; the creation of a gender equity grant program to complement the women's initiatives grant program, to enhance gender equity across the Northwest Territories; and provide support to community-based projects that benefit people of all genders; and, the development and implementation of the Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training program which is mandatory for all GNWT employees and is available to the public free of charge.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has also been collaborating with the Government of Canada, provinces and territories, by providing input into the development of a national action plan on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as on a national action plan to address gender-based violence.

A number of announcements and events commemorating this day will be taking place across Canada today, including the release of a national action plan. The level of interest and participation by provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous organizations and communities shows that the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will not be allowed to gather dust on a shelf. The GNWT commits to, and looks forward to, collaborating on the implementation of the national action plan.

Mr. Speaker, here in the Northwest Territories, we continue to have the second highest rates of violence against women in the country. This violence has, sadly, become normalized in our communities and it often leaves victims and their families to suffer in silence. This is a reality we are not proud of. It is one we have a moral obligation to work to change.

I had the privilege of attending the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and

Girls, and I heard stories of families and survivors from the Northwest Territories who experienced the tragedy of a missing or murdered love one.

At the hearings, many families and survivors not only bravely shared their truths about the loss of their loved ones but also presented recommendations on what they felt could be done so that others do not have to endure through the same pain they endured. It took immense courage to share their stories. We have a duty to honour that by doing all we can, individually and collectively, to create a society where all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people feel safe, respected, and have equal access to a quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge and remember these women and girls and their families. Survivors and families deserve not only our respect but also our help, and the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to support them in their healing journey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 171-19(2):
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, five years ago the Government of the Northwest Territories took responsibility for the tugs, barges and marine facilities that have served our communities for decades. Since then, Marine Transportation Services, also known as MTS, has evolved and improved and provides reliable and professional marine shipping service while supporting the Northwest Territories' economy and workforce development.

In 2020, MTS delivered more than 6300 tons of cargo and 28 million litres of fuel to the communities on Great Slave Lake, the Mackenzie River, the Beaufort Delta, and the Arctic Coast. Millions of litres of fuel were delivered to 20 coastal north warning radar systems on behalf of the Department of National Defence.

Mr. Speaker, planning for the 2021 sailing season, our fifth season, is on schedule. The first barges are expected to depart Hay River in mid June. This is the first of 16 tows scheduled for the season. With a robust COVID-19 mitigation plan in place to protect our communities, residents can ship and receive their cargo safely. Thanks to funding provided by Canada, four new double-hulled barges joined the MTS fleet late last year. These barges will be in service this season, carrying deck cargo and petroleum products to our communities and customers.

For the past two summers, adventurous teenagers from Ndilo, Dettah, Lutselk'e and Yellowknife have joined a unique research expedition to help scientists conduct a bathymetric study of Great Slave Lake, the deepest of any lake in North America, and to install moorings in Christie Bay. These young people worked with researchers using cutting-edge technology and shared traditional knowledge of the water they grew up on. They shadowed the captain and the crew of the vessel, learning about exciting and fulfilling career paths they might never have otherwise considered.

This collaboration between young Northerners and world-class scientists took place on the MV Nahidik. The MTS vessel is leased to the Arctic Research Foundation, a non-government organization that collaborates with northern and Indigenous communities to support scientific research in the North.

I had an opportunity to visit the vessel and meet some of the students when it docked at the end of last season. I toured the vessel, was given a demonstration of some of the equipment they used, and most importantly met some of the students who had just completed this exciting expedition. Our association with the Aurora Arctic Research Foundation supports infrastructure projects and northern youth, and by advancing northern science we may better understand the effect of climate change on northern waters.

MTS also supports the Canadian Coast Guard's navigational aid program in NWT waters, performing annual inspections, overhaul, repair and maintenance to the Canadian Coast Guard's vessels Dumit, Eckaloo, and the GNWT Hay River shipyard. This essential program places and maintains buoys and range markers each year, facilitating the safe passage of commercial marine traffic on the Mackenzie River and the Great Slave Lake.

Through the Marine Training Centre and with the support of Transportation Canada, our partnership with the Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium supports marine-related education and training in the Northwest Territories creating long-term and fulfilling employment opportunities for NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, through MTS, the GNWT will continue to pursue opportunities with public and private stakeholders, and our hardworking MTS crew will continue to deliver essential supplies to our communities. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 172-19(2):
TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIPS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, like all of us here today, I recognize the importance and value education and its role in creating long-term success for our residents and our territory. I am pleased to say the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, through its apprentice program, also reflects this value while also working hard to improve housing for many Northwest Territories residents.

It is important to highlight providing opportunities like the apprenticeship program does not happen without collaboration. The NWT Housing Corporation works with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on this initiative, providing an opportunity to highlight successes that can be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation aims to hire 12 apprenticeship positions to work with the local housing organizations across the NWT. These apprentices are obtaining valuable classroom training while also being mentored by certified trades professionals. These apprentices are already making valuable contributions to the people of the NWT. They are working diligently to learn and build up their skills.

In addition to supporting apprenticeships, assignments at the local housing authority organizations, the corporation is also asking general contractors bidding on new housing contracts to support at least one apprenticeship over the lifetime of that project. From April 2020 to May 2021, this approach has already supported 13 apprentices working on a variety of construction projects throughout the Northwest Territories.

I am a firm believer in the work these apprentices do and I have seen the impact of their work firsthand in many small communities across our territory.

Being an apprentice is often one of the first steps in a lifetime of work in the trades. Since 2007, 19 apprentices that have worked with local housing organizations are now journey certified. This includes a plumber in Behchoko, an oil burner mechanic in Deline, a carpenter in Fort Smith, and a housing maintenance serviceperson in Paulatuk.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the role the Housing Corporation has played in the careers of these journeypersons. I want to see more of this important work, I am pleased to note that under the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation four-year business plan, we intend to increase the number of Northwest Territories journey-certified apprentices by ten through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation continued

partnerships with ECE, our general contractors and others.

I look forward to coming back to the House and providing an update on the apprenticeship program to further highlight the successes of this program. I am confident that we will continue to increase the number of certified apprentices and celebrate the skilled tradespersons of the Northwest Territories. I also want to thank the staff in the local housing authorities and associations of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation who have worked diligently to develop and insure the certification is acquired and the maintenance of these programs to further extend the lifetime of our public housing units. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PANDEMIC ANXIETY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to discuss pandemic anxiety. Mr. Speaker, I have been receiving numerous calls from constituents who are feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic, are tired of self-isolation, tired of the relaxation of public health orders that appear to benefit others but not them, those that are in extended care that are feeling isolated and alone, grandparents and children and grandchildren feeling the anxiety of not being able to visit family outside the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, anxiety, tension, apprehension, concern, fear, change and hope are all aspects of this pandemic that need to be recognized and dealt with in a manner that allows one to continue on with living. It is difficult when one finds that what was once predictable is not any more, what was once controllable by each of us is not any more; and, what is important and accessible to each of us is just out of reach now.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this pandemic, fear set in and most of the world agreed action had to be taken as people were being hospitalized and dying. Our CPHO and this government took swift action by limiting travel in the NWT and providing public health orders that were there to protect us all, and we praised her for that.

Mr. Speaker, now Northerners watch the news and hear that southern Canada is planning to loosen restrictions and provide more freedoms. Sentiment is now changing on how our CPHO and government is handling this phase of the pandemic. Many of our residents, who have been vigilant throughout, want to see further relaxation of

restrictions. The people in the northern part of the NWT now have access to the Yukon while people in the southern NWT, who have done their part and who are fully vaccinated, continue to feel the impact of the restrictions and want to know why not us?

Mr. Speaker, we are at a moment in time where we have to look at our legislation and ask if we are reaching a point where we may be subjecting this government to potential court challenges now that a vaccine is available, data is available, and the majority of people are conscious of safety protocols.

Relevant wording we have to look at in the Public Health Act states that a public health emergency means the occurrence of imminent threat or a public health hazard or disease that presents a significant risk to the public health. It further states that the public health officer may take reasonable measures as he or she considers necessary.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions this government has to ask are based on the fact that a majority of people in Canada and the NWT are vaccinated and restrictions in many parts of southern Canada are being lifted. These two questions are:

Do COVID-19 and known variants pose a significant risk? Do the orders continue to provide reasonable measures based on the current risk? Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NURSING HUMAN RESOURCES

MS. SEMMLER; Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nurses are the course of the NWT health care system. Without nurse, we would have no one in the communities, no one to care for our patients in our hospitals, no one to provide nursing care for our elders, no one to assist our new mothers, no one to provide health education to our youth in many communities, as well as many other things that they do. Nurses are essential. Our health care system absolutely could not function without them. What does it mean -- this mean, Mr. Speaker? It means that there -- when there is a pandemic, the entire territory is ordered to stay home; nurses have to continue on like nothing has changed. It means that if working in a hospital and they wish to request time off from work, it gets denied due to operational

requirements if there's no one to cover for them. This happens on normal times and not just in pandemics. It is unfortunate that given how much nurses do, they are not treated the same. It was recently raised that indeterminate nurses are tired of being treated differently than short-term locum nurses. It causes a weaker morale in the workplace, as mentioned in the same article. Yes, there is a nursing shortage in the country, and, yes, it's hard to attract people to the North due to the cost of living. Many may not know that term nurses do receive the northern living allowance as it's added to their hourly wage. They also get their flights and their subsidized rent. Indeterminate staff don't. Some say well, they get a pension plan. Well, in my experience as a past manager, that wasn't on the top of the list for many. The world is changing, Mr. Speaker, and our younger generations don't think like the past - to work, work, work, get that pension and retire. It's more about work-life balance. Work, work, work for the things you want to do, and enjoy life.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister stated in a news article on May 25th, 2021, that the health authority is meeting with the UNW to investigate those concerns. The nurses are not going to complain to the hand that feeds them, and the health authority needs to send out independent persons to hear from them so that they can voice their concerns without feeling like they may get retribution for saying the truth. This government is committed to increasing the number of resident indeterminate health care professionals. I know that many will speak up in confidence given the opportunity to do so, to-- the real issues are brought-- so the real issues are brought forward, and only then will we be able to fix the issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES-NWT CHAMBER OF MINES WORKING GROUP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On March 4th, 2021 during the review of the ITI main estimates, I asked questions about the core funding received by the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. The ITI deputy minister said "we meet with the Chamber every two weeks in a working group. We are working on our competitiveness. We are looking at actions. They are contributing to the critical metals action plan. There is a lot of good work."

This got me thinking. What could the Chamber of Mines and ITI senior staff possibly be talking about that requires meetings every couple of weeks? I'm

not aware of any other economic sector that has that kind of privileged access to this department. So I filed an Access to Information request to find out what was happening.

What I got back appears to be an incomplete set of GNWT-Chamber of Mines COVID-19 recovery working group meeting summaries with numerous redactions that I tabled in the House yesterday. I encourage all of my colleagues, the media, and the public to review these meeting summaries. What was supposed to be a working group focused on economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID pandemic has transitioned into a high-level bimonthly lobbying campaign behind closed doors.

Notes reveal ITI taking actions well beyond economic recovery, or COVID. The economic and financial interests of the mining industry appear to be driving actions by ITI. Regular MLAs don't get this kind of access.

Working group members have been reviewing and editing ministerial correspondence, including letters to co-management boards, reviewing and changing work contracted through public procurement processes, and pushing for land withdrawals that support land rights' negotiations to be lifted or stopped. Political advice in dealing with the federal government is freely shared and exchanged. Efforts are being coordinated on a federal minerals plan with GNWT pushing to have diamonds and arsenic considered critical. Nothing seems to be off limits in these lobbying meetings.

This is not about whether mining is good or criticism of the Chamber of Mines. The chamber does a very good job representing its interest. However, these interests are not the same as the public interest. This is about the appropriateness of these meetings, held behind closed doors, that have expanded well beyond economic recovery. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CON MINE DOCK

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, call me biased but I believe the community of Great Slave is lucky to have some of the most beautiful spots in all of Yellowknife. Residents of Great Slave enjoy an abundance of nature at our doorstep. Tin Can Hill, Rotary Park, and the former Con Mine site are all great places to walk your dog, launch your canoe, go skiing, or just allow nature's beauty to soothe your soul.

Over the past few months, I have been trying to get information on what is happening at the former mine site and, specifically, at the dock. I've approached different levels of government, as well as different departments, and from what I've been able to ascertain is that there will be no building developments happening on the mine site proper in the short term. However, there appears to be a lot of interest in what is going on at the end of Robertson Drive; in particular, by the Department of ITI as part of their Great Slave fisheries revitalization program.

Once the snow had melted, I visited the dock to see what my constituents had been contacting me about. The dock is badly in need of repair and ongoing maintenance. Rebar tie-offs are twisted, sinkholes are forming, and sediment is eroding into the lake, something that could lead to environmental damage. The approach down to the dock is steep and rutted, also showing signs of sediment migration into the lake.

It is clear that the dock is routinely used by the public as a boat launch, for my constituents accessing their houseboats, and as an entry point onto the lake for recreational enjoyment year-round.

If plans are being made to change this site, it's imperative that area residents be given a say and their needs be incorporated into any design. Will there be energized stalls and parking available for the house-boaters? Will the dock be widened and commerce areas set up for farmers markets or the like? Will there be areas for picnicking or trails established? What I'm really getting at, Mr. Speaker, is will the public be able to continue to utilize and enjoy this area unfettered and will the final design meet their needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2021 NUNAKPUT GRADUATES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, graduation's across the territory and my communities in Nunakput. With the end of the school year approaching I would like to extend congratulations to Nunakput's class of 2021 graduates in our communities. I'd also like to give a special thanks to the teachers and the school staff and our local DEAs, family members, and other role models in our communities who assist our youth to succeed and achieve their goals.

Graduating is a monumental achievement and dedication to study and perseverance in graduation in the North. This year is a bigger deal because we

had to deal with so much in our small communities, such as COVID-19. Through the pandemic, they had such a -- to go through quite the process. But they did it.

Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk has seven graduates this year: Cassandra Kuptana, Brennan Wolki,, Savannah Beaulieu, Janelle Pokiak, Medric Lavallee, Natasha Ross, and my daughter Mikayla Jacobson. I'm really proud today, in regards to that. She did it.

--Applause

Yeah, my daughter, she's really special to me, because that's my youngest daughter. Now I only got one more to go.

--Laughter

He's eight years old but I got a few more years.

Mr. Speaker, in Ulukhaktok at Helen Kalvak Elihakvik School in Ulu, we have one graduate, Tyrell Kuptana. His graduation ceremony will be held on June 11th.

Angik School in Paulatuk is celebrating their graduation. We would like to congratulate Figgues Krengnektak, Grace Nakimayak, Shannon Green, and Jorgan Ruben.

Graduation is a significant milestone in a young person's life and it marks their entire entry into the adult world to pursue bigger dreams and pursuing trades, move to post-secondary education and entering the workforce. The sky's the limit, Mr. Speaker.

Our grads represent the future leaders in our communities and address the complex challenges we face as a territory. To all graduates across the territory, we are all very proud of you and we wish you the best in your future endeavors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I've spoken several times about the importance of what the Taltson Hydro Expansion represents for the future of the NWT. I speak passionately and frequently about this issue for a number of reasons. Primarily, it is a great opportunity for the NWT economy and all people of the NWT. This project is of great importance because it will bring the NWT into a prime state of development for the future growth of the diamond industry, mineral industry,

non-renewable and renewable industry, and is a green energy project at the highest level.

Mr. Speaker, in the eyes of some, this project is either considered too big or not good enough to address our territory's needs. Well, that all depends on which needs we're addressing first. For me, my focus is the economy and helping people to better themselves and not just to survive, but to thrive. Right now businesses are hurting which means that people are hurting. I want to see people with stable jobs, a steady income, and that people are fed and housed appropriately. However, in order to achieve those things, we need to have a strong economic base with a variety of jobs available for people to work.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Taltson Expansion has the potential to spur further economic growth for the people of the NWT. I'm confident that this project can and will create spinoff industries within the NWT. Let's also address the elephant in the room. This project is crucial if the NWT has any intention to advance any future mining exploration projects. We all know the cost of living is going up every year for everything we buy but so is the cost of doing business in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, we need to start creating the right conditions to attract and retain business and investments in the NWT once again. Our economy is on life support right now and is in dire need of a kick start. For example, in January, Statistics Canada published a report on economic activity in Canada for 2020, which found out that NWT experienced a decline of economic activity by 12 percent in 2020. Moreover, another recent Stats Canada report from last month states that the NWT experienced the highest decline in gross domestic product of any jurisdiction in Canada for 2020. In total, GDP fell by 10.4 percent in the NWT for 2020, amounting to the most severe economic decline for the NWT in 40 years.

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

--Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, as our territory and country moves toward an economic recovery in the post-pandemic world, our government needs to seize this moment and secure permanent funding for the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project. The federal government has been investing hundreds of millions of dollars in programs, services, and in key economic sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. This is a ripe time to work with the levels of government to finally get this project off the ground with permanent funding.

In times of economic decline, we must think big and long term, and the Taltson Hydro Expansion must be included with that discussion. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, given the GNWT's strategic potential to the rest of Canada, our infrastructure deficit is truly shocking. We sit on top of some of the country's most valuable resources, but many can barely put food on the table, and our assets from roads to ports to community social infrastructure, do not reflect the needs of the 21st century economy or of the quality of life we aspire to.

In this House, one of the infrastructure deficits we speak of the most is housing. Housing needs bold leadership as it struggles between affording its legacy while figuring out how to pay for its future. Declining CMHC contributions make the government's need for real action imperative. By 2038, CMHC's contribution to the operations of public housing will be zero, and the value of today's GNWT contribution to the Housing Corporation will barely cover the operations and maintenance of NWT public housing, let alone fund new housing stock in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the world is in the cross-hairs of crisis - pandemic crisis, mental health crisis, and climate crisis. We need to transition to greater resilience in our economic systems, social institutions, modern wellness practices, and industrial technologies. The transition we face is a trillion dollar economic opportunity for northern and Indigenous businesses or a relapse to obsolete ways of solving problems. In short, Mr. Speaker, we are at a point of transformative opportunity.

The federal government is doing its first nation-wide infrastructure assessment called Building the Canada we Want in 2050. The national engagement sets out three main priorities: assessing Canada's infrastructure needs and establishing a long term vision, improving coordination among infrastructure owners and funders, and determining the best ways to fund and finance infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't only a potential to, again, signal desperate need for housing infrastructure; it is an opportunity to transform the definition of

nation building infrastructure to include forward-looking social infrastructure that the North needs. This includes public transit, high speed broadband, freedom from diesel dependency using clean energy to power homes and businesses, waste management, child care, community, cultural, and recreational centres that build more inclusive and liveable communities, and housing that supports and empower a meaningful life.

This is an opportunity for stable, predictable, long-term infrastructure investments that train people in 21st century skills, create jobs, grow the economy, and build cleaner, more equitable inclusive communities.

Mr. Speaker, the deadline for this initial submission to this assessment is June30th. I will have questions for the Premier to ensure this government is ready to meet that deadline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE MOTOR VEHICLES OFFICE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Yellowknife department of motor vehicles to be open a few extra hours a week on either evenings or weekends. I believe this would make life a little easier for those who can't get time off to make an appointment.

Mr. Speaker, I brought this up in this House before. I made statements and questions. I made statements to two different Infrastructure Ministers through two different deputy ministers. Let's see if today is the day.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING FLOOD RESPONSE SUPPORT FROM BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, two of the communities from the Nahendeh Region are hurting right now. Our people are heartbroken and displaced, and many have lost everything they own. While we are dealing with the flood, I was amazed and awed of the residents and businesses inside and outside of our two communities who made donations of funding, food and services, cleaning supplies, and clothing during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, this is my way of reaching out to those who helped us in their own way. I want to tell you how much we appreciate your kindness and willingness to come to our aide, so please accept this Member's statement from all of us in these two communities as I say "thank you".

Mr. Speaker, I am going to try to keep my thank you short. There will be appendixes in the statement which I would like to have deemed as read.

On Sunday, May 9th, I received a call from a friend in Yellowknife saying that he had spoke to Walmart and Walmart Canada, both Independent grocery stores (Rochi and Glen), YK Motors, Shoppers Drug Mart and Northern Food Services. Working with a logistics coordinator, there were four planes of food and water during the flood period. The two airlines, Air Tindi and Buffalo, helped get the food and supplies to Fort Simpson.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council purchased four brand new 14-cubic foot freezers and stocked them with meat supplies for the residents of Jean Marie and a similar amount to the community of Fort Simpson. The community of Deline had a fishing derby and shipped the caught fish to Fort Simpson for the residents of Fort Simpson and Jean Marie River to enjoy. As well, they provided two deep freezers, tarps and four coolers.

We had over 800 pounds of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pepsi and chips shipped to Fort Simpson. Talk about lifting the spirits of the community. 101 buckets of chicken fed over 300 families.

We saw groups, such as the Jean Marie River support group and the Fort Simpson support group formed to hold auctions to help raise funds. Thanks to the businesses and individuals who donated products to bid on. There was GoFundMe page that was also set up. We saw an anonymous donor donate 55,000 pounds of food and water for the community of Fort Simpson. The Dene Nation provided supplies to both communities as well as other communities.

I realize I have missed businesses and individuals, and I am sorry for this. However, please realize my praise goes out to all of you and I thank all donors for their generosity and kindness that was shown to both communities. God bless you all.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 756-19(2): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – NWT & NUNAVUT CHAMBER OF MINES WORKING GROUP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Yesterday, I tabled meeting summaries from the GNWT-Chamber of Mines COVID-19 recovery working group. Can the Minister tell us whether she was aware of and authorized the full scope of discussions being held between senior ITI officials and the Chamber of Mines throughout these meetings. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this group was set up, if you can think back now a long 12 months back to June, when we were still just fresh coming out of the lockdown and we were still a long way from having the Business Advisory Council or Emerging Stronger or any other type of document, when the Department of ITI then reached out to the industry representatives that represent almost a third of our GDP to start to talk about COVID recovery, COVID relief, and, really, economic recovery and economic relief more generally.

So I can't take credit for the decision to get that going at that time and to get that work moving, but I've certainly have been aware that that working group exists. And I have often asked, you know, what the reaction of the group has been and what work they're at. I have certainly received briefing notes, which I think were included in this some-hundred page document that I received yesterday. And, again, you know, certainly well aware that that work is ongoing and intended to look at where industry and private industry can come together with government to find overlap to discuss efforts for economic recovery and regrowth of the mineral resource sector in keeping with the mandate of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. The records of these meetings show that the chamber, and even ITI staff, are been pushing to stop or remove land withdrawals, most of which support good faith negotiations of Indigenous land rights. Can the Minister explain why her department is pushing to stop or remove land withdrawals in light of

Cabinet's commitments and mandate to settle and implement Indigenous rights? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no one department has a position or an opinion about land withdrawals. There is a position of the Government of the Northwest Territories on land withdrawals, and that alone is the position, not one offs or, you know, statements made out of context, perhaps in these notes. Although on that note, Mr. Speaker, I received this only yesterday. I have also gone through it. I've gone through the unredacted version.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me-- and it shouldn't be any surprise-- industry, indeed municipalities, have long said that the lack of certainty around land is a real barrier in the Northwest Territories. And it should be no surprise that solving and-- land claims, resolving the land claims and moving those negotiations forward is a mandate of this government for a very good reason. There's nothing new there. That is very clear to every department, and it's clear to the Department of ITI. It is also not a surprise that industry continues to ask what is being done on that and they advocate for a solution to that challenge, but the solution is going to be a whole-of-government one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. She may need to discuss this matter further with her staff.

But the summary seemed to indicate that the Chamber of Mines is having direct input into ministerial correspondence in changing the work done by a consultant hired through a public procurement process. Can the Minister tell us how much access the Chamber of Mines has been given to ministerial correspondence and the draft work of publicly hired and funded consultants. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's no impropriety in the sharing of information that-- again, I've reviewed both of the redacted and unredacted versions and I spoke to the department. And it's very clear that when there's correspondence going between levels of government, between governments, between government officials, while we may well want to share the efforts and the work that we are doing, for example in a remediation economy, a number of letters were I believe tabled here in the House in order to put forward the kind of advocacy that is happening between governments. That correspondence and that sharing is just that, it's sharing. They're certainly not going to be editing any materials. Or if they are writing, if industry is writing on their own lobbying efforts, it may well be to their benefit to share that with the government.

And that's a benefit of having working groups like this, whether it's in the mineral resource sector, the fisheries sector, in the remediation economy, that is the kind of work ITI does, and it's the same level of access that's being provided here.

With respect to the work of consultants, I think I have a hunch as to what exactly the Member is speaking to. You know, and, again, at this point, it's-- I suspect, Mr. Speaker, although I haven't had an opportunity to speak to the Member about this document that was tabled, there is a study that was commissioned. It involved all three territories and CanNor around how to increase investment in the Northwest Territories in the mineral resources sector. And that work indeed did look at the position of the Chamber of Mines, because they represent the industry that we are trying to increase investment in accordance with the mandate.

I'm happy to speak to the Member further about that work, but where it's at, it is progressing. Again, it's tri-territorial, Mr. Speaker. And as tri-territorial but knowing that we are looking to increase investment in private sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister for that response. Now that this information on these meetings has been made public, the Minister has several options as I see it, and they are not mutually exclusive. She could stop these meetings, confine them to their original and stated purpose of economic recovery, allow other interested parties to observe and/or participate, make complete summaries of these lobbying meetings made public, and afford other economic sectors and nongovernmental organizations the same opportunity for consultation and lobbying.

What, if anything, is the Minister prepared to do about these GNWT-Chamber of Mines COVID-19 recovery working group meetings that have moved well beyond their original purpose? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think as I said at the beginning, this is an industry that contributes one third of the GDP of the Northwest Territories, over 1300 direct jobs in 2019, not to mention indirect jobs, over \$813 million is spent in procurement. That's supporting all the other industries. If the Department of ITI wasn't having regular meetings with the industry representation, I would be facing very difficult questions in the House to explain why we aren't. There are regular working group meetings with the fisheries sector right now. I have regular meetings with Northwest Territories tourism,

as is the department working often very closely with them.

The list of options that the Member has proposed, I have not seen. I don't have it in front of me. But every industry should have access to the Department of ITI. That is exactly the role of ITI, and certainly the sector that is the size of the mineral resource sector should have a role with the Department of ITI. It should always be focused on the well-being of the Northwest Territories, on the economy of the well-being-- the well-being of the economy of the Northwest Territories, and always in keeping that there is work that can be done in the private sector and work that must be done in the public sector. And where we can find common ground we move forward and where we cannot, so be it, both parties still need to advance, because, again, I think at the end of the day, we're all working for the same thing, which is really the growth of the Northwest Territories and our betterment of our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 757-19(2):
TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the Taltson Hydro Expansion is setting the groundwork for future development of industry and ensuring that the power rates across the territory are more reasonable. Therefore, this is probably the number one mandate item for development in our list of priorities. Does the Minister agree with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree. The Taltson Hydro Expansion is one of four major infrastructure projects as a priority of this government. And in no particular order, but it's the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Tlicho All-Season Road, the Slave Geological Province Energy Communications and Transportation Corridor. Also, Mr. Speaker, this is a mandate to advance any of the infrastructure projects as Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the snowball effect that the Taltson Hydro Expansion will have for our economic recovery will be enormous since we know, that by 2030 all major auto companies will be going electric for their vehicle lineups. We cannot wait until the last minute to plan, assess, and complete this major consumer change without this project. Does the Minister agree with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree again. The Taltson Expansion Project is a critical piece of our strategy to connect ten of our communities around Great Slave Lake to one hydro grid that will stabilize the cost of energy for all residents and also set the stage for more of a sustainable resource development so that we can rely on green energy to be able to grow our economy for the next 50 years. In our time between the Snare and the Taltson system will provide essential green energy, infrastructure to fuel the clean electrification of the transportation sector here in the Northwest Territories for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister must mediate a truly strong agreement with the Indigenous groups with majority ownership if possible. We must start walking the talk and show concrete action that the major shareholders are the Indigenous groups that are affected. Does the Minister agree with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, this is three for four perhaps. I agree. And we are doing this. You know, we have the Akaitcho Dene First Nation, we have the NWT Metis Nation, and the Salt River First Nation have signed off on an MOU to work together on this project, which is very important milestone in moving forward to be able to engage with Indigenous groups along-- you know, along this project. So we are in the process of shifting our focus to the implementation of the MOU and also a key area of focus on the commercial structure and the business case for this project and ownership opportunities will certainly be available to our Indigenous partners, but we need more time to define the overall costs, the risk of this project, and also all the parties to the agreement that are prepared to accept this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, to conclude, the Taltson Hydro Expansion will be and should be one of the major priorities in our recovery plan for the Government of the Northwest Territories after the pandemic. The Minister should be asking the federal government to fund this project 100 percent to stimulate the economy of the North and to ensure our Indigenous shareholders will benefit from this project. Does the Minister agree with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to be operating right now at 100 percent funding for all eight -- for \$18-million from the Government of Canada to be able to support a feasibility stage of the project. Funding is being used to define the commercial structure,

including costs, risk to the nature of public sector and our private sector to support that is required to make this project a reality. We expect that various levels of public sector support will be required, including the GNWT to be able to unlock the benefits of a long-term potential of this Taltson Hydro Expansion. So, again, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to be able to agree with the Member on this subject, because sometimes we don't always agree on other subjects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 758-19(2):
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDERS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has created much anxiety and this has affected the mental wellness of the population. We're at a crossroads where it is possible to expect court challenges based on the premise that the public health emergency declared does no longer meet the test for "significant risk" and therefore the orders may be fine and reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice confirm his department's participation in reviewing those public health records created due to the current public health emergency to ensure they meet all legal requirements, and how far does that participation go with the Department of Health? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Justice has a division called legal division and that is essentially the GNWT's in-house law firm, and legal division provides legal advice and services to GNWT departments and entities such as the Office of the chief public health officer. And since the beginning of the pandemic, the legal division has been working with the chief public health officer to provide advice in respect of the drafting of-- they will suggest wording. There's probably, I'm sure there's been some back and forths to ensure that, you know, the wording is what it should be. With that said, ultimately the final say on what an order says is that of the chief public health officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak to whether or not the department has reviewed the relevant sections of the Public Health Act to determine what constitute and is the legal definition of "significant risk" as it relates to the current COVID-19 public health emergency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in the Public Health Act, a public health emergency is defined as something that presents a significant risk to public health, and determining whether there's a significant risk to public health is the determination of the CPHO. The Department of Justice's lawyers do what they can but ultimately, they are not medical professionals and there's a lot of science involved in determining risk and so ultimately they of course have to defer to the chief public health officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak to whether or not the department's reviewed the relevant section of the Act to determine the legal definition of "reasonable measures" as it relates to the current COVID-19 orders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you can imagine, this has been a focus of the department for over a year now and the Public Health Act has been reviewed, other pieces of the relevant legislation, the ever-evolving case law, Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So, yes, all of these have been reviewed. And, again, this is similar to the "significant risk," the definition, this determination is made by the chief public health officer.

The department does provide advice on the risks associated with specific measures and orders, that is to say the legal risks. But in terms of the risks and what is reasonable in response to those risks in terms of the public health orders, that is, again, under the authority of the chief public health officer. But Justice does examine those and provide advice and opinion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it appears the risk of COVID-19 and variants have subsided due to the introduction of vaccines along with the health safety measures in place. Can the Minister confirm if his department has considered the possibility that a rights infringement court challenge may be forthcoming that seeks to have the court vacate the public health emergency and on all related CPHO orders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure government lawyers are always worried about court challenges coming and so, yes, they have definitely considered the possibility of a court challenge since day one. You know, this is a very unique situation and no one knew how far orders could go at the beginning. There has been case law around Canada, not necessarily in the territory, that has tackled some of these issues and the

department is watching that. But it's always on the radar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 759-19(2):
CON MINE DOCK

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ITI. Can the Minister confirm whether ITI has applied for a reserve on the lease containing the Con dock?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, ITI has applied to Lands for as a reserve of the Con dock mine area and the purpose being to create a new boat launch and the associated docking facility mentioned with respect to the commercial fishing industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does part of that, then, also include the fish transfer facility itself, or will that be located elsewhere? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just by way of preface, there's still a lot of work to be done in terms of any kind of design, the final design, which could look a variety of different ways. But in short, the main access, or the main interest area, indeed, is to create a fish collection station so that fishers can offload from the lake and have it shipped down to the, but then, hopefully, constructed plant in Hay River. And as such, this will be one of the associated sites that fishers around the lake can be attending. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so I'm glad to hear that it is about maintaining the public access. I'm going to throw the Minister a little bit of a curve ball here. There isn't a lot of room down at this location and the area adjacent to the dock and the access point for it was a former tank farm, tank fuel facility. So, maybe the Minister will have to get back to me but I'm curious to know if the plan is to expand, then, into the old fuel tank facility area, and if so, is that area remediated? And she can get back to me if she needs to. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's always nice to have a bit of an out, to be able to get back to the House with respect to detailed information. What I can say, Mr. Speaker, at this point is that any of the work that's involving the lake is going to have to involve the Department of DFO for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, small craft harbour specifically. And at this point, what I understand

they are looking at is at least three different potential designs and as such that it-- my understanding of them, not being someone who's designed this type of facility, is that it likely will still be surrounding on the dock area specifically and not into the tank sites. But what I can do is say that once they are ready to have that feasibility study done, that work done, we'll make sure to communicate that with the Members so they can understand what they will entail. And last comment, Mr. Speaker, I understand too that the fact of us seeking this land is actually out for a public consultation right now. So there certainly is more available information with respect to the land that is at issue, and there will be more information available once we are at a further advanced stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has provided me with a lot of information. I did hear somewhere in there then it sounds like the dock is actually going to get repaired then. If they were going to put all this facility down and not in the fuel tank area, then that means a large expansion for the dock would be my guess. So I'm very excited for that to come and be part of my constituency. I guess the Minister has mentioned-- and again I am a little off script here, the Minister's mentioned to me or mentioned that there's public consultation ongoing. Could the Minister commit to providing me with the information where my constituents could then be involved in that? I understand that they are meeting with the City of Yellowknife however I'm not sure if I'm constituents understand, or I understand, how they can feed into that stakeholder engagement. And also, will the Minister commit to coming and having a meeting with residents in that region? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there have been meetings with the city already, between the city and ITI, and I understand that those discussions have been positive. I understand there is public consultation now, I suspect with the Department of Lands so I'll certainly confer with my colleague and get that information out to be sure we can share it publicly. And then lastly, Mr. Speaker, it would be again with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans who would have the final sort of critical role to be playing in terms of the repair work at the Con Mine dock. But indeed have been engaged with us thus far and have recently corresponded to confirm that they'll be working in collaboration with ITI. So, again, we will ensure that that information gets out to. And I would be more than happy to walk down the street and meet with the folks in the riding of Great Slave. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 760-19(2):
YELLOWKNIFE MOTOR VEHICLES OFFICE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it was yesterday in the House, the Minister of Justice was talking about integrated service delivery and the goal being to, you know, make government processes designed for the people and not necessarily what is easiest for government. For almost a year now, the Yellowknife department of motor vehicles has not accepted walk-in appointments. You have to get an appointment. I've had numerous constituent issues regarding this. So my-- I believe this is clearly easier for the department to run it that way but not necessarily the public. So my question for the Minister of Infrastructure is when is the Yellowknife DMV going to be reopened for walk-ins?

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife DMV office, like all government offices, has an approved exposure control plan in place to be able to protect the staff and the general public. So this plan was-- was limit the number of clients allowed in the DMV office, are no more than eight at a time. So in order for us to ensure compliance with this exposure plan, the Yellowknife DMV had to implement appointment-only service and have a security person on-site. The DMV will not be able to reopen to walk-ins until the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, or even reduced. The chief public health officer-- we are very hopeful that the updated Emerging Wisely plan document will be able to address this or at least provide us with some timelines so that we could be able to be reopened to the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'll save some of my questions for Dr. Kandola when we can reopen the Yellowknife DMV.

During COVID, the DMV was completely closed for a period. But they were actually-- offered more and more services online and some of the traditional in-person services were being done by email. I guess my question to the Minister of Infrastructure is what is preventing all services from being offered online? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has a robust online service menu, which includes things like renewing and replacing driver's licences, general ID, book/cancel/reschedule driver exams, renew/print/cancel vehicle registration, commercial truck permits - the list goes on. So because of the nature of these-- some of these services, they

cannot be completed online. Transfer of a driver's licence or ID card, obtaining new vehicle registration require in-person verification of documents for the authenticity of the-- as well, just to be able to identify person requesting this service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I one day hope that there's a path forward where the Yellowknife DMV can look to do what most capitals across Canada and most, you know, government service officers in other jurisdictions do, which is have a portion of their hours be available, either on evenings or weekends, just for a small few hours for those people who cannot get time off work to make normal 9-to-5 hours. Is there any possibility of that happening, Mr. Speaker?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the possibility of extending hours of the YK issuing office. As the Member mentioned, he's been trying to get this office open evenings and weekends for the past year and he has not had any success with several DMs and several Ministers. Because, and I want to say that there are many different factors considering, including the costs, staff safety, cost of services. Also the UNW Collective Agreement. Opening-- we did analyze the cost of opening on Saturdays and it was about a \$170,000 a year. So these costs would have to be passed on to the clients, resulting in increased fees, and no one wants that. We also would be able to require to have a client program officer in headquarters be able to provide overrides or authorizations as well as require system support from the Department of Finance. The staff at the issuing office have to deal with sometimes irate clients on, you know, perhaps a regular basis, and these clients are usually dealt with by the manager. So that means the manager would have to be on-site after hours as well, so putting additional stress on some of our staff. And, this is very important, the UNW Collective Agreement defines a regular workday as Monday to Friday between 8:30 and 5. And any change to this requirement would mean that the union-- it would be an agreement with the union and the employer.

So I'm sorry, I mean, I agreed plenty times with the previous MLA but this time, there is no plans to extend the hours of operation at the Yellowknife issuing office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Costs, irate clients, union barriers, that could have been an answer to pretty much the reason why we can't do anything in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I guess -- I would like to speak to costs.

Right now the DMV is not even open 9 to 5. It closes at 4 o'clock or 4:30, depending. Is there a possibility where we actually reduce the weekday hours to be open part-time on weekends? I think we could actually reduce the overall hours, or give some people a window outside of that time, and maybe we can go-- we have a new Collective Agreement coming out, maybe there's some sort of path to allow flexible hours, you know, for our workers. Is there some sort of path forward where we get around the cost obstacle by changing the hours of the DMV? I'm settled to being closed Monday and open Saturday; whatever is possible here, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member's very adamant to get this office open. He's even willing to settle for less weekday for hours for half a day to be open, thinking it's still not going to cost us money. It's going to cost us money, Mr. Speaker. So however, you know, on a flip side, we are looking at, you know, willing to direct some of the department to look at options perhaps, as a path forward to be able to increase hours during the work week. But any potential solution for this, Mr. Speaker, would be dependent on discussions with the UNW and our employees and the department to see if we can make this work. Little light at the end of the tunnel but not yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 761-19(2):
NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier. My first question is will the Premier commit to an all-of-government response to Canada's first national infrastructure assessment engagement called "Building the Canada we want in 2050" and will the Premier commit to sharing the GNWT's submission with standing committee?

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, whenever we do any submissions to Canada for such projects, we try to do an all-of-government approach. Right now, currently, our departments are reviewing the Canada's engagement paper and will be consolidating and submitting a formal response to that. But I do want to highlight as well, is that's not the only chance that we get.

This government has taken a strong stance in building partnerships, relationships with the federal government. Every chance we get, Mr. Speaker, we

are lobbying the federal government to increase our infrastructure, not only the amount of infrastructure but the cost of infrastructure for us. And we will continue that throughout this term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT's housing deficit, and given that the NWT has a large housing deficit and that housing is a priority of this government, will the Premier commit to highlighting housing within the engagement response to ensure we continue to moving the housing needle in the NWT? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing was identified within our priorities at the beginning of this government. It's always been a priority of mine and many colleagues around the table, how housing was an issue for. I've heard housing over the last year and a half coming from the other side of the House constantly.

The pandemic actually, we had -- we didn't have enough housing before, and the pandemic brought it to the forefront that we don't have enough and we're moving backwards instead of frontwards. So, yes, absolutely, housing has become a priority for us. It's one of our main priorities. In fact, we're working on it. So not only are we bumping up the staff within the housing departments, one position specifically, to look at the federal engagement and to look at our policies within the housing thing. We've also been working with our federal government. We've -- earlier this year, the GNWT proposed to the federal government to establish an intergovernmental working group of officials, with Canada, that would bring together all players in housing, including Infrastructure Canada, Innovation Canada, CanNor, Indian and Northern Affairs, Indigenous Services Canada, and CMHC. Now, this is kind of a new thing that we haven't tried before, but I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that Canada is on board and has agreed to doing this working group with us. So we are-- if we're all at the table and we're meeting with them regularly, I am hopeful that housing will be a priority in the GNWT for the federal government as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, this engagement is about transforming of technologies and thinking outside the box for what we want our communities to look like here in the Northwest Territories. How will the Premier ensure that departments integrate their approach to infrastructure? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, all departments get together, and we talk about our infrastructure needs. When we put in the request to Canada, it's

various. It's not only on ideas like this, such as the public engagement on the national infrastructure assessment. We meet with them. In fact, through COVID we're meeting with them every two weeks, usually, with the Prime Minister and all Premiers. At those tables, we talk about the deficits and the infrastructure needs. We search -- every Minister here works on their infrastructure needs with the appropriate Ministers. I carry those forward at the Premier's table. And we also look at ideas of when the federal budget just came out. We become as flexible as we can. We look at our needs and we look at their mandates, and we try to make them work together. So that's-- Canada has a win and the NWT has a win. And that's what partnerships is and that's about being flexible, and you need to be flexible when you're working in anywhere. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, the honourable Premier. Oral questions. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, case studies show that on the failures of infrastructure strategies, the focus is on governance and regulatory regimes that don't keep pace with technical and social capacity or our needs. One example of that, Mr. Speaker, here in the Northwest Territories, is we can say we're sitting at all these table and that we're partnering together and we're really working forward -- or moving forward in order to make change, but then we can't make policy changes at the basic levels of our departments to make people work together and make our policies work for the people of the Northwest Territories. So I'm wondering how does the Premier intend to respond to transformative technologies with modern governance structures that allow us to evolve to the North we want to be? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of the case studies that the Member is speaking of so I can't really speak on those studies per se. But what I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that the GNWT has learned very quickly to be very flexible in technologies. Climate change's impacting the North more than any other jurisdiction in the world. So with climate change, we're looking at all of our infrastructure, our oil fields, our housing projects, everything. And we bring those forward to the federal government at all asks, so. So we need to be flexible, Mr. Speaker. And we need to be aware of the impacts and the technologies that will help us to deal with the impacts. We've been doing that for many years because of climate change and we will continue to do it as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 762-19(2):
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDERS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain to my constituents what does "significant risk" mean to her department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this term is not defined in the legislation. And it is the judgment of the chief public health officer about what "significant risk" is. She is a medical doctor who uses resources from the public health community to determine significant risk, and she advises myself and others about what that risk is and how to mitigate it. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain to my constituents what does "reasonable measures" mean to her department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm getting a working-over as a non-doctor/non-lawyer. So reasonable measures are those measures, as I understand it, that will mitigate the risk of disease and other unwanted outcomes of a public health emergency. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm the basis for her decision to continually extend the public health emergency as it relates to COVID? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, public health is about balancing the public health emergency and the risk to the public with the mitigation measures that reduce that risk. That is something that is an ongoing process. It's a judgment. It's based on science but ultimately the chief public health officer has to try to strike that balance. And I heard my colleague, the Minister of Justice, say that they were involved in looking at that as well. What I recognize from my inbox today, and most days recently, is that people are not satisfied with that balance any longer. They feel that the mitigation measures are too harsh for the risks that are posed now by COVID, especially given the increased vaccination rate. And that's the reason that we are revising Emerging Wisely, or the CPHO is revising Emerging Wisely. We recognize that things have changed and we need to catch up. And so by this time next week, that document will be public and everyone will see how we've addressed that. And no doubt, my inbox will fill up again. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if her department, with respect to the public health emergency and orders, is to only provide a rubber stamp with no discussion with-- yes, when the CPHO provides her direction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision to renew is the chief public health officer's to provide, and I sign off on it. So the thing is that advises me about what she thinks is necessary and then I agreed up to this point. I guess at some point I could disagree. But the point here is that the chief public health officer has sweeping power under the Public Health Act to evaluate things like risk and reasonable measures and to decide on what kind of public health orders would address those, and so the public health emergency comes out of that. And I am keen to see the public health emergency retired, and that is something that I hope that Emerging Wisely will point us in the direction of so that we no longer have these states of emergency in place that continue month in and month out. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 763-19(2):
NURSING HUMAN RESOURCES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I thought you forgot me. Or are you just favoring my colleague there?

Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, you know, this a long ongoing issue. This is something that I talked about even in my campaign. You know, this is not something that's new with the difference between locum nurses and indeterminate nurses and the unfairness and how it creates this unhealthy workplace. You know, when working with the people and you're having to have each other's back, you know, and you get frustrated. So I think one of the first questions I have is will the Minister commit to having an NTHSSA hire an independent party to hear from the nurses who are indeterminate, locum, do exit interviews with all health care staff, make that mandatory, and to report back to the staff that have put that information forward and to the NTHSSA on the findings and then make it public so that this House and everyone else can hear it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes that she is in fact unforgettable. And I do appreciate her advocacy always about nurses. And I'm alive to the issues around job satisfaction. They've been reported to me personally and reported publicly that there is dissatisfaction within the NTHSSA, and some places, about working conditions, compensation, and so on and so forth.

I am very interested in hearing from the nurses. I can say that it is easier to retain a nurse than to find a nurse and get him or her to move here and take that job. We have an overall vacancy rate in the NTHSSA of about 17 percent. So anyone that we can keep rather than see out the door, this is a victory all around.

So we have been trying, in fact, that work in our mandate by saying that we would take measures to recruit and retrain resident health care professionals in the time of this Assembly. So I am going to commit to working with the department to gather the input of the nurses and to find out what we can do to understand why they do leave and whether there are things that we can do that would make their job satisfaction better. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I believe she was talking about me. Sorry, I messed up on my list so I'll put you on the top tomorrow. Top of the list, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I was talking about you; that's okay.

So will the Minister also commit to, if we're going to do this kind of work and she's going to talk to her department and hopefully that, you know the thing like I said in my statement, you know, you're not going to bite the hand that feeds you or, you know, and so some nurses fear because, you know, when you live in a smaller community or you're working with a tight group of people, you're all friends, you know. And I managed the nursing units in Inuvik, and they were my friends. They were my colleagues, they were my staff, so, how do you come forward and really say what you want to say when you can't do it anonymously? So I think that is one of the things that I would like a commitment, if they could come forward and do this anonymously so that their words can get on record as well. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the point that the Member is making, and I can commit that information collected will be reported in a way that can't be attributed to any individual. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that to the Minister. I think the nurses in the

territory will be happy to be able to provide input into this. And I feel like this is something that should happen sooner than later. When we come back after this session, it will be starting our third-- we'll be going into our third year, right? Yeah, second, yeah, third-- or yeah, we've got two years done. Wow, the pandemic has gotten to my brain. So we are going into our third year. So I would like this work to be done sooner than later, if possible, so that way we can actually try to meet that priority in this government. So will the Minister commit to that? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a new idea that the MLA is presenting today so I can't really commit to how long will it take to make it operational and to provide the results to her. But I have committed to looking at some of the ideas that she raised that are, it seems to me, quite simple to implement things like exit interviews and job satisfaction surveys and so on. So I will do my best to provide this information as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the last commitments that I would ask the Minister of is if her department has been working with RNANTNU to see where these-- if these concerns have been raised with them within, you know-- and how the department can work with RNANTNU to possibly get a lot of the information that's coming forward. And if -- that's just another commitment that I'd like to ask for today. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. The NTHSSA has a territorial nursing council and they meet regularly with the Registered Nurses Association and they seek their advice on all kinds of issues, including recruitment and retention. And, you know, if we're going to develop ways in which to survey nurses about job satisfaction, we would certainly turn to them and ask their advice on that. I want to say as well that nurses are unionized. They belong to the UNW. And they also have the option of pursuing their issues through the Union of Northern Workers and we have a regular working group with the Union of Northern Workers where we-- where we hear the concerns that are brought forward and try to resolve them. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 764-19(2):
CANCER PRE-SCREENING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I've been talking to a few constituents over the last few weeks and sitting at

home, we've been really having an increase in cancer, stage 4. I hear a lot of stage 4 cancer in my constituents. I have people that are-- you know, that need a little bit of help here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister if she could start doing again, I guess prescreening of cancer patients in the riding across the NWT if she can for, you know, colorectal cancer, any kind of cancer, that's higher rates in our territory. If that's possible to start providing, I guess, checkup, checkups prior to being told they have stage 4 cancer. Our constituents need help, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine a worse situation than being told that you have stage 4 cancer. And that's certainly something we want to avoid at all costs. Screening is something we could do. We could certainly do more of it. We've tried new approaches, specifically with colorectal cancer. There's a FIT test, that's an acronym, and it's a self-administered test, and we've sent FIT tests out throughout the Beaufort Delta where there's a high incidence of colorectal cancer. And we have pretty good uptake on that. It's a very preliminary screening tool. There could be a more sophisticated screening done. And we recognize the cancer rates in the NWT are high in some areas, that colorectal is one area where screening is very important. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, if we could get I guess work together with the Minister's office to start getting prescreening for my constituents across Nunakput. She said that, you know, it's colorectal cancer. Lung cancer's most common diagnosed in women and long cancer, we just need a little bit of help because our whole region, the Beaufort Delta, people are, someone in someone's family's fighting cancer, and they need a little bit of help. So Mr. Speaker, I just wanted, you know, a commitment from my Minister to make sure that we could make a path forward to get prescreening tests done sooner rather than later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have information to hand about how prescreening is decided now in Nunakput. But I'm certainly willing to ask questions and understand how it's done and to see whether there are ways in which we can make it more widely available and get back to the Member for Nunakput. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I brought up my Member's statement this last week in regards to travel for

medical, medical travel. And this is a part of it. So somebody misses-- this is a chain effect. And, you know, if we could stop that, it would be good. I know our staff works hard, her staff works hard in regards to making sure that people are getting out there and getting served, but there's got to be a way that we could work towards it again to make prescreening, because we're losing a lot of people, a lot of good people that shouldn't be. It shouldn't be having to take that stage 4, you know. Again yesterday, I just lost a friend, stage 4 cancer. And it really hurts. And when you're seeing it like that and when we can try to make a difference, Mr. Speaker, we should try to make a path forward. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry to hear about the Member's friend. Unfortunately all of us know people who have cancer or have had cancer and have lost people we love to it. It is very difficult.

I'm interested in screening because it is a means of preventing further interventions by the health system. It's better quality of life for the patients themselves, and it's just better overall if we can provide prevention in the form of prescreening rather than addressing problems when they get to such a severe stage. So that is something that I'm personally very interested in, and I'm willing to take up with respect to the Member's questions. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 765-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES – NWT & NUNAVUT CHAMBER
OF MINES WORKING GROUP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have further questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment on the GNWT-Chamber of Mines COVID-19 working group. Can the Minister tell us whether there's a terms of reference for this group and if so, could she table that in the House tomorrow? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly there's some parameters around what the goals of the group would be, and I will make sure that we have something that I can bring forward to explain the goal and intent of the group. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I thank the Minister for that and I look forward to the

information being tabled in the House tomorrow. But I can tell the Minister I've reviewed the meeting summaries very closely, and there's things being discussed in there, including a workshop on the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the Geoscience Forum, the Fraser Institute rankings of jurisdictions, the Chamber of Mines-City of Yellowknife Memorandum of Understanding, and many more items. So can the Minister tell me how these matters relate to economic recovery for the mining sector? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I managed to write down two of the items that were listed. With respect to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board workshop, there was a workshop that was held; I believe it was hosted by the land and water boards and it was attended by, if I recall correctly, a hundred or a 150 different representatives from governments, from industry, so, you know, I am not particularly surprised that they'd be talking about that since both parties would have been in attendance at that.

With respect to the Fraser Institute, that's an annual report that's put out. Some say, you know, again, say what you will about whether or not it is an accurate representation of our industry or perhaps we're doing better than they're saying that they are. The point is, it's an industry publication that is looked at by the industry. And, again, in general, we haven't always done or fared as well as I would like to see us do.

Again, not surprising that we would want to look to the members of the industry who respond to that and say 'what can we do to be better' so that we can rank more highly. And, again, Mr. Speaker, there was a number of items listed there. The point of these meetings, at the core, was to find areas of common ground. They are not entirely overlapping. There are going to be things that the Chamber of Mines raises that the government can say, thank you, we will take that away. And there are going to be items that may be an interest to the government to pursue that the Chamber of Mines say, go ahead, do as you will. But that is the nature of tension between industry organizations and government that exists, whether I'm in the tourism sector, the agriculture sector, the fisheries sector, the film sector. It's a healthy tension, and it has to be there. So we should always, in my view, be having these conversations with the industry that we represent or that we work for, to grow the economy. We don't-- we are not run by them but the conversations need to be had.

So I'm happy to go through the other items on that list and ensure that in fact the conversations are clear, that the-- you know, the position of the government is made clear and, you know, can do that, whether that's one by one now or whether

that's later with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that commitment to ensure that the scope of these meetings is confined to its original purpose. It appears as though, and I want to draw the attention of the Minister to one particular meeting that was held on November 4th, 2020, and there was a discussion there of the mineral tenure relief package. And that certainly does have something to do with economic recovery. Information, though, shared appears to have included considerations and the decisions made by the Financial Management Board and Cabinet. Regular MLAs, we were not provided an opportunity for input into the relief package. Can the Minister explain whether the Chamber of Mines was provided with information on how the FMB and/or Cabinet made its decisions on this relief and how that relates to Cabinet confidence? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have only scanned notes in front of me, but I am confident that nothing that is confidential would have been shared. The meeting minutes simply are indicating that, in fact, although there were ongoing requests as to whether or not the mineral relief would be extended, this is of course just several months in, wondering what would be happening for the next year, the statement simply is that it has to go through Cabinet and FMB before such a decision is made. That is an appropriate response. 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 response. I'm not aware of any other economic sector or nongovernmental organization that has been able to have twice monthly meetings with senior officials for over a year with so little transparency without other stakeholders or interests at the table. Can the Minister tell us whether any other economic sector or nongovernmental organizations have bimonthly lobbying meetings without any public scrutiny or other stakeholders at the table with her department? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the business advisory council certainly, once they got going, were meeting very regularly; I think at one point weekly with representatives of the Department of ITI. But before the BAC, or the Business Advisory Council even existed, this group was put together as a working group to start to talk about economic recovery at the tail end of the closure-- there was still Ekati I

think was still closed at the time. It was clear that there was going to be a tremendous economic recovery. There was great fear and uncertainty and so this group came together and said what can we start to do right now, and they've continued to have regular meetings.

As far as others, and setting the Business Advisory Council for the moment, I believe there are regular, if not weekly or biweekly meetings with NWT tourism. That is another major sector that we have regular meetings with. And it's actually been my request that we start to have more regular meetings with the representatives of the fisheries sector given the momentum that's behind the revitalization of the fishing industry.

So, you know, again, Mr. Speaker, this is a sector that represents a third of our GDP. They are certainly spending more time at developing a recovery plan because of the impact that it has on the economy but that is by no means exclusive, and it certainly would be my hope that as we make the decisions about economic growth and about economic recovery, we are doing so in a way that is responsive to what is happening on the ground in the industry and in the business community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns for written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 427-19(2):
ANNUAL REPORT ON MISSING AND
MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS,
JUNE 2021

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: The Annual Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls June 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 428-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
520-19(2), CLIENT-FOCUSED INTEGRATED
SERVICE DELIVERY

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 520-19(2) Client-Focused

Integrated Service Delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Motions

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS Section 2(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act prescribes that an Electoral Boundaries Commission be established within two years after the day fixed for the return of the writs of the 2015 general election; and,

WHEREAS section 2(2) of the act requires that the Commission shall be composed of a chairperson and two other members appointed by the Commissioner on recommendation of the Legislative Assembly; and,

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make such a recommendations;

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, Northwest Territories, and Mr. Jack Rowe of Hay River, Northwest Territories, be appointed members of the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Member for Kam Lake.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly has established and appointed members to the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021; and,

WHEREAS Section 9(K) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act enables the Legislative Assembly to establish guidelines or criteria that shall be taken into consideration by the Commission;

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.
4. In addition to whatever recommendations the commission may propose, the Commission shall recommend how the electoral boundaries 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 publicly 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 accomplish its mandate within the existing budget allocated, it may return to the Legislative Assembly for additional funds; and,

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 KamLake. Motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Honourable Premier.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 33:
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY ACT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Bill 33 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 34:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2021-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2021-2022, 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 34 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 34:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2021-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2021-2022, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 34 has had second reading. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 25, Committee Report 15-19(2), Committee Report 16-19(2), Minister's Statement 161-19(2), Tabled Document 412-19(2), Tabled Document 413-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker, I will allow going beyond the reasonable hours of the day with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for FrameLake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Bill 25, An Act to amend the Education Act; Tabled Document 412-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No 1, 2021-2022; Committee Report 15-19(2), Report on Yearly Auditor General's 2020 Audit of the Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories; Committee Report 16-19(2), Report on Housing Phase One, Needs for

NWT Homeowners and Private landowners. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler) Thank you, Member. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we'll take a short recess and resume with the first item.

--SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we agree to consider Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act. I'll ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here today to present Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act. This bill seeks to amend the Education Act to allow a term of office of four years for elected district education authority trustees in cases where a DEA's community government has a four-year election cycle.

Currently, only election cycles of two and three years for DEAs are permitted by the Act. The proposed amendment arises from the 2018 change in municipal election cycles in Yellowknife from three to four-year terms of office for mayor and council.

Bill 25 would allow the two Yellowknife DEAs, Yellowknife Catholic Schools and Yellowknife District Education No. 1, to move to a four-year election cycle and realign their DEA elections with municipal elections starting in 2022. The amendment will also allow the two Yellowknife DEAs to hold interim elections for one-year terms this fall, as the current three-year terms of the DEA members ends in 2021.

I am pleased to bring forward this amendment to support our education partners in ensuring the efficient administration of their board trustee elections.

This concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have regarding Bill 25. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that considered the bill for opening comments. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 30th, 2021. It was

referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

On May 31st, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and completed its clause by clause review of the bill. I thank the committee for their efforts when reviewing this legislation, and individual Members may have additional comments or questions at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, I would.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. To your right is Mr. Mike Reddy, director of legislative division, Department of Justice. And to our left, making her first appearance in the chamber, Megan Wahlberg, director of policy, legislation and communications for ECE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 25. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. First off, I guess I'd like to say that I did raise -- I've met -- a number of the Yellowknife MLAs have met with the district education authorities here in Yellowknife, Yellowknife's Catholic School and YK No. 1, and we knew about the situation of how their length of term for their boards was now out of sync with city council. They requested that there be changes made to the Education Act to ensure that their term of office could be bought back in line again otherwise they'd have to hold separate elections from what the City of Yellowknife does and incur extra expenses, which I'm sure we would all rather see spent on education.

So, certainly, I supported that. I raised the issue in the House. I pushed it, even I-- earlier in this Assembly that this should get dealt with.

So I guess, first off, I'd like to know from the Minister and staff what consultation was done with the two Yellowknife school boards. And, for example, were they given a copy of the language in the bill? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was extensive consultation with the Yellowknife school boards. I've had numerous conversations with the chairs of those boards as well. As to the question of whether or not they were provided with the proposed language, I will hand it over to Ms. Wahlberg but first I'll note that the consultation with education bodies, and consultation in general I think, is to figure out the what not necessarily the how. And so when it comes down to the particulars of the, you know, the words used in legislation, it's our job as the government to ensure that those words achieve 'the what' that the school boards want. But I can pass it to Ms. Wahlberg for further information. Thank you.

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

MS. WAHLBERG: Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you, Minister. It's not my understanding that we provided the exact draft bill to the Yellowknife education bodies. However, we provided them with the plain language wording of it and they agreed to what was provided. And we made sure that they fully understood the change in the wording and the way that it was impacting the amendments to the legislation. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So here's what I said in the House on February the 6th, 2020, about these bills when I was asking questions to the Minister of Education. The situation for CSFTNO, which is Commission Scolaire Francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, which is the Francophone school board, is different as I mentioned in my statement, in that its commission represent two communities that now have different cycles for their municipal elections. So I raise the issue that CSFTNO, based in the two communities, that there was an issue here, that I wanted to make sure that whatever changes were going to be made in the Education Act would not adversely affect CSFTNO. So can someone explain to me whether there was the same sort of consultation or consideration given to CSFTNO on development of this bill? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So there was definitely consideration given to CSFTNO and the effects of this bill would have on them. And it was our understanding that this bill would have no effect and, in fact, they expressed that they were in a different situation than the other school boards. They're in two communities, and they don't align their elections with either

municipality. They have a different way of conducting elections. They don't require the same voters list and enumeration and things like that. But as it turns out, there are regulations that-- under the Education Act, that reference term lengths of other education bodies in education districts and that is really a remnant of when the French first language school board was created. And so in an indirect way, these changes will affect the CSFTNO. And, again, we know what they want, and it's our job to ensure that-- that that is ultimately achieved, so. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. So there is a problem, then, in that the regulations say that the length of term for CSFTNO is tied to the district education authorities, and now we've got one. We will have, if this bill passes, a length of term of office for the Hay River ones, for possibly Hay River commissionaires versus the Yellowknife commissionaires for CSFTNO. So how's this issue going to be fixed? And I'm curious to know why it wasn't discovered earlier. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I've spoken with the chair of the CSFTNO and informed him that there exists this issue and that we will reach out as soon as this bill is passed and begin work on amending those regulations. And I've been assured that from the time that those consultations with the CSFTNO are complete, and really the consultation is 'do you want to remain with your three-year term limit or do you want a four-year term limit?' Once we're done with that, within two weeks we can have new regulations drafted and likely enforced.

And the reason this wasn't discovered, well, I can take that one; that's on me. It is the Department of ECE and the Department of Justice's job to ensure that when we're putting forward regulations like-- or changes to acts like this that we fully consider every aspect, and this was overlooked. But-- and perhaps that if this was not discovered, it would have been overlooked for all eternity and elections would have gone forward as normal because it literally took the legendary tenacity of the Member along with a team of lawyers to really discover this. So it was-- it was something that we did overlook, and I take full responsibility. And I thank the Member for his contribution. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, I'm happy to take compliments. You know look, my objective here is not to embarrass or point fingers at anybody but given the-- how shall I put this? Litigious relationship in the past between CSFTNO and this government and the extraordinary efforts I recognize that the current Minister has undertaken to build a better working relationship with CSFTNO, my objective here is to make sure that we continue to build that relationship and that when we do these kinds of changes, it doesn't adversely affect the Francophone first language community rights holders and so on. And that's why I guess I'm tenacious about this, is I don't want this to end up in court again and I-- you know, look, full disclosure. Our kids went to Ecole Alain St. Cyr. I'm a quarter-French Canadian, my wife is a Francophone, and they're a vibrant part of our community and we just want to make sure that their rights under the Constitution are recognized and implemented fully. So I accept what the Minister said. I will hold his feet to the fire, though, in terms of getting this resolved quickly because CSFTNO does have elections scheduled this fall, and they would like to proceed with them.

And as the Minister said, basically the way they conduct their elections is a ballot box in the foyer of the schools. And the parents who are right holders under the Constitution can come in and cast their ballots right in the school. So it's different than what the school boards or the city, how they carry out their elections. But it's still democratic and all the rest so I think we want to make sure we work with them to get the solution that they want. I hear that from the Minister. And I'll hold his feet to the fire. Thanks, Madam Chair. I think that's all I've got to say. And I do support our school boards in Yellowknife getting their elections back in sync and in no way do I want this bill to be delayed. We owe it to them as well to fix this problem. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, did you want to respond?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the Member's comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Anything further? Questions? Comments? Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments? We can proceed to a clause by clause review of the bill. Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

Clause 1, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Clause 2, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Clause 3, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act, is now really for third reading. Does the committee agree that this concludes the consideration of Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, and thanks to our witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber?

Committee, we have agreed to consider tabled document 412-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) Number 1, 2021-2022. Does the Minister of Finance have an opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022. These supplementary estimates propose a total increase of \$36.6 million comprised of the following major items:

- First, \$4.3 million for investments committed to as part of the 2021-22 main estimates process, including \$600,000 to advance the Northwest Territories midwifery program into phase 2 of its implementation;
- \$1.4 million to support after-care and community-based addictions programs and services, comprised of \$750,000 for a community-based addictions and after-care fund;
- \$150,000 to fund the senior advisor to support Indigenous knowledge and wellness coordination and \$500,000 for additional community development activities;
- \$935,000 to support efforts towards reducing poverty in the Northwest Territories. This

includes \$750,000 to the anti-poverty fund, \$110,000 to increase funding for the roundtable advisory council, and \$75,000 to increase core funding to the Hay River shelter;

- \$743,000 to pilot a new approach to assisting with improving cultural safety and patient experience; supporting Indigenous patients in having their concerns, complaints, and questions resolved, and bridging cultural and language barriers;
- \$500,000 to increase the childcare infrastructure fund;
- \$100,000 to increase the Child and Family Services contribution.
- These investments will be offset by a reduction of \$4.03 million to departmental travel budgets.
- Second: \$14.8 million to support the Northwest Territories aviation sector. This funding request is partially offset by \$12.5 million in revenues from the federal government.
- Third: \$5.7 million to provide short-term relief to the Northwest Territories tourism operators and accommodation providers, two sectors that have been significantly impacted by the economic disruptions resulting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Fourth: \$5 million to support community governments, small businesses and NWT residents for costs incurred due to the 2021 flooding. And consistent with the Disaster Assistance Policy and previous practice, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has established the Disaster Assistance Committee. This committee will establish a list of recoverable costs and the coordination of the recovery process. We do recognize that that process will take some time and in the interim the Departments of Finance and Municipal and Community Affairs will be working together on a process to ensure that there is advancement of some financial relief to residents.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair, and I would be happy to answer any questions that the Members might have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, please.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, on the right is Jamie Koe. He is ADM at the Department of Finance. And on the left is Terence Courtoreille. He is director at the Management Board Secretariat.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome back. I will now open the floor for general comments. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair; sometimes we all look alike. I want to start by thanking the Finance Minister for carrying through with a number of commitments she made as part of our budget negotiations on the main estimates back in the last sitting. So there's a number of new spending items in here to carry through with those commitments and that those are much appreciated, and I think they were mutually achieved by both sides of the House to-- on behalf of all the residents of the NWT.

One of the other areas, though, that they agreed upon was changes-- or reductions in travel expenditures. And I just want to confirm with the Minister that these reductions are to travel outside of the Northwest Territories for nonessential purposes. So if the Minister can maybe just talk a little bit about how the travel expenditures have been reduced across all departments, that would be helpful for, I think, the public to understand that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate the commitments that were made, I want to echo that, you know, that really was a consensus government approach was a very positive one for the people of the Northwest Territories. So I think the appreciation really does flow in both directions on all of those commitments.

Madam Chair, with respect to the travel reductions, this was not a simple process and it was not a simple calculation. It was done in a way where the departments came forward, did an analysis of all of their travel spending in order to understand what of the various travel budgets is in the category of discretionary as opposed to nondiscretionary. And, certainly, all of the travel that takes place takes place for the purposes of advancing the initiatives and efforts in programs and services of various departments. Some of that, though, of course, is to -- has transitioned to being more in line. Some of that is not going to be occurring because of various restrictions-- well, outside of the territories as well as in the territories over travel. And so what they looked as was to determine, indeed, what type of travel is critically and critically required, and

generally that would, of course, be in the Northwest Territories as opposed to the discretionary and certainly non-Northwest Territories travel. So it wasn't a blanket 20 percent across all. It was 20 percent in the total budget but applied differently to different departments depending on the needs.

So there's some departments, for example Health and Social Services, their travel budgets might be not impacted the same way as, say ITI, because just of the nature of the travel that gets undertaken in the course of the year. But it was done, again, the focus was on ensuring that Northwest Territories travel and essential travel for the delivery of programs and services was maintained. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks, Madam Chair. That's good to hear, and I think important for the public to understand that. And it's one of the reasons why we couldn't make the reductions in the main estimates themselves, because we wanted to make sure that this was done carefully and thoughtfully. So I think it's fair to say that there's going to be a some concerns or questions around some of the other items in the supplementary appropriation and we'll get to those items a little later this afternoon. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further general comments? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think once we start opening up and going back to somewhat normal, you know, I do not want to discourage travel. I think that face to face and some of these contacts that could have been made during these past two years with our new Cabinet and Premier must take place, and along with the MLAs on this side. It's extremely important that contact is of great value to any government, and I don't want to lose sight of that when you start deducting all travel, okay. Because, I mean, there has to be some travel. You know, there's things that we expect the ITI Minister to go to. We expect the Education Minister to expand his horizons. If we're going to be doing these kind of things, we can't limit everything, okay. It's at the discretion of how the travel is going to be done. And I just want to make that comment because I'm not one to tie hands and do all these things because I'm one about vision, improving government face to face. You don't get the same thing on Zoom. I don't care how many times you go on Zoom, you don't get it. Just a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Madam Chair. I'm certainly somewhat Zoomed out myself. And I can say, you know, I do think, Madam Chair, that every department does still have a travel budget, and I appreciate the comments. There will be some business, I suspect FPTs, for example, the federal-provincial-territorial meetings that we often attend, where those may be slower to open up because there are so many different travel restrictions across Canada, whereas perhaps other areas of travel will be soon-- faster to open up. And I-- I can certainly say that I think every-- I think can probably safely speak for every colleague here that there's no replacing of face to face and if we need a reminder, the Zoom experience has probably taught us all that. But at the same time, there's more that can happen online as well. So we're going to be spending the next year, no doubt, seeing how that balance unfolds and then probably over the coming years as well. So there's still travel money in every department; it's just that it wasn't all-- it wasn't necessarily a blanket 20 percent. There really was effort to look at what is spent where and by -- and for what purpose. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Well, Madam Chair, I just want to make sure that no hands are tied. You know, once we get to a new normal, it won't be the same as before, nothing's going to be the same, but I want to make sure that this government is able to operate in a very-- with a new vision of reaching out and making sure that they have the opportunity to learn and to see different things and do-- have that face to face contact, including not -- all Members in this Assembly. Restricting travel and think you're going to save a dime and in the end you end up spending more on something else is not okay. If you're going to move ahead in the economy and in business and in anything else, you have to be able to have that contact, you know. You should be able to just click of a -- and you know who to phone. I mean, some of them have it already, but that face to face is missing here. Some of my colleagues always talk about Zoom and all this other thing about online and stuff. I'm not with that. I get my job done by being face to face. I like to know the reactions. I like to know all those things. And it's very important in leadership. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any other comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, there are department staff watching these proceedings, and I think the comments will be well taken. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's always, like, interesting to be on this side and see how things function and one of the new things to me was, I think I mentioned last time, the negotiation that happens between Cabinet and the Regular Members. So I, too, want to thank the Minister for participating in that and actually I believe it went fairly smoothly from what I heard feedback on. And also just in that, I want to say 'thank you' to her specifically for the antipoverty funding money. Instead of bringing it up when we get to that section, I'll just speak to her right now.

It's really important to me that we see more money going into the hands of our NGOs. They are filling the gaps and services that we aren't able to provide as COVID changes our landscape. So for me, I think that it's always important because NGOs will always stretch their money more. And I know I'm saying things that, I see the Premier nodding and such, because this is their area, but, yeah, they'll always do more with their money than, I believe, the government will. So for me, I just really wanted to specifically speak and say thank you for the money for the antipoverty fund and so now we just have to work on the making sure that money gets out the door easily with as little red tape as possible. So, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister, did you have any comments?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: For sure. That it is actually a good example of where I think numbers identify an area of issue and an area of concern. We're able to come up with some faith and trust in the department to look at and say what can we do to address your concern, and then there was this discussion. So these are all good examples of how that process can and should work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions, comments? I see no further general comments. Seeing no further general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department. The committee has agreed to forego general comments on each department. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document? Committee has agreed to begin the review with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

Okay, we will begin with Department of Education, Culture and Employment on page 4.

Supplementary Estimates (Operating Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Culture Heritage and Language, not previously authorized, \$27,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early learning and childcare, not previously authorized, \$451,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try and keep my comments brief considering we already agreed to this. I'm very happy to see the child care infrastructure fund. This is much needed money. I believe, though, we need something like \$20 million to make up our infrastructure deficit to get to the required-to place where all our communities have child care. And I know the previous fund was oversubscribed. And I'm hoping we can get this money out the door very quickly, and I know the department will do that. I guess I'm just looking for-- I know some of the previous applications didn't quite meet the criteria or didn't necessarily get funding, and there's a very large demand in this area. I'm just looking for a commitment that we will reach out to those people who had previously applied for this fund and, you know, work with them to continue applications for the top-up here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I think that's a question for the Minister of Education.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of EC and E.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This money is long gone; it's out the door.

---Laughter

And there are discussions between, you know, our-- between ECE, people in the regions, people at headquarters and communities who are require infrastructure and so, you know, if a project wasn't successful for whatever reason, there are those conversations that have happened. So that work is definitely being done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No, I guess we'll just have to top it up again. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. All right, let's do this again.

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early learning and childcare, not previously authorized, \$451,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$2,744,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, negative \$96,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,126,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on page 5.

Supplementary Estimate (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, main estimates, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$44,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimate (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, environment protection and waste management, not previously authorized, negative \$18,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, environment stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$939,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimate (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,328,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring, not previously authorized, negative \$39,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resource, wildlife and fish, not previously authorized, \$163,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, one of the items here is \$300,000 for the barrenground caribou calving survey. Given that it's June 3rd, I think this work might even be underway right now but I'd like to get some confirmation from the Minister about the status of this work. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, there's no way I would have let this one pass by without hearing from the Minister of ENR on this one, please.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. The work started Monday. The people are out there. We were able to work with the Hamlet of Coppermine, getting permission from the Nunavut government and their CPHO and the municipalities. So we have the workers out-- or the people out there surveying a herd presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's great to hear because I know one of the reasons why it's here again is because the work couldn't be done last summer with COVID restrictions. So can the Minister tell us when the department expects to have the survey results available to us as MLAs and for the public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. My understanding, with all the data and that, we're hoping to have it at the end of the summer but I will get back confirmation with that to committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. And the reason why this is so important is the last time the survey was down, the herd-- or done, the herd was down to 8,200 animals compared to a high of almost 400,000. So this is a critical piece of information we need to make the best possible decisions about that area, including whether we should be building roads or not. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Oh, sorry. I didn't know if it was coming to me or. So, yeah, we're making sure that data is critical. That's why we were able to work with the Nunavut government and the hamlet of Coppermine to get the survey done, and it was probably unfortunate because COVID. You know, it hit us last year but we're able to start continuing to manage our survey, moving forward. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So it's my understanding, just reading, yeah, that this is just the money being brought forward to pay for the project that didn't happen last year. However, because COVID has happened and we do have additional expense and such, do we anticipate that you can still do the-- that the department can still do the caribou survey for the same costing as they had originally budgeted, or do we think we'll have to come back later on for more money for this work? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I have not been given any indication that this is going to be-- that the project scope or the budget needed to change. So for the time being, the project budget is the same.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. Any further questions, comments? Seeing none, I'll call the page.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, not previously authorized, \$163,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resource, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,329,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs on page 7.

Supplementary Estimate, (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Cabinet support, not previously authorized, negative \$45,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to make a comment that this is the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs almost having their travel budget, and when I look at the few million dollars we took out the GNWT travel budget and what it's paying for, you know, investments in mental health and wellness, investments in the poverty fund, I think this is a great work, and I think it was this Cabinet leading by example. And I know we've had no controversy about Ministers, MLAs, and senior management travelling, but I just commend this Cabinet. They made lots of sacrifices, and it hasn't been an easy year, and you didn't get to go to Vancouver or Calgary or Ottawa or all the other places that Ministers usually get a lot of flack for, so. This is by far the biggest proportional cut to any travel budget, executively anyway. That's all, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Any further questions, comments?

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Cabinet support, not previously authorized, negative \$45,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$105,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, executive council offices, not previously authorized, negative \$313,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs, not previously authorized, negative \$91,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$554,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance on page 8.

Supplementary Estimates, No. 1, (Operation Expenditures) Department of Finance, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$133,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, No. 1, (Operations Expenditures) 2021-2022, Department of Finance, human resources, not previously authorized, negative \$116,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, No. 1, (Operations Expenditures) 2021-2022, Department of Finance, information shared services, not previously authorized, negative \$50,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, Department of Finance, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$15,882,000. Does committee agree?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for FrameLake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, there's a large item here, almost \$15 million support for the NWT aviation industry. I understand most of this money comes from the federal government. But can someone explain to us how this money is allocated amongst various airlines that operate in the Northwest Territories. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Madam Chair. I would be happy to provide that, and see if I have it. Madam Chair, I'm happy to read it out here if the purpose is to have that put on the record. The listing is fairly lengthy. So just to confirm, I'm happy to provide it to the House, or to table it, perhaps that might be more efficient, or I can read it out. Just to confirm, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for FrameLake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Rather than gobble up our valuable time, I'd rather have the Minister table it. But if someone could explain generally how the allocations are made, I think that's what I'm looking for. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Mr. Koe was the lead on this so I'll have him perhaps just describe the process that was used, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr.-Koe.

MR. KOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try not to get too accountant specific on my response here, but. Since this is the third round of the aviation funding, we've had some pretty good dialog with all the airlines. Actually it's been pretty transparent on both ends but we do ask for all their financial information from their revenue and expenditure projections, so -- their income statements, their cash flow statements and their balance sheets. So we have a good understanding of their entire organization and how they operate. From there, we specifically earmark some time to meet with each

airline and go through all their financial statements and ask our questions to do our due diligence to fully understand-- to fully understand their operations and their pressures and how they're evolving as the pandemic as evolved.

From there, we do a calculation of what we call a gross margin approach. So just looking at kind of their revenues and their variable expenses and what we're looking at here is kind of just the cost to operate, the cost to operate the essential flights that they are undertaking within the Northwest Territories to ensure that supplies and patients and people can move around the territory.

So once we do that calculation, you know, we kind of apply that calculation to the overall funding that's available to come down to a breakdown of the funding for each airline. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I notice that one of the stories on CBC today is that Air Canada used \$10 million of this sort of funding to pay bonuses to its senior executives. Is any of this money that is being given, is it being used for the same sort of purposes here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I saw that story too. When I saw it, I think the headline actually was that the airlines got a bit of a tongue-lashing from one of my federal colleagues if I might, so. And no, to be short, the contribution agreement that we have in place that is -- that has to be signed by the recipients who are -- the recipient airlines who are receiving this funding are not to be using that for the payment of any sort of bonuses or dividend payments. It is really meant to be provided solely to provide essential air services. There is a holdback provision in the contribution agreement as well so that they are expected to report back in to the Department of Finance so that the officials in the Department of Finance can review their financial information and, indeed, confirm that they have abided by all of what is in the contribution agreement. So, you know, this is our third go around. You know, I think the arrangements with the federal airlines are fairly different. This is our third go now. As Mr. Koe's indicated, there's a good relationship. They're certainly familiar with the information that they are receiving from the airlines, even if each one of them may structure their financial affairs differently. At this point, we've now had three times now gone through them, and three opportunities to review and be familiar with how it is

that they are structuring their operations. So, you know, fairly able to look at the materials and I'm confident that indeed they are performing as they are expected to under the contribution agreements. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's good to hear, that the money's going to be used to actually maintain services rather than pay bonuses or shareholders. Can someone tell me what the compliance record is? Have there been instances where the contribution agreements have been not complied with? And I don't need to know names and I wouldn't expect that names would be revealed. But have there been any compliance problems with the contribution agreements and if so, what was the-- have they been resolved? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. And Madam Chair, I just want to say I was flipping through the contribution agreement trying to find the specific section, but it-- just at the risk of repeating, it is quite clear that it is-- there is not to be any dividend payments, share buybacks, shareholder distributions, any management bonuses relevant to the term of the agreement. So, I mean, there is no lack of clarity that this funding is not meant to be for those purposes - board member salaries or parent corporations to a third party, etcetera. So it is quite clear.

I do not believe there have been any challenges in terms of any of the airlines meeting the requirements. Again, let me get that confirmation from Mr. Koe. I agree with the Member, this is important.

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

MR. KOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, we haven't had any compliance issues to date. As I said, we do have a very open dialog with them. So if an airline thinks there's something that is close to the definition, they usually contact us and we have that conversation to whether it's allowable under the agreement or not. And, again, through that dialog, we have no -- or no compliance issues to date. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. It's my understanding that at least one of the airlines I'll name them Canadian North does receive financial

assistance from other jurisdictions, possibly in Nunavut, possibly federal. How is that factored in to the calculations and their financial situation when we have to decide how we're going to allocate our funding as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so I think it is only Canadian North, if I'm not mistaken, that is of a size that it would be receiving funding from other jurisdictions. They have to report all of their receipts, all of their revenue sources to the Department of Finance. But, again, the funding that we are distributing to them, again, this a federally-- mainly a federal program. The amount that they get from the federal government is for the wage subsidy program. So it is not business relief. It is not relief to assist them in their maintaining of their operations of their fleet of, you know, the cost associated. Otherwise, it is really-- they're two separate things. They also do receive money from the Government of Nunavut which also, again, does get reported to us. But Nunavut is funding for their-- the flights and the routes and the scheduled flights that are within Nunavut, and we are funding for operations that are here in the Northwest Territories. So the information's available and it's factored into revenues, but, again, the funding that is given to those cases is meant to be directed to maintain scheduled services in our respective territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, I appreciate that. I have one other area that I want to turn to, and it's one of my favorites - the Northwest Territories wage top-up program. So there's money in here. It looks like it's being offset by the Government of Canada. When is this program going to run out in the Northwest Territories, and what happens afterwards? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So again-- so the wage top-up program, you might recall, was originally when some essential workers, typically in the southern jurisdictions, were not necessarily returning to work and not making themselves available at their workplaces because of the risks associated at the time of COVID-19 and the option was to go on to the various relief programs. So this was an opportunity to try to encourage people to go back into those workplaces that were highly needed. Our wages, being what they are in the Northwest

Territories, was such that-- and the fact that a lot of essential workers are government employees, we were able to top up everybody and bring everyone up to an \$18 an hour rate. And, again, our wages being what they were, that money was simply not getting spent such that we continued to have funds available, and we have the ability-- Canada has allowed the Northwest Territories to be flexible in the application of the program. Right now, we are going to let the program go until August 31st, 2021, and if there's any additional funds required, we would be funding it from within the Department of Finance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I appreciate that, so August 31st. The problem is, of course, some people are going to see their wages go down the very next day, September 1st, to our minimum wage which, if I remember, is \$15.10 -- 25 cents. Anyways, they're going to see a substantial drop in their wages. I've identified this as a problem. We don't seem to have a high enough minimum wage here. We talked about guaranteed basic income but there doesn't seem to be a lot of appetite on the other side for this. So I just think this is unfair for workers when this program runs out, and we need to figure out a way to assist them and do something better. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, do you have anything to add. Any further questions, comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. How much have we given Canadian North to date? And including this top up here. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, to date Canada North has received total contributions of \$21 million and -- \$21,372,000.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know Nunavut's number's somewhere about \$40 million as well and just recently in the legislature, a couple of the MLAs said it was a missed opportunity not to take an equity stake given the amount of money they'd actually given the Air North by then. I know the Canadian government took six percent equity stake in Air Canada with part of their bailout. At any point, were there any conversations or did we consider taking an equity stake in Canadian North?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No such conversations were had with me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, you know, the first couple bailouts, I get, when their main concern is insolvency and keeping these essential routes open. But we're getting to the point where the government is clearing propping up these airlines, and I think some larger conversations have to happen about whether we're just going to keep pouring money into them without getting a seat at the shareholder table. And that was very much the Minister of Finance federally's point in taking six percent of Air Canada as part of their bailout, to make sure that they're at the shareholder table and they have an input on continued operations and they get access to things such as when Air Canada, you know, pays all of its executives \$10 million in bonuses. And I want to make sure that we have similar access and the department's doing its job with Canadian North. But I've heard the Minister here that there's a holdback and we will be diligent.

I guess my other area is with the Yukon travel bubble now emerging, Canadian North and Air North, the Yukon's airline code share route, Yellowknife to Whitehorse, has there been any talks in giving them this further millions of dollars to reinstate that route from Yellowknife to Whitehorse?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I know it's easy to lose sight of the fact that the vast bulk of the airline funding is coming from the federal government and I'm not sure they are prepared to fund us to take an equity stake in our local airline. And, again, the conversation hasn't been had, Madam Chair, to be quite clear.

As far as adding route, the funding that is being made available is to support the existing and really the essential services routes in terms of moving supplies and moving people within the territory and south. Right now, this is our only route to the south so all supplies, any travel, particularly medical travel, is reliant on this. A new route would certainly, you know-- I don't know what kind of analysis Canadian North would need to do to determine the costs of adding that new route. And I anticipate that for them to do that may well change the financial information that they are providing to us, which would then change the determination of what they would be entitled to under the approach we've taken with the entirety of the system. So as much as anyone else, I would love to get on an airline and go just about anywhere right now, I'm

sure some conversations can be had about what that would look like and whether it would be possible but it certainly hasn't happened to date because to date, it was a matter of getting the funding to flow to maintain the routes that we have. You know, and-- I think it's easy to commit them to say that we can try and look into that between now and hopefully there's a -- I think there should be a fourth round of funding. We'll see how that unfolds with the federal government. And if that's the case, then before we get there, let's, you know, we can at least look into it at that point and see what that particular might be.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I appreciate that. I think, you know, there's probably some goodwill after you give the airlines millions of dollars to-- and I'm not asking for a new route, I'm asking for the return of the-- sorry, too many noise. The Air North and the Canada North code share route, Yellowknife to Whitehorse. And, you know, I've heard some rumors that if the travel bubble gets going, that they may be willing to do that themselves. So just a commitment that the Minister of Finance will reach out to those airlines about the possibility of that happening. I think it could be a win for us. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm happy to make that commitment. Again, I'm not sure if it will qualify as an essential route unless we can describe our mental health as an essential service to Whitehorse, Madam Chair. But there's certainly no harm in asking what it would entail to bring it back and if there's anything to be done, I'll bring it back to the House to let people know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North, anything further? No? Okay.

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$15,882,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, negative \$233,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, total department, not previously authorized, \$15,350,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Health and Social Services on page 9. It's a good page.

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$279,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary estimates (operations expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$4,548,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's \$100,000 to the Child and Family Services contribution here. I believe the word "contribution" clarifies this, but this is not-- you know, the \$40-million budget of Child and Family Services, this will be given to the Foster Family Coalition to support foster families through their contribution agreement, is that correct?

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

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

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm just very excited to see this \$750,000 towards the antipoverty fund. I think we all support, you know, helping NGOs through this time and trying to, you know, ultimately end poverty in the Northwest Territories. But I know there's been some concerns in the past about the antipoverty fund doesn't necessarily address the systemic issues of poverty. Can I just get an update on-- I believe there's a review underway or whether there will be any changes to how we disburse the money under the antipoverty fund, seeing this \$750,000 added. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, if I could direct this to the Minister of Health and Social Services, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you. We're not talking about systemic level funding here. We're talking about band-aids. They're important but they are temporarily solutions primarily for food-related wants. To end poverty meaning adequate housing, food, and every other kind of indicator would require hundreds of millions of dollars. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I'll save debate on the cost of ending poverty for another time. I just hope that the funds had some clear aims to be used for that.

There's \$591,000 here for the phase 2 of the NWT's midwifery program. Can I just get a confirmation on when we expect those positions to actually be hired. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, for that question. I do not have a time that I can relay to you. It is difficult to recruit midwives and recruitment efforts will begin shortly but there's no guarantee that that will result in having someone here in a time that I can provide to you right now. I can just say we have the money, we're going to go and recruit. We recognize this is a difficult area to recruit in. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions, comments? Oh, Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want I guess clarification on the funding for the Hay River shelter. Can you confirm with us where-- there's two shelters there. There's a day shelter and a night shelter, and can I just confirm which one this is targeted? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, for that question. The answer is it's for the day shelter. The Health and Social Services department does not provide overnight shelter funding. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you Madam Chair. And that funding, is that going to be for our fiscal year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that's my understanding but I do know that we have subsequently received a proposal from the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre around sheltering services. So that was the intention when this was negotiated in March, but things may change yet.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: It's confirmed to me that the 75,000 is expected to be in fact ongoing.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm just wondering if it was I guess for 12-months, because you know, there's approximately 10 to 12 people, or maybe a few more, that use that day shelter. So that works out to about \$17 per person per day. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll leave that as a comment. Any further questions, comments under the Health and Social Services programs? Okay. I'll call that one. Supplementary estimates (Operations expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, long term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$4,548,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we are going to take a short recess.

---Short recess

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will call this meeting back to order. We are going to continue with under the Department of Health and Social Services. Okay. So we are at Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, long term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, negative \$13,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,814,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 12.

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$76,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$630,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates No. 1, (Operations Expenditures), 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, negative \$296,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$5,622,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My first question is of the \$5,700,000 in new tourism relief funding, is any of this federal money? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No the two programs to support the tourism industry, these are both GNWT funded, Madam Chair, if I might too -- I'm sorry to do this, but we'll need to just double check the numbers you read on the last one for the sake of the record. But I don't want to take the Member's time away on that, the 118.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. We'll just finish this one, and we'll go back; how's that? All right, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'll start with the one for licensed tourism operators, \$2.5 million. I'm glad to see this. I think tourism bailout -- or assisting our tourism operators is much needed funding. And I'm glad to see the GNWT do this of their own initiative. I think to date, we've been waiting on a lot of federal programs and these are designed to kind of fill some of those gaps. So I'm going to vote in favour of the money. I just had some questions about how it is spent.

Of the \$2.5 million for tourism operators, how much of that do we expect to go to northern tourism operators versus those who are based in the south? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, yes, so, you know, while we were in the past relying predominantly on federal programs, the benefit of that is that we were able to gather quite a bit of data around the number of operators who were accessing the funds -- the relief funds in the last year. There are operators in the Northwest Territories, about 70 percent that have been so far receiving relief funding. Operators located outside, about 30 percent or 17 operators. But that said, Madam Chair, I do want to highlight that although the operators sort of base their -- or owner might be located elsewhere, the cost and the funds are meant to be costs that are, you know, directed primarily for activities and facilities here within the Northwest Territories, so rent or mortgages here and facilities in the Northwest Territories. I know utilities here in the Northwest Territories, of that nature. So that, again, the intent is to have the primary focus being cost incurred within the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm happy to hear that 70 percent of it will go to the northern tourism operators. I guess it's that remaining 30 percent, and there's a debate here. You know, NWT tourism, many of its members' operations are not based in the south -- or not based in the NWT, they're based in the south and they fly clients in, and I kinda get that the money can be spent here. But it doesn't always get circulated in the NWT economy, especially not in the way a northern tourism operator does. And when I look at, you know, a lot of the other ITI programs, they require you to be northern-owned companies. They require 50 percent ownership. There's a number of different ways you can make sure that the -- you know, there's some definition of

"northern business". Why did we not do that for this program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so -- sorry, and I was actually -- I apologize. I was actually looking for more detailed notes, really, from the ITI as the Member was raising the concern. And the reason I wanted to do that in hearing where the concern was going was to be able to provide the assurance around the structure of the program. You know, we had some helpful information back from the committee around how to ensure that this money is indeed circulating to the Northwest Territories, circulating to Northwest Territories residents and businesses and spending time here. The, you know, general approach to ITI programming isn't a residency approach but, in general, we do want to ensure that there are -- that the money is circulating in the Northwest Territories. So, for instance, here, there is a requirement that the applicant have a physical address here in the Northwest Territories, a Northwest Territories tourism operator licence, that they're registered here, if applicable, with the Business Corporations Act, that they are paying income tax here. And as I said, again, the -- you know, the direction discretionally is that it is meant to be, you know, money that is staying with the operations here in the territories and focusing on that. And so while the ownership might reside somewhere else, the purpose of the funding is to ensure that the tourism infrastructure and the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories stays healthy and stays diverse and stays vibrant, and that's really the goal here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm glad to hear that. I think it's much needed for a lot of our tourism operators who are facing another very uncertain year about whether they will have any tourism.

I want to move on to the support for tourism accommodation relief program, the STAR program, which is \$3.2 million for hotels and accommodations. I guess I also have similar concerns for this in that the vast majority of hotel rooms in the NWT are in Yellowknife; the majority of those hotel rooms are owned by very large hotel chains who, you know, certainly do not reside -- or not owned by Northerners. And I guess this is just another one of those funds that I -- do we have a sense of how much of this would go to northern-owned businesses as opposed to

southern-owned businesses? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So again, Madam Chair, in this case, you know, again I can certainly provide a breakdown of the totality of the accommodation sector in the Northwest Territories because, again -- because there have been various relief programs operating, and we had good cooperation from our federal partners who are administering a lot of those, we have the information around what the sector looks like. And what I can say is that they've looked really, again, at the rooms available and the reduction in the capacity that's been filled over the last year, and this subsidy is meant to help all of the accommodation providers that are in the Northwest Territories keep those rooms available at a break-even point. So the system has been designed -- or the STAR has been designed such that it's a contribution to bring them up to a point of breaking even with their fixed costs here so that these facilities, these accommodation facilities in the tourism industry, are ready and available and still open and alive when the time comes to start to receive hopefully more tourism, firstly by staycations ideally, but realistically looking at when the restrictions start to take into consideration and continue to ease. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess just stepping back, a number of jurisdictions have provided rebates for staycations where if you go on, you know, a staycation in the territory, you send in your receipts and the government gives you a 20 percent or some percent rebate. And the reason I like this model is it encourages tourism within the territory; it encourages, you know, some competition to still remain in the market so that we're not just subsidizing people who have essentially shuttered their doors to a break-even point. It allows operators to actually exist with some revenue. And I guess my preference would be that of, you know, the \$5.7 million of our own money, we would have distributed it in that way that actually caused people to, you know, go experience tourism operators. Can I just get a sense of whether the department has considered that model? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that certainly was considered and it may well have been considered

after the suggestion I think might have been made by some of the Members in the House. You know, I would point out a couple of things. One -- and it was considered as -- within the Department of Finance as well as the Department of ITI to really look at what kind of bang we can get for our buck. I certainly want to encourage staycations. I know that some of the chambers are undertaking initiatives to promote staycations and promote local spending. They did that last year, and I think quite successfully. And certainly had some support from the government to do that.

With respect, though, to ensuring that this sector itself stays alive, we ultimately made the decision that getting funds that continue to provide the relief amounts so that they could hit the break-even point or maintain their mixed cost was the better way of ensuring the goal which was to keep the sector afloat. And while, because again, certainly staycations helped last year, that alone would not keep the sector afloat. So that they are going to need some direct infusions of dollars at the same time trying to encourage staycationing through marketing and through other -- you know, again some initiatives that the chamber -- around awards, et cetera.

The one other thing I would note for folks to remember is the federal government -- you know, it didn't get a lot of fanfare but they certainly did change some of the tax rules for northern travel and staycations do qualify. So for everyone who was, you know, very disappointed not to be able to maximize their tax deductions under the travel, you know, that is now available so, please, take your staycations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think we've got a document problem in you're reading numbers from the tabled document but Members are working from a different. There's a couple of travel figures that seem to have been flipped.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Maybe we'll take a short recess and we'll just kind of look at what we need to fix here.

---Short recess

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. And we are -- I'm going to give it to the Minister of Finance.

COMMITTEE MOTION 131-19(2):
 TABLED DCOUMENT 412-19(2),
 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
 EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2021-2022 – MOTION
 TO AMEND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND
 BUSINESS SUPPORT,
 CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's come to our attention there might have been a number written incorrectly on the materials that are tabled. So in order to avoid any confusion and ensure that we are accurate, I'd like to make a motion that Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, be amended by changing the line under "Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized", that this be changed to \$450,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Minister of Finance.

COMMITTEE MOTION 132-19(2):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 412-19(2),
 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
 EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2021-2022 – MOTION
 TO AMEND MINERALS AND PETROLEUM
 RESOURCES,
 CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, one further correction in the same vein, I move that Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022 be amended by changing under "Industry, Tourism and Investment, Minerals and Petroleum Resources Activity, not previously authorized", to negative \$118,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

We will now go back to Supplementary Estimates No 1, (Operations Expenditures), 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, for the department of economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$452,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The next one we'll go back to is Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No 1, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, negative \$118,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No 1, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$5,622,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No 1, 2020 -- 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department, not previously authorized, \$5,880,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 13.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, asset management, not previously authorized, negative \$74,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$10,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, energy, and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, negative \$113,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$1,051,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), Number 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$464,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,313,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), Number 1, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,318,000.

You agree? Okay.

---Laughter

Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice on page 14.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, negative \$23,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, corrections, not previously authorized, negative \$43,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations, not previously authorized, negative \$2,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, services of

government, not previously authorized, negative \$75,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, services to the public, not previously authorized, negative \$17,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$160,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider Department of Lands on page 15.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No 1, 2021-2022, Department of Lands, Corporate Management, not previously authorized, negative \$21,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Lands, Operations, not previously authorized, negative \$8,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Lands, planning and coordination, not previously authorized, negative \$76,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Lands, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$105,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs on page 16.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, community

governance, not previously authorized, negative \$17,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, not previously authorized, negative \$66,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$50,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, not previously authorized, \$4,952,000.

Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone explain to me the \$5 million line here for flood relief; how was that figure picked? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the five million is really an initial figure right now to support the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and, more specifically, the disaster assistance committees that have been set up to go in and to provide, firstly, the emergency services and emergency supports that have already been offered. So in terms of the costs of conducting the evacuations, the cost of providing shelter and food for evacuees, you know, cots, fans, camping equipment, supplies, again, food, and various other supplies in a real emergency moment. So I understand the costs in that regard are already upward of -- well, pushing \$3 million. So this helps provide some liquidity to the department as they've already incurred those costs.

There's obviously a recognition that there's going to be some relief that needs to take place immediately and in the coming months. And so putting it to five million gives, again, that cushion for that initial needs and then some room to undertake the costs that will be incurred in the next while. It's fully anticipated, and there's already a coding, a financial

coding being made available so that all of the costs associated with flood relief and recovery, including the emergency and ongoing will be recovered -- I'm sorry, not recovered but will be tracked so that we can provide a sense of what the total value is over time. I think there's probably a very likely chance that we'll be back in front of the House to seek some additional appropriation in this regard in the fall. But this, again, allows this response to move forward for the moment. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is any of this earmarked in any way for some kind of a program fund that's going to get money into people's pockets immediately on a non-reimbursement basis? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, the process that would be followed through the disaster assistance committee is that individuals have the opportunity -- members of the community have opportunity to make their application, make it known, list out what items it is that they may have lost and, you know, what damage they may have incurred. And while there's no necessarily -- you don't necessarily have to be bringing in a receipt to do that. Essentially you're writing out a list of what you believe your losses or damages to be. The caveat or the kind of note that I'd make with that, though, is that if you're doing that in advance and you're submitting this list without receipts, without having, you know, necessarily incurred those costs at the front end, you do take the risk that they may not in the end say okay, that every single item you've claim for can in fact be covered. But, you know, again, if people are being conscientious, as I'm sure they will be in looking at their losses and keeping in mind, you know, then, you know, that there is that caveat there and this would certainly provide the opportunity that when they need to go in and get some real essential items, you know, you can do your own sense of it but the risk would be, to me, if they're essential items, you're much more likely to see them ultimately covered once the entire process is underway. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think that was a two-minute 'no'. Look, I've got only six minutes left on the clock. We've got about 15 minutes left in the Chamber. This is probably the most important thing we're going to talk about today, and we're getting a lot of complaints. I'm getting

complaints, as a Yellowknife MLA, that there's no way to get the money into people's pockets right now.

I've looked at the application form for the disaster assistance policy and it's, I think, six, eight pages. It's English. If your first language is English -- or you don't read or write English, you may be out of luck. I'm not sure that this is going to be very helpful for elders. And it's really for damaged property. It does not cover people's immediate needs for food, accommodation, you know, whatever -- and I understand that some of those costs may be covered already through municipal governments doing -- and MACA doing things, but we're getting contacted about people needing immediate assistance right now - money in their pockets. And I guess I've heard that not one cent of this money is allocated for that purpose. So what are we going to do to fix this? That's what I think I need to hear. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, that's not accurate. The \$5 million is for flood relief. It's for flood relief in the communities, for small businesses, for individuals, for residents, tenants, homeowners. It is just -- it's how, indeed, now it does get rolled out is, I think, really where the question is, but that is exactly its purpose, is to support all of those individuals who are in the flood-affected communities. And the application process is one that allows it to operate through the disaster assistance policy that has been in place for, you know, years. It is the one -- the same that has been employed on previous occasions. And so it's a system that exists, a system that works. It allow us to, you know, get -- be organized and structured in how the funds are being distributed and equitable and how the funds are being distributed and to make sure that there is a process in place for that.

So, yeah, there is an application form. It's a form where you essentially start out by writing down your contact information and then you describe your damaged property and the items it is that you feel that you need to have replaced.

So there are now two navigators that are in the flood-affected communities in the South Slave. Those individuals are certainly well placed to assist any individual that needs the assistance. But I know that the Department of MACA has previously put out a Q and A saying that, you know, you don't need to wait for a MACA employee, you can go to any senior GNWT employee. They will be able to help filling out these forms and move this process forward so that people can begin to apply for funds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, okay. I've looked at this form. This is for reimbursement. This is not money in people's pockets, some kind of an advance right now. What are we going to do to fix this problem? I'm sorry, I do not want the Minister running out the clock for another two minutes on me, please. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I'm gonna be in a difficult situation to describe a program in two minutes and 50 seconds. So as I've committed to in the opening session and the opening statements, at this point there's a recognition that there are individuals who are not currently receiving supports through the evacuation program, who may not be on income assistance, who's already handed out additional \$1,000 to families and \$500 to individuals, or who aren't receiving the hampers that are being handed out for food. So if in fact that does continue to be the case, I know we are all very concerned about there being an availability of funds immediately, that this \$5 million, as I said in my opening statement, the Departments of Finance and Municipal and Community Affairs are going to work on a process to ensure that these \$5 million, and that this process, is putting those dollars into people's hands immediately. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm going to switch topics slightly. I do not consider this to be resolved and this -- okay, two issues: Who's going to help people fill out this form? The two navigators are floating around in the communities. They're there for a couple of days, then they're going on down the valley. Those navigators are not going to be there helping people fill out these forms. Who's going to help them -- people, elders who may not speak any English fill out these forms? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The navigators are the first point of contact but they're not the last point of contact. Madam Chair, there are government staff and government employees in all of these communities. There are senior members from various departments who have been on the front lines from day one, and they will continue to be there. And if direction simply needs to be given to them to say,

you know, you will acting outside of your specific department, I fully expect that, in fact, they've already been doing that as part of their role within the disaster assistance policy and its enactment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just don't consider this to be resolved. I would like to know whether the Minister is prepared to ensure that there's monthly reporting of the expenditures of this \$5 million similar to what's happening for the COVID Secretariat. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd be happy to make that commitment.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that work's been done through income assistance to get some funding in to people's pockets. Is that a onetime payment, or is that going to continue on a monthly basis as long as people need it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Minister of ECE, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the income assistance regulations, the director has discretion to allocate an emergency allowance in situations that are deemed an emergency. So this onetime emergency allowance has been allocated to income assistance clients in Fort Simpson, in Fort Good Hope, and -- or rather in zones 1, 2, 3, to Fort Good Hope and other affected residents. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I'm just -- this is, again, sort of not maybe necessarily about the numbers but while I've got some -- somebody here to answer a little bit more about this flooding.

So my understanding is that the assessors and the assessor group or company will be in the communities; they're going to be looking at damage. Will the assessors be the determinant or

the people making the determination of the award amount? Are they sort of the judicial panel, so to speak, for the relief funding? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding of the system is that it's the disaster assistance committee that has the ability to make the final decisions on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah okay, that's good I guess; there's at least two sort of arm's lengths there.

Can the Minister speak a little bit to -- well, I've got a few things here, I guess. Will the -- is there a dispute mechanism built in to the process? If there's only one sort of small group making a determination of assessment of value, I'm concerned that, you know, there may not be a process for people, or a timely process, for people to appeal that decision. As well, too, will local knowledge be incorporated into that decision making process? I think people situated within the communities are probably better assessors or judges -- judgment of maybe what a property was like prior than, say, a senior bureaucrat sitting in Yellowknife who doesn't know Fort Simpson. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the disaster assistance committee is made up both of ADMS, who are largely based in Yellowknife, as well as regional presentation from all of the affected communities and regions. So although I do certainly appreciate the comment, and I recognize that.

With respect to whether or not there's an appeal community, or an appeal process, Madam Chair, I am not certain about that although there -- typically with a system of this nature, when it's at an ADM or director level, it does have some final appeal to a Minister. I expect this is the same here. If I'm wrong, I will bring that response and that correction back to the House tomorrow.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to ask that the Minister commit that she do everything she can to make that appeal process as timely as possible. And if perhaps we have one-offs that we have to come to her or her colleague and

ask for that, that we would get responded to in a timely manner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have some concerns around, as the Minister had mentioned, the navigator positions. It's my understanding that those are two senior management employees. While I do recognize that people can go to others and other senior managers and people in different departments, which I do appreciate and I think that always happens in our small communities anyway, I'm sure we'll also be helpful to people helping out forms over here, and I hope -- and I know that the Northwest Territories will step up.

I did ask, in House and I don't believe I got an answer from the Minister of MACA, about whether there was a commitment to potentially hire a local individual in each community to help facilitate this process, and this would then go further to my colleague's questions around helping elders in those communities. I think this is a great opportunity to hire a local person for a short-term contract in order to help them facilitate. I don't imagine that amount of money is going to be that large, given the amount of time that they would save bureaucrats in having to answer all these questions. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, at this point there's not an intention to use the funds that are within this five million to hire a local position for the communities. Certainly, you know, Madam Chair, as the assessment process gets underway and concludes, if in fact it's determined that there needs to be something further, you know, again, Madam Chair, you know, I anticipate that there's going to be some flexibility in the existing appropriations for that to happen and if not, we'll be back in front of the committee back in the fall. But, again, for the moment, that's not anticipated. And for the moment, it's not anticipated to be needed. I hear the concerns of the Member. Obviously, having someone on the ground is better. That's why there's two people that have been sent in immediately. They are both, you know -- yeah, at this point, that's not determined to be any advice for and I should keep it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I respectfully disagree with the Minister. I think what I heard my colleagues and myself -- I actually didn't ask it but my colleagues did ask in public briefing that it be local people who know the people on the ground in the communities and who are trusted and the people in the communities are comfortable with those people. I can guarantee you sending in senior bureaucrats from Yellowknife to small communities who are not filling a navigator position, you're just creating another level of governmental official coming in. So I do strongly suggest -- and I would never want it to come out of this \$5 million, I suggest you find that money elsewhere. That's all, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take that comment, and we'll continue on. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to start off with the navigators. You know, having navigators go in to support the people and the victims filling out forms is, you know, a great first step. And what I would look at, though -- and my thoughts as well was to use local people for it. And when I was looking at the number of student hires, summer student hires, there seems to be a number of positions that could still be available. And that might be an area where we could utilize some local local people to go in and, you know, knock on the doors of the people that are actually impacted and, you know, provide some jobs for a couple of three months. So, you know -- so that, to me, I guess is kind of an easy fix for a short term, anyway. And I'm wondering if the department would consider something like that to solve that issue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I -- let me just give that one sort of a strong maybe in the sense that I think there's probably a number of the departments that have a presence in the affected communities who may well still be in a position to hire summer students. Obviously, I don't have that in front of me here. But, certainly, as the Minister for Finance with HR under it, we are still very much wanting to recruit summer students, so. And as we've said, we don't want to take that money out of this five million. So let me commit certainly to follow up with all of my colleagues to see if we can't support that idea. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the other -- you know, we're talking

\$5 million here. And I haven't heard any numbers on the number of people that have been impacted in each community or the number of businesses that actually have been impacted in each community. If the Minister may have that information, I'm not sure, but I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I do have some numbers here in front of me. My concern, though, is that I've also heard, literally just this afternoon, that some of the numbers are still changing and some of the estimates are still changing, and I don't know that it does anyone any good for me to give numbers here if they are still changing and not accurate. So, yes, the assessors are in the communities, the navigators are in the communities and I think the situation, as I understand in the north -- in the Beau-Del is still unfolding. So, you know, I'll commit that we'll -- it may not be tomorrow and I know session's over tomorrow, but that -- the information as soon as it can be more verified can go out to the Members. Perhaps it will go out with the variance that we put out monthly. Hopefully before that, though, is that I would think that those numbers will be shared sooner than that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess one issue I had with the forms is that, you know, it's fine that the navigators may help the persons fill out -- the victims fill out the forms but if neither have the experience or qualifications I guess of assessing, you know, maybe damage to the building, which I'm sure will be in those forms, then it's kind of a lost cause. So it seems to me that -- you know, I know the assessor's going in there to assess the damage but that's different than assessing the building for what needs to be done to the building. Is the government going to have somebody in there to assist the victims and the navigators with ensuring that the right information is placed on the forms? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that is partly the work of the disaster systems committee once its set up, or sorry -- that they are coming up with lists of eligibility of what types of damage and what property losses are going to be eligible for compensation and at what level. So that is indeed exactly part of the work that they would be undertaking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, and looking at the disaster relief, I guess is that, you know, the reality is that it's not going to put anybody back to where they were 100 percent before they started, before this happened, and I'm hoping that, you know, that's relayed to the people so there's no false hope out there. It's very important that we do that. And I guess I just want to go to what the Member for Frame Lake was talking about and that was the -- you know, putting money in the pockets of individuals. And I guess when I look at that -- and I've been pushing that, and I've talked to the Minister of MACA about that, the Minister of ECE as well. And you know, it's just that when something like this happens, you know, people are displaced. And when you're displaced, I don't care if government's paying the -- footing the bill for the accommodation, meals, you're always out. You're always going to be out money. You might be paying for your own gas. You might be -- whatever it might be. And so there's always those extra costs and, you know, a lot of people, you know, they live paycheque to paycheque. They don't have a lot of funds saved up. So I think it's important that we take that into consideration. That's kinds of why I wanted the number of how many people are impacted, because I guess that -- when I look at what happened with the CERB, I think that's kinds of what that was, to put money in the pockets of the people right away. And I think that's what we're saying on this side is the same thing. You know, what can we do? I'm hoping it's not going to be, you know, a year down the road and we're still talking about putting money in people's pockets. I'm hoping that this situation gets sorted out fairly quickly and people get back in their houses and we solve this. So I think that's what we're looking for, and I guess ECE has already did -- provided some money, but we're looking for is a little more support than that to make sure that the money goes into their pocket and having the five million go towards the other, I've got no problem with that as long as there's money -- separate pot for people. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I can give you an estimate. I think we're looking at somewhere between, you know, I think 60 to 80 households right now. So at least there's a sense of the scale of what we're dealing with. And Madam Chair, again, the commitment that I'm making, I realize that it is not as specific as people want but it's an understanding now that the disaster system's committee process, while it exists, while it's a policy and it's a process and it has a way of unfolding, is going to take some time. That is why I'm making the

commitment that Finance and MACA are going to work together to make sure that we get ahead of that committee process and get some money moving faster than what that process by itself will take. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And, yeah, I just -- you know, we have victims out there and I just want to see this dealt with quickly. We need solutions and, you know, and the solutions have to come from all of us and, you know, we always say money's tight but at the same time, you know, we've got to help -- we've got to put the money where the help is actually really needed, and we know where it is in this instance so, you know, instead of -- you know, instead of us, you know, sitting here and arguing about stuff, you know, if you have a solution, put it out there and hopefully, you know, the department can use it and help the victims. So thank you. And that is all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. And I'll take that as a comment.

Any further questions comments? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: One comment. There's got to be some compassion here, okay. Compassion, it's our own people. These are people that are -- don't live in big houses that are worth \$2 million and stuff, okay. And I stress to the government that we on this side know what compassion is, and we got to make sure the other side also knows that too, okay. And I don't want any cold answers when you're communicating to poor people and whatever, compassion plays a big part. And I've said that even at the beginning, that we got to listen to the people, okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Do you have any comment, Minister of Finance?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, the Minister of Housing has been very clear that she is committed to getting housing dealt with - ready, sorted, built, rebuilt, and when I'm focusing on the disaster assistance policy and the disaster assistance committee, it is not for lack of recognizing that we need to work outside that stringent process. I want people to know that there is a process, that it is in existence, that the committee is stood up, and you know, and will undertake its work and take it seriously. But, again, that's where -- I've made the statement today that we're going to be working together to accelerate something outside or in addition to that process. The challenge that I have, and I know it will produce

frustration, is I don't have a final answer. What I know is that we need to move this five million out quickly. I know we need to move the five million into the hands of people who have been displaced, who may already be back from the evacuation centre. And, you know, we want to work within the processes we have as much as we can because they are there. But I want to send that message that I recognize that in the coming days, a method needs to be in place so that this five million can start to move out even if it's in some sort of advance ahead of the full rollout of the process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha, did you have any further questions?

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any other comments. I hope that people understand compassion, though.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. So we're going to move on, and I'm going to call this page now.

I don't want to use another ten minutes. As long as you're not going to speak I mean for ten minutes. Okay. Well, I will let you go, then. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. Yeah, I just want to get clear assurance that our assistance approach is not being driven by the federal reimbursement. We need to put people first. And, quite frankly, I can't speak for everybody on this side of the House, we don't really -- or I don't care if we actually get all the money back out of the federal government. The principle that needs to be driving our assistance approach is to help people get back up on their feet and get people back into their homes by winter. The reimbursement stuff can come afterwards. That's not what should be driving the way that we provide assistance to people. And this form and that policy is what is going to hamstring us. That's what this is designed around and you guys need to fix this now. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are not driven by getting money from the federal government. It will certainly be nice to get money back from the federal government. They have a disaster relief fund. It is set up to provide supports for all provinces and territories. Our disaster assistance policy is not that different from the others for this exact purpose. But we aren't before the House right now with this, making the commitments that I've made today, in

the hopes that I'll get money back. We're here because we want to make sure that we're getting this money out as quickly as we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. And thank you, Member. All right.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, not previously authorized, \$4,952,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimate (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, school of community government, not previously authorized, negative \$10,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Sports, recreation and youth, not previously authorized, negative \$165,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,644,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 412-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No.1, 2021-2022?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Thank you. Oh, sorry. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 133-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 412-19(2), SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2021-2022,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 412-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, be concluded; and, that Tabled Document 412-19(2) be reported

and recommended as amended and ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Tabled Document 412-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in a formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

Thank you, Ministers, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-At-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber.

Member for Frame Lake, I just want to apologize. I didn't say not to talk; I just meant don't use up the whole ten minutes, you already had one round. Thanks. Okay. So, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Sorry, do we want to try to squeeze in the standing committee report? Okay, all right. Just checking.

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 non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 25, Tabled Document 412-19(2), Committee Report 15-19(2) and Committee Report 16-19(2) -- or sorry, three is it? Yes, three, sorry. Tabled Document 412-19(3), and would like to report progress and that Bill 25 is ready for third reading and that consideration of Tabled Document 412-19(2) is concluded and the House concur on those estimates as amended and

that an appropriation bill to be based thereon introduced without delay.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Frame Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 34:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2021-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriations Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2021-2022, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister's requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Hay River north, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife North, and the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. Thank you. The results of the recorded vote, 14 in favour, zero nos, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 34 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Madam 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 Friday, June 4th, 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. 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
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, June 4th, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

---Adjournment

The House adjourned at 6:52 p.m.