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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Thebacha)

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(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Colleagues, welcome back to the Chamber. Before we begin, I wish to offer condolences on behalf of the Assembly to the family and friends of the honourable Robert McCleary.

Mr. McCleary began his adventure in the North in 1966, teaching across the Eastern Arctic and in Yellowknife. He served two terms at the Legislative Assembly and was elected as Speaker to the 9th Assembly in November 1979. As a Member of the Constitutional Alliance of the Northwest Territories, a group of representatives from the Indigenous governments, Indigenous-led associations, and the Legislative Assembly, Mr. McCleary helped guide the development of a new government that we now know as Nunavut.

He was well known for his musical talent and with his love of the north. He wrote many songs about the Northwest Territories. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

I would now like to welcome Members back after a long adjournment. We last convened in this Chamber on June 4th. I hope that all Members and people of the Northwest Territories had a safe summer and fall out on the land, enjoying our beautiful territory.

On October 19th, pursuant to Motion 38-19(2) and in the public interest, I announced the fall sitting would be rescheduled. The House was called to sit today almost six weeks later than scheduled. This was a decision that I made after careful consideration and discussion with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The COVID-19 virus continues to affect many of our people and our communities, and my thoughts and prayers are with those communities dealing with an active outbreak, those that have overcome outbreaks, and everyone who has been affected by the COVID-19 virus.

On November 1st, the Board of Management approved the Legislative Assembly's COVID-19 vaccination policy requiring mandatory vaccinations

against COVID-19. All persons who enter the Legislative Assembly building and are eligible to be vaccinated will be required to have received the full series of Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccinations or an approved combination of Health Canada-approved vaccines.

Members, I would like to formally welcome our new colleague, the Member for Monfwi.

---Applause

The Member for Monfwi was elected in the by-election on July 27th. The official swearing in ceremony was held in the Chamber on August 5th with many respected Elders, friends and family by her side. The Member for Monfwi was recently the president of the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories for six years and a councillor for the Behchoko community government. The Member completed a bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Saskatchewan and received diplomas from the child and youth care worker program at Mount Royal College and a social work program at Aurora College. Even though it is the Member's first sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Member for Monfwi has been actively working for her constituents and attending virtual committee meetings since her swearing-in ceremony.

Colleagues, please join me in welcoming the Member for Monfwi to the Chamber today. We are all excited to be here and working together in person for this sitting.

---Applause

Thank you, Members. It is an honour for us all to be here on behalf of our constituents and all residents of the Northwest Territories. I would like to take this time to remind Members to conduct themselves in keeping with the rules of the Assembly. This respect for one another, for this institution, and most importantly for those who elected us. Treat each other with dignity and take pride in the work that we do here. We are here to serve as representatives for the people that elected us and put their trust in us.

I look forward to being able to welcome the public back into this building, however the current COVID-19 situation does not allow it at this time. Although the Assembly remains closed to the public, media are welcome in the gallery. We

continue to broadcast and live stream our proceedings. We need to ensure the public has the opportunity to see and understand the work being done here on their behalf.

Now, colleagues, it is my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of

- Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2022-2023;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures) No. 4, 2020-2021;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Corporation Expenditures) No. 2, 2021 - 2022

during the Second Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Yours Truly, Margaret M. Thom, Commissioner.

Thank you, colleagues. Member for Thebacha on a point of privilege.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege under rule 20(1).

Since the Assembly last adjourned on June 4th, 2021, a number of incidents have occurred that undermined the dignity, integrity, and efficient functioning of the Legislative Assembly. Each of these incidents arise from the conduct of the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

As is well known, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh was recently the subject of a code of conduct inquiry. This inquiry convened on October 4th, 2021. The sole adjudicator delivered his report on November 17th, 2021, and recommended that the Member's seat be declared vacant.

The incidents giving rise to this point of privilege relate to the Member's conduct in the period leading up to, during, and since that inquiry. As I will explain, these incidents go to the heart of this Assembly's ability to function as an institution of constitutional democracy. Specifically, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has, since this House last sat, demonstrated a continuing pattern of threatening behaviour and undermines the dignity, integrity and effective functioning of the Legislative Assembly as whole, breaching all of our privileges as elected Members and undermining the democracy in the Northwest Territories.

The first threat I will discuss was issued a great many of us sitting in this room today.

The day before the inquiry began on October 3rd, 2021, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh sent a threatening message that included the following: "Whoever backed this, I'm coming for you".

This message was sent via Facebook Messenger to a group called Caucus. This Facebook group includes all MLAs except myself and the Member for Hay River South as we do not have Facebook accounts. Two staff members are also members of this group. I was made aware of this threat the following day on October 4th, 2021. Since that time, I've learned that this is not the first time the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh made threatening statements to Members or staff of the Legislative Assembly.

For example, I learned that from the Member from Yellowknife North that on August 16th, 2021, during a discussion about the process before the sole adjudicator was appointed in response to the code of conduct complaint, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh told the Member for Yellowknife that, quote, "If you come for my family, I come for you."

I also understand that on August 24th, 2021, after a phone call to the deputy clerk Glen Rutland in which the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh admitted he was intoxicated and he said, quote, "I'm sorry, Glen, I normally would do this in person but I am coming for you."

I've also learned that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh sent a text to Mr. Rutland on October 1st, 2021, in which he used a Latin phrase referring to cutting the neck off a snake in reference to an officer of the Legislative Assembly.

None of these threats were dealt with by the sole adjudicator in his disposition report released on November 17th, 2021 into the code of conduct inquiry involving the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

It is clear to me that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh's engaged in a pattern of threatening Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly. This amounts to intimidation of Members and the staff who support us in carrying out our work as elected representatives of the people of the Northwest Territories.

This threatens the Assembly's ability to discharge its legislative and deliberative functions.

The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh is entitled to disagree with Members of this House. Disagreement and debate are a functional part here as our work here as legislators, however, this Assembly only functions when this debate is expressed with a minimum level of respect. By threatening Members and the staff who support our

work, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has demonstrated profound disrespect for his colleagues and for the Assembly as an institution of democratic governance. He has also crossed the line from disagreement, which is entirely open to him, to threats and intimidation, which are not.

The pattern of behaviour by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh obstructs and intimidates the Members of the Legislative Assembly in relation to our duties as elected representatives. This breaches the privileges of both individual Members and of this Assembly as a whole.

As a Member of this Assembly, I have been directly affected by the threats made by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Although I did not directly receive the indiscriminate threat the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh sent to the Facebook Caucus group October 4th, it is clear that this threat was aimed at and intended for the entirety of Caucus of which I am a member.

This threat has shaken me. My office is located in the same hallway as the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh like many other Members of this Assembly. I travelled to Yellowknife from my home in Fort Smith for session. I am a long way from my family and community and often work well into the evening when I am in Yellowknife. I have no doubt that these threats could make any Member who receives them feel vulnerable regardless of their circumstances. But I think it is important to highlight that I and many other Members of this Assembly feel this vulnerability deeply. My feeling of physical safety has been undermined, both at the Legislative Assembly and in Yellowknife where the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh resides.

This is absolutely a breach of my individual privileges as a Member of this Assembly. The conduct I have described is also a breach of the Assembly's collective privileges.

When the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh is present, I've seen that people do not speak freely for fear of how he will react. His behaviour has created an atmosphere of mistrust and unease at the Legislative Assembly that is corrosive to consensus government and to the important work that we are all entrusted to do as representatives for the people of the Northwest Territories.

This pattern of behaviour also undermines the dignity and authority of the Assembly in the eyes of the people of the Northwest Territories.

The behaviour of the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh towards both staff and other Members would not be acceptable in any other workplace. It is a distraction from the important work we are doing as legislators and leads to the public to view

the Legislative Assembly as dysfunctional and unprofessional. The time, resources, and attention Members have had to devote to dealing with these issues also distracts from Members' abilities to address the many pressing issues facing the Northwest Territories.

The standard of behaviour required of Members is set out in the code of conduct which states that Members must not only act lawfully but in a manner that will withstand the closest public scrutiny, upholding the dignity and honour of the Assembly and its Members.

The code of conduct also requires that Members treat one another and staff appropriately and without harassment.

The conduct of the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, since this House last sat, clearly fails to meet this standard.

The threats I have described clearly amounts to a breach of the privileges of individual Members and of the Assembly as a whole.

In addition to this threatening behaviour, we all became aware in the sole adjudicator's November 17th, 2021, report that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh's pattern of obstructionist and intimidating behaviour continued during the sole adjudicator's inquiry. The sole adjudicator's report describes, quote, "antagonism" displayed by the Member of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, participants in the inquiry, including the sole adjudicator himself. It also constitutes breaches of the Assembly's privileges.

The report described the Member insulting participants, for example, by calling one witness a liar, describing the decision as a, quote, "legal farce." And at one point, asking the sole adjudicator at one point, "Can you guys not just get your crap together."

Although he apologized for these comments, the sole adjudicator found that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh "offered excuses for his comments rather than actually apologizing for his behavior."

Most troubling in this is the sole adjudicator's statement that the Member's comments "reflect that he does not have any respect for the participants in this inquiry and for the rule of law which is such an integral component of a democratic society."

The sole adjudicator also noted that in making these statements, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh may have breached the code of conduct by bringing the integrity of his office or of the Assembly into disrepute. The sole adjudicator did not consider these "offensive statements" when making his findings as they fell outside of the inquiry's terms of

reference. However, the extreme disrespect shown by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh throughout the inquiry process is a further affront to the dignity of the Assembly.

This affront continued on November 18th in the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh's press conference following the release of the sole adjudicator's report. At that press conference, he referred to the inquiry as "a colossal waste of time, resources and taxpayer money." He also stated that he was convinced that the result of the inquiry was determined before it even started. At this press conference, the Member's legal counsel also attacked many of the sole adjudicator's findings and the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh characterized the sole adjudicator's recommendation that his seat be vacated as "just a lame attempt to permit other Members to unseat him."

This clear inability to demonstrate any remorse nor any regard for a report recommending the most serious sanction this Assembly can deliver is a clear indication that the Member will not change his behaviour and will continue to demean this Assembly.

All of this behaviour is consistent with a pattern of threats, intimidation, and disrespect the Member has directed towards his colleagues and the institution itself and his failure to take responsibility for the damage this behaviour causes. It also represents contempt of the inquiry process and is properly seen as an attempt to undermine the code of conduct and its enforcement. It is unacceptable and requires sanction by this House.

Mr. Speaker, today is the first day of sitting since the events I described occurred. I am raising this matter at the earliest opportunity as required by Rule 20.

Should you rule that there is a prima facie breach of privilege and that this matter be raised at the earliest opportunity at the appropriate time, I will immediately move a motion for the seat of the Member of Tu Nedhe-Willideh to be vacated in accordance with Rule 25. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. I will now allow some debate on the point of privilege to other Members who wish to speak. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly I would like to thank MLA Martselos for bringing this point of privilege. I want to begin by explaining a bit of procedural issues for those who are watching.

This current point of privilege is not the sole adjudicator's report, it is not the motion recommended in that, this is a point of privilege to anything that was outside of the four corners of the

report and as such we should not be speaking about what was within the terms of reference of that report. However, I do think that it is important that this point of privilege is raised so that the entire context for when we have the debate about the motion to remove can be provided. I believe that is why this point of privilege was brought.

I want to begin by, Mr. Norn called me rather upset and he said, "If you come for my family, I come for you."

I want to clarify when I first received this, I did not interpret it as a threat, of a physical threat, and in fact I didn't even necessarily interpret it as one directed at me, more as a general principle that if someone comes for Mr. Norn's family he comes for them. And he immediately apologized after that, and we went on to have our discussion which was somewhat amicable.

I don't believe that matter on its own would meet the prima facie test for a point of privilege. However, as the Member has raised, this is also occurred to staff and then ultimately to all Caucus members and at some point, Mr. Speaker, these general threats of "I'm coming for you" amount to a breach of our privileges to feel safe in this House, to feel safe in our jobs, and a doubt starts to creep in to exactly what that means with no explanation provided by Mr. Norn.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to clarify that I, as Caucus chair, have worked to resolve this not on the floor of the House, not in such an adversarial way, and it has been extremely difficult.

Most recently, at a December 13th Caucus meeting when these specific threats from staff were raised, Mr. Norn did not deny any of the alleged incidents nor did he apologize for them. In fact, Mr. Speaker, he became visibly upset, raised his voice during the meeting and left. Before leaving, he told Members that he would only take further questions through his lawyer.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of a Member in our Caucus saying they will not be questioned or held accountable and all questions have to go through a lawyer breaks down the fundamental way we try to resolve differences in this House. We do not operate through each other with a legal counsel. We are all here as colleagues, as equals, of the 19th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, you have a two-part test:

Whether this was raised at the earliest opportunity; I don't believe there is any doubt about that. This is first day of session since all of these events occurred.

The second part of the test is whether these meet a prima facie case of privilege. I think that this pattern of behaviour meets that test. This is not behaviour we can let be tolerated. If there was a ruling that this does not meet the prima facie, then any Member is allowed to threaten and it is not a privilege of this House to come in here and feel safe in our workplace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Are there others who wish to speak to the point of privilege. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Member for Thebacha for raising a point of privilege because if she did not I was going to do it Mr. Speaker. Given that this is a very serious matter, I support your decision to allow debate on this point of privilege. I will not deal with any matters that are within the scope and terms of reference for the sole adjudicator appointed to hear a complaint about a breach of conduct by the same Member.

In my view, there have been three breaches of privilege since the House last sat, and I would like to speak to each of these as separate incidents.

Firstly, there's the matter of a threatening message or text sent by the MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh at 6:43 p.m. on Sunday, October 3rd, 2021. The message was sent to an internal chat board for Caucus Members and read as follows: "I just wanted to say F-you for making my loved ones cry. You squeezed my heart. Whoever backed this, I'm coming for you."

This message is now a matter of public record having been raised in the public hearing in front of the sole adjudicator. I was very concerned when I received and viewed the text on the evening of October 3rd, the night before the commencement of the public hearing by the sole adjudicator. Mr. Speaker, I was so concerned for my personal safety and that of my family that I made a complaint to the commanding officer of RCMP G-Division here in Yellowknife the next day. I want to thank the commanding officer for his immediate response as he literally called me within minutes of the receipt of my complaint by email to check on my safety and that of my family. I was contacted by an investigating officer on October 7th and immediately attended an interview. I informed you, Mr. Speaker, and my fellow Yellowknife MLAs of my complaint to the RCMP shortly after I was interviewed.

Mr. Speaker, the intention of the message from the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh remains unclear, but I was very concerned for the safety of my family and myself knowing that the Member for Tu Nedhe-

Wiilideh lives in Yellowknife, has been a Member of the RCMP, and has likely received firearms training.

Mr. Speaker, there's never, to my knowledge, been a public explanation or apology from the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for this message. On the face of it, I believe this message is a breach of my privilege under Rule 20(1)(v) whereby Members have "freedom from obstruction and intimidation in relation to their duties as elected representatives." I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, find the action for the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, in sending that message, to be a breach of my privilege.

Secondly, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and his legal counsel held a news conference on Thursday, November 18th, 2021, in which the legal counsel said the following in connection with this decision this House must make about the report and the recommendation of the sole adjudicator, and I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, the words of the MLA's legal counsel:

"Members of the Legislative Assembly, consider the precedent that you are being asked to set. We know that politicians across the country, around the world, have made similar errors to Mr. Norn and they've often suffered sanctions. But once this remedy recommended by the southern expert is imposed, if that is the conclusion, be afraid. Be very afraid. Anybody familiar with the north and its history and the very human conduct of elected representatives under the watchful eye of the people of the Northwest Territories, the gathered media in the very small towns and cities and hamlets and communities of the Northwest Territories, be careful what you wish for, because the moment you give the power to each other to dismiss one another, you not rotting of the Northwest Territories, but you give only add to the undermining of the already rotting democracy of the Northwest Territories but you give more power to the bureaucracy. This is bureaucracy driven, and if you give in to the temptation of accepting the recommendation of the adjudicator, and that's all it is, don't sleep well at night. Because it may not be tomorrow, it may be next year or next session, but some of you are going to cross the threshold and the mere threat of going through what Mr. Norn just experienced and is experiencing will undermine your ability to do your good job and Mr. Norn is exemplary in the execution of his duties and his protection of democracy, not just from the bureaucrats that run your Legislative Assembly but their southern colleagues brought in to the exclusion of your northern colleagues", end of quote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm all for freedom of speech but I view these words by the legal counsel for the MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh as an attempt to intimidate

me in my role as a Member and that must make a decision on the report and recommendation of the sole adjudicator. While it is possible that these words could be interpreted as a cautionary note with respect to the seriousness of the issues before the House, I did not take these words in that vein. The overall thrust of the news conference and the comments made by the Member and his legal counsel were denigrating and dismissive of a process for addressing the conduct of Members, which this House has established as an appropriate process. I viewed this news conference as a clear attempt to intimidate me and other Members as we embark on the difficult journey of considering the sole adjudicator's report.

Again, on the face of it, I ask you to find that there has been what appears to be a breach of privilege under Rule 20(10)(v) whereby Members should have "freedom from obstruction and intimidation in relation to their duties as elected representatives."

I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, find the action of the legal counsel for the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh in holding the news conference and saying what he did constitute a breach of my privilege.

I do not wish to speak to what an appropriate remedy may be as that is a decision for this House to contemplate should you agree that there is a prima facie case of the breach of privilege of the Members.

Thirdly, and lastly, Mr. Speaker, I believe the privilege of the House has been breached by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh as set out in Rule 20(1)(i) where this House has "the power to maintain order and to discipline for breaches of privilege and for contempt of the House. Contempt of the House may include disobedience to its orders, misconduct before it, affronts against its dignity and authority, and any act or omission which impedes or obstructs the House or its Members in the performance of their duties."

As discussed by the Caucus chair and the MLA for Yellowknife North, I'm aware that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh sent threatening messages, made threatening calls to our staff at the Legislative Assembly. These incidents were disclosed to Members at an in-camera discussion held during a Caucus meeting on December 13th, 2021 in relation to the findings of the recent workplace assessment. In no way can we allow, tolerate, acquiesce, or condone such behaviour and I view this as an extremely serious breach of the privileges of the House whereby our work has been impeded and obstructed, not to mention the impact on our staff.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that, on the face of it, you find these threats to the staff of the Legislative

Assembly by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh constitute a breach of the privileges of the House under Rule 20(1)(i).

Mr. Speaker, the last matter you must consider in terms of these points of privilege is whether they have been raised at the earliest opportunity. Given that the House last sat on June 4th, 2021, and a point of privilege has been raised as the first order of business today, I believe you can very safely find, as required in Rule 20(5)(b) that "the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity."

I would also recommend that you take all of the submissions today under advisement but render a full and timely decision.

Mr. Speaker, I regret very much having to raise these matters publicly as I would much rather get back to working for my constituents and a better Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Are there others who wish to speak to the point of privilege. I see none. Oh, Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the events that have caused us to be here today having this debate are unfortunate. I do not speak to the matter of the Member's conduct as it relates to the point of privilege lightly. However, I must stand and speak out about what has occurred and the impact it has on Members, including myself.

Mr. Speaker, we are a consensus government in the Northwest Territories and we must operate in a productive and professional environment. Will we agree at every step? Certainly not. Will some of these debates and discussions be passionate? Certainly, they will be. However, Members agreed when they were sworn in to abide by the code of conduct and carry out our duties in a manner that will withstand public scrutiny in the course of our work, even in challenging times. As Members of the Legislative Assembly, we are also afforded privileges so that we can carry out our work. Therefore, would we expect threats from one of our Members of Caucus as part of this work? Certainly not.

The last point is what we're talking about today and why we must take action.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh sent Members of this House, including two members of our staff, a message using unparliamentary language that I will not repeat and indicated that "whoever backed this, I'm coming for you." This was in reference to his hearing with the sole adjudicator that was about to

start, and the proceeding complaints by the chair of Caucus in relation to his conduct.

When I heard these words, Mr. Speaker, I was immediately concerned. I did have to think of my own and my family's safety. Like many women who have experienced violence at the hands of men, I thought about what he would do to me if I did what I felt was right.

Mr. Speaker, we agreed as a Caucus to bring forward the complaint in relation to the Member regarding his failure to uphold our code of conduct for a specific and factual reason. It was not politically motivated despite what the Member may believe. The complaint was made because the Member had failed in his duty to uphold the code that we are all bound by. The words he sent us indicate that the following processes we all agreed to, by asking him to ensure he upholds the code of conduct, we would face retribution from the Member.

Without getting into the details of the previous complaint, our code of conduct under principle 3 states: Members must treat members of the public, one another, and staff appropriately and without harassment. Members must take all reasonable steps to ensure the work environment is free from harassment.

The words "coming for you" is surely a threat of retribution and, in my opinion, harassment against every Member of the Legislative Assembly that received this message.

As a woman I find the threat particularly troubling. Threats of violence, whether physical, verbal, or emotional, are faced by women every day. The Legislative Assembly should be where political leaders, no matter which gender, should be able to safely fulfill our duties. As leaders, we must act like it and we must treat each other professionally in order to lead on behalf of the people that elected us.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of this House has individual and collective privileges as set out in the rules of the Legislative Assembly. One of the individual privileges is to be free from obstruction and intimidation in relation to our duties as elected representatives. The Member's statement to his Caucus colleagues is unacceptable according to our code of conduct and I believe it is unacceptable according to the privileges that Members of this Legislative Assembly are afforded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. To the point of privilege, Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to speak to the timeliness of the point of privilege; I don't think that's at issue. I wish to speak to really whether or not this is prima facie point of privilege which means, in other words, whether or not on its face what's been raised is such that it would obviously or clearly amount to a breach of the privileges of the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak first to the allegation of threats that was made against public servants and, secondly, to the allegations of the threat made against all Members offence the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I was present on more than one occasion when I heard language used by MLA from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh towards public servants that was more than rude; it was abusive. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I was present for the discussion of one very specific graphic metaphor used to imply the lengths to which the MLA would go to exact his revenge against the reputation of staff if he perceived them to be acting in a manner contrary to his interests.

When trying to figure out the intended meaning of words, context is critical. The MLA, by this time, had launched a very public war against the reputation of one of the senior public officials of this building and it was publicly obvious that he intended to pursue that by methods and means of his design. I say this knowing from the publicly-available report in to the office of the clerks that MLA Norn had chose, despite being provided legal counsel, not to fully participate in that formal process and yet continued to make statements about his allegations and beliefs and to use derogatory language about those others who may have been involved.

His behaviour and his speech is that of someone who believe that the rules simply do not apply to him. Within that context, for a public servant to hear a threat that I heard from MLA Norn is going in some way, is going a long way in my view, to leave them feeling vulnerable, to leave them feeling like they would indeed have to take that threat seriously and, indeed, it would very reasonably impact their ability to discharge their duties freely and unimpaired. That, in turn, impedes the work of this House. It impedes the ability of the staff to give us difficult and unpopular advice, difficult and unpopular news, things we may not want to have to listen to but it is for the good of the people of the Northwest Territories that we understand the policies and the laws that we are here to uphold. It erodes the trust necessary for us as elected officials to use our staff to the best of their ability so that we can, in turn, discharge our duties. This is properly a point of privilege.

I'd like secondly to speak to the comments made towards all MLAs. Again, the words that are used in the context of a threat, in my view, should inform the determination of whether someone is using intimidating language or not. It is worth considering both the intention of the speaker as well as the reasonable perspective of the intended recipient. The words themselves, that of whomever backed this I'm coming for you, the "this" in my belief was the beginning of the hearing before the adjudicator set to start that next morning. In my view, that's quite clear. As for what the "I'm coming for you" means, I'll get to that shortly.

Mr. Speaker, one of our duties is to protect the integrity of the Assembly, to uphold the laws and rules that we ourselves are responsible. If we do not submit ourselves to these rules, laws, and procedures, what moral right do we have to ask citizens to follow the laws, the rules, or the procedures that have been created either by this legislature or as a result of its direction?

After MLAs had learned, along with the rest of the public, that the MLA had breached public health orders and had potentially misled the public about his actions, it was incumbent on us as those responsible for the creation of law, including the Public Health Act and the legislature's code of conduct, to take action. We did so in the form of the referral of this matter to the Integrity Commissioner. And I believe every step was taken in good faith and, frankly, necessary for the preservation of the dignity of this House. From there, the processes that followed were those found in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Section 107 of that act says that we, as MLAs, shall consider the disposition of that process.

By threatening all of those who "backed" the actions that launched the inquiry and the hearing, the MLA, in my view, is telling us very clearly that any further actions or statements that any one of us have to make in relation to his conduct or potential discipline under the code will be met with him "coming" for us. Very clear, Mr. Speaker, I understood those words as a message that should we continue discharge our duties by following in good faith the laws, rules, and procedures established by this Assembly, that MLA Norn will come for us when he disagrees with those laws, rules or procedures. Specifically, that he will come for us if we act in good faith, as MLAs, in an effort to discharge our duties on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. That leaves one last thing, Mr. Speaker.

What does it mean to say "I'm coming for you." Again, in the full context of all of what has been going on, the public statements, the media statements, the participation or lack thereof, it seems to me that this means that the speaker will

be coming in some form of revenge. I believe the intention was to intimidate us emotionally and psychologically. If we look at the totality of the circumstances of all that has occurred in the last several months, I believe at minimum that the revenge contemplated was in the form of reputational attack. As politicians, reputation is essential capital to discharge our duties. For us to trust one another and for our residents to trust us, we must have reputations for integrity and honesty and decency. The scary thing about reputation is that if someone in a position of trust and authority, such as an MLA, makes public statements against someone else, even if those statements may be totally without basis or evidence, the subject's reputation is immediately at risk of reputational harm.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that MLA Norn's threat was made against us for acting in our professional capacity, for speaking honestly and frankly, for acting in our professional duties on behalf of constituents who had raised their concerns about his disregard for public health orders and process. I believe this was a threat against us for putting into motion the legal processes the legislature itself has established to deal with exactly these situations, and it is a threat of reputational harm for actions that we took in the course of our elected duties.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I believe the intention of this threat was to intimidate us into silence and inaction in our professional capacity so that we do not speak on behalf of the residents who have raised their concerns and certainly not to speak specifically in this House about the MLA's actions. In the totality of the circumstances, in Mr. Norn's conduct and including public statements, lead me to believe that should we fail to heed this threat the MLA would make every effort to cause any one of us, if not all of us, reputational harm in any manner he sees fit. For all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you find that there is a prima facie case for point of privilege. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. To the point of privilege. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start today by thanking MLA Freda Martselos for being outspoken on this topic and raising the point of privilege that she has so eloquently raised. It's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that we all have a right to work without threats and intimidation, to not be bullied or to work with bullies. And that's not only true of ourselves; it's also true for our staff as well.

MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh crossed this line by threatening me and my colleagues in October with his "I'm coming for you" statement so much so that I

did consider going to the RCMP because just weeks earlier, I had suggested that he resign and I felt that I had made myself a target by doing so. Further, I had to think twice about whether I was going to stand up and talk about it today or whether I was, in fact, enlarging the target on me.

So from my point of view, it's unambiguous. The intention of the Member was to intimidate me and everyone else who received the message in the Facebook chat. And we have not, to this point, seen him take any responsibility for his statements. Up to this point, he has yet to acknowledge what he wrote or said, let alone apologize, and this is unacceptable.

It's important to know that this is not a one-off. I'm aware from discussions with those involved that he has also threatened staff with the same language of "I'm coming for you." It's as wholly unacceptable to threaten staff as it is to threaten Members. But unlike Members, staff do not have an easy recourse. We have the opportunity to talk about this point of privilege, but staff do not have the same recourse primarily because of the power differential between the staff and the Members and also because the staff, as we all know, are here to facilitate the business and operation of the Legislative Assembly. And it's my experience that they go out of their way to do that. They, as I would sometimes say, drink a lot of bath water in order to make the institution run smoothly and overlook minor problems with procedure. This, however, is not a minor problem. This is a problem that strikes at the very heart of what we're doing.

The code of conduct, this has been cited previously, asks us to do our utmost to respect and honour all inhabitants of the NWT, and I take that to mean me and you as well, and to treat the public, one another, and staff appropriately and without harassment. Members must take all reasonable steps to ensure the work environment is free of harassment.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, I take harassment to include intimidation using the definition of "harassment" in the code that it is improper behaviour by a Member that is directed to and is offensive to any Member or employee, among others.

The code goes on to say that if the Member knew or ought to have reasonably known that he was harassing someone and that his speech would be unwelcome, then it's on him to acknowledge that behaviour, to stop it, and to find a remedy for it, whether that's arbitration, an apology, or some other form.

So for me, the situation is very clear that Mr. Norn's -- that the Member for Tu Nedhe-

Wiilideh's behaviour has interfered with our work, and it has interfered with the work that we've been elected to do. It has occupied a tremendous amount of our time and treasure to deal with this unwanted behaviour. And his conduct is not becoming to a Member of this House. So it is my view that there is a breach of privilege here, both on the face of it, and it was raised at the first opportunity. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. To the point of privilege, Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to thank the Member for Thebacha for raising this point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, each of us as Members of this Assembly was duly elected by a majority of our constituents. When we are obstructed in this House by another Member or Members to the point where our ability to work is compromised, then it is our constituents that become disadvantaged and that is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the point of privilege raised by the Member for Thebacha was not rushed into or taken lightly. We, as Members, must be held to a higher standard. When we break the trust of those that we work with or that work for us, and most importantly of our constituents, it is important that we recognize that error and immediately take responsibility.

In this matter, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has failed that test therefore I have to support the point of privilege put before this House on points raised by -- those by the Member for Thebacha and by those who spoke prior in which points are in no way trivial. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. To the point of privilege, Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this democratic institution is a place of strength because we are able to discuss issues, reach new understandings, and make inclusive decisions. One of the most valuable tools we have at our disposals is the combination of our diverse work experience and unique lived experience. We have all travelled different journeys to be here. Mr. Norn himself has worked as an RCMP officer; MLA Semmler as a public health nurse; Minister Archie worked as a chief negotiator and spent her childhood living a traditional lifestyle; MLA Martselos served her people as Chief; and MLA Jacobson often shares his whale hunting adventures alongside the realities of living at the top of the world. All of us have unique lived

experience and connections that bring incredible value to our team and this Assembly. But sharing requires that we create a safe place.

Our ability to be effective representatives of the people we serve is reliant on our ability to safely share our knowledge and experience and to apply our own unique values to the decisions we make.

A Member's integrity is fundamental to maintaining public confidence in each individual Member and in the Legislative Assembly as an institution. How we act and treat one another either builds or erodes the public's trust.

Mr. Speaker, elected officials need to be able to do their work without fear, intimidation, or worry for their safety, and so do our staff. It's taboo to speak of staff in this House but our success, especially committee work, is heavily reliant on the staff of the Legislative Assembly. The staff, as well as every public servant, has the right to a harassment-free and respectful workplace. Threatening or harassing public servants is a direct contravention of the GNWT's Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy, the Member's code of conduct, the rules of this House, and the Criminal Code enforced by the RCMP.

We are at the tail end of a second very difficult year both as residents and leaders. North American democracies are reporting surges in abuse and threats to those elected in leadership positions. In the United States, violent threats against lawmakers doubled last year. While in Canada, the RCMP acknowledged that they must do more to respond to noncriminal threats against politicians. In the last year and a half here in the NWT, we have seen threats against elected officials and people in leadership positions, and this is not okay.

This point of privilege is based on a repetitive pattern of threats and has a direct impact on the confidence of the people I serve, on my colleagues, and on the work that we do. If we are to focus on improving the lives of the people we serve, there is absolutely no place for threats in the Legislative Assembly. The behaviours that we allow in this House and in this building set the bar, and it should not be set to the lowest acceptable level.

This building and its elected officials are not above the law. Unless we as leaders in elected office refuse to accept repetitive written and spoken threats, we condone this behaviour not only for ourselves and our workplace but for the public service, the communities we serve, and for the people of Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I support this point of privilege, and I want to thank the Member for Thebacha for bringing it forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Are there others who wish to speak to the point of privilege. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I am speaking in support for the Member from Thebacha.

These types of comments I don't think would be appropriate at any work site - if you do your job, I'm coming after you. I think that this is probably the most clear a case I've seen where there's a breach of privilege. It's not very -- there's not a lot of gray area here. This is very black and white.

You might think that the comment is a little vague, and it is. It's not clear what it's referencing but, you know, other Members have commented that if you look at the timeline, it is right before the sole adjudicator's inquiry and so I think it's easy to connect those two.

I think we also have to consider the fact that we have, for the first time, an Assembly made up mostly of women. And in the Northwest Territories, we have a rate of violence against women that, you know, is incomparable to the rest of Canada. It is so high in the Northwest Territories. I don't think it's unreasonable to think that a comment like that directed at a group of women might be taken in a certain way. I don't know what everyone's personal history here is. You know, we've heard women today say they have a history of violence. I think it's reasonable to think that a comment like that is likely to intimidate, and for myself as well. Does this mean that someone's coming for me? I'm going to get a punch in the back of the head as I walk down the hall? Does it mean that's someone's lawyer's going to write me 19 letters? I don't know. Nonetheless, both of those are things I don't want to have to deal with. They're both headaches.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a pretty clear case, and I think that the decision that you make, we have to take that and then, as an Assembly, figure out how we are going to deal with this because this type of behavior isn't appropriate in any workplace, let alone the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Are there others who wish to speak to the point of privilege. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, first, I'd like to thank the Member for Thebacha for bringing this forward.

In all my life, I've travelled to Yellowknife. After receiving this threat, I have never felt my safety was compromised coming here until that. You know, we were planning on being here the end of that week, or the following week, for meetings and then

session. I did not want to come. So this type of threat was going to prevent me from being able to do my job as an MLA.

As my colleague has said, this Assembly is made up of more women than men now and this type of a threat in any circumstance would never be okay. And as a Legislative Assembly Member, this is unacceptable behaviour towards anyone.

I have been unable to participate fully in committee meetings for fear of I might say something wrong that may put myself or my family at risk of these -- more of these threats. And I -- you know, I -- I had a statement made but I just -- I didn't need it anymore. Like, this is how it impacted me. And for not even to have an apology and sit in these committee meetings like we're supposed to continue on and work. We've had breach after breach of confidential information. We don't know who it is or what it is, you know, and so why would we want to talk? Why would we want to do anything, especially when we start to get threatened. So Mr. Speaker, I just want to put my support behind this point of privilege. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. To the point of privilege. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This motion is news to me. I did prepare what I'm about to say hastily and I want to say, you know, that words that were mentioned here, you know, that were referred -- that everybody's referring to were in no way, shape, or form meant to be a physical threat. And if I scared anybody, I am truly sorry from the bottom of my heart.

This has all been twisted all out of context, all of it. I am a very passionate person when it comes to my work. I'm fiery. I'm militant. If I see unjust things come happen around me, I report it. Throughout my service in public service, I have put my body and my mind in harm's way, and I'll never stop doing that.

The Member for Thebacha had a well-worded motion, and she had plenty of time to prepare and think about this, and so did some of my colleagues as well. I'm going to speak to you from the heart. I wrote a few notes. But I want to say something that really hold true, something happened recently. Like, I watched an interview with Oprah Winfrey and Adele. And Adele said something that really rung with me and I put it on my social media, you know. One thing she said is we are now living in a "gotcha culture." Everything we do or say now nowadays is watched, recorded, and judged to the nth degree. And I think with me, that's -- I think that also is applicable.

You know, we talk about prima facie here, and we always have to remember context. And so much of what I've said was just taken out of context. And again, it was never meant to intimidate anybody. That was never my intent. And people who know me personally know that I would never do anything like -- like, do hurt -- harm anybody. That's just -- I would never do that. And I want to make that clear here today.

And it appears though, like, what I said was weaponized, like used as a political tool and the RCMP became involved, and they spoke to me. And I made it clear to them as well this was not -- this was just merely a political statement and not physical. And they accepted that, and it was unfounded and we let it go, and we walked away.

But I should say that the RCMP should not be used as a political instrument. But I could see now from listening to some of the comments, I could see why I had to be spoken to, and that's -- that is fair. And again, I will say again what I said was regrettable, and I apologize for that. I wish I could take it back. I'll follow that, and I will take what consequences you have here but I believe that removal from my seat here is overkill.

It hasn't happened in any legislature in Canada or the Commonwealth as far as I can -- as I know, but I'll have to fact-check that.

And Mr. Speaker, the Member for Thebacha mentioned that this -- something along the lines that this whole thing was predetermined, and I believe it was.

You know, two weeks ago, a staff Member sent out an email to clerks across the country seeking wording on a removal or suspension from the Legislative Assembly. So there was already works in the -- there was already work underway. And I have proof of that.

And I have to say this whole process - and I'm referring to the inquiries that I've been involved with - were just blown way out of proportion. It was predetermined.

And we still have staff in this building assaulting a sitting Member, a Criminal Code offence. This has never been addressed yet. There is double standards that still go on in this building. And I have to say with this inquiry I've never felt white privilege and I felt there was racism involved with the adjudicator and the lawyer, Laprairie, Mr. Laprairie. And coming from the adjudicator, I'm going to tell you something. I'd like to say something as well --

MR. O'REILLY: -- point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Member is referring to the sole adjudicator process, the report, and these are not on topic. And he is really, I think, using some abusive, insulting language. I believe this is a breach of the rules, Mr. Speaker, Rule 24. So I would ask that the Member confine his remarks to the point of privilege and not bring in the sole adjudicator and use respectful language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The Member has called a point of order. That Member just read his point of order.

Members, I just want to say that we cannot refer to what's been said in the report that hasn't been tabled yet. Once it has, then you could say anything that you want to about the report. But until then, do not reference anything in that report.

There is a point of order. And I'll ask the Member to retract his remarks and apologize to the House. Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sure, if that's the wishes of the Member, I can retract the referral to the adjudicator's report. I think that's what was mentioned. If I may, can I continue on, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, also apologize to the House. Mahsi.

MR. NORN: Okay, I was just waiting for the light to come on here.

You know, and Mr. Speaker, the wording in the motion removing me from the office is surprising and --

SOME HON MEMBERS: Retract the statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The two-part thing you had to do is retract the statement and apologize to the House. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Sorry, I was going to continue on. Yeah, I'll retract what the -- make the referral to the adjudicator's report, and I apologize for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, carry on, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Going back to the motion, the wording in the motion to remove me from office is surprising, Mr. Speaker. And I don't believe people in the -- like, in this House can do that. Only my constituents can do that at the polls during election.

Removal from office is overkill and unprecedented. We've had past Members in this House commit serious crimes and still retain their seats.

SOME HON MEMBERS: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, point of order is called. To the point of order, Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to keep us on track. So right now, we're discussing a point of privilege related to threatening comments that have been made, and we're not discussing the motion in the report as you had just mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River North has called a point of order. He's just read his point of order. The Member has called the point of order. Does the Member -- offending Member wish to explain? Call the point of order.

MR. NORN: Sorry, can you repeat the question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member just called a point of order on you. Do you wish to explain what you were trying to say.

MR. NORN: Oh yeah, I was just speaking to the motion because there was mention in the wording and just for clarification that there was recommendation for removal for my seat, and I was just speaking to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Does anyone else wish to speak to the point of order. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize this is very difficult debate/discussion that we're having. But there is no motion on the floor right now. What we're talking about is a point of privilege raised by the Member for Thebacha. And I believe that Members should keep their remarks to the point of privilege, not a report that hasn't even been tabled in the House. A rule of anticipation, Mr. Speaker, you can't talk about something that hasn't even arrived in the House yet but we expect it. So for a number of reasons, I would suggest that the Member confine his comments to the point of privilege alone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the Member's point of order, there is a point of order. I ask the Member to please retract his statement and apologize to the House. Thank you.

MR. NORN: Yeah, mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. So just for clarification, what exactly do you want me to retract, like what wording do you want me to retract? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. With mention to the report and the perceived outcome.

Member, I have already ruled that you cannot reference the sole adjudicator's report at this time. If you continue to do so, I will have no choice but to un-name you Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh on the point of privilege. Thank you.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. So am I okay to proceed?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

And going back to, you know, the point of privilege and the words that were said, like I said, I'll say it again, they were taken out of context, and I apologize. Like everybody else here, I think we spent enough time on this that we just want to move on and continue on with our business. But what I've experienced because of all this is if there's any price that had to be paid, I think I paid twice over. And that's all I have to say, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the point of privilege, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I echo some of the comments that were made by Premier and MLA for Thebacha. As a female Member of this Assembly, I felt unsafe given by the comments made by Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, especially as an MLA living far away from home and from my support system.

Intimidation of Members of this Assembly and our staff is not acceptable at any level. We cannot condone or dismiss the action of the Member. To do so, is to devalue the work and the commitment of MLAs and the staff that work so hard to support us. I'm not in opinion that threats were made impacted the ability of myself, my fellow MLAs, and our staff to do our jobs in a safe manner. There is a case for a point of privilege, and I urge you to take to the appropriate action. And finally, thank you, to the Member for Thebacha for bringing up the point of privilege forward at this earliest convenience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Are there any others who wish to speak to the point of privilege? I see none.

Thank you, Members. I will take this matter under advisement and provide my ruling at a later date. Members, before we continue with orders of the day, we'll take a short recess. Thank you.

---Recess

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Since we have moved on to the orders of the day, I'd like to call a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member's calling a point of privilege. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to call a point of privilege on the Member for Frame Lake. When he was speaking, he did mention my lawyer, Mr. Steven Copper, as we met an agreement earlier that we would wouldn't speak about third parties at all because they're not here to defend themselves. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, it seems to me that you are raising a point of order, not a point of privilege with respect to the Member making reference to a person who is not a Member of this House. I believe this rule is 24(h): The Member shall not make allegations against another Member, a House officer, a witness, or a Member of the public.

Please proceed, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, it's difficult to hear you. So from what I'm understanding, this is not a point of order, then.

MR. SPEAKER: It's not a point of privilege; it's a point of order. So to the point of order.

MR. NORN: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, yeah, point of order, my apologies.

Just going back to what I was saying, the Member for Frame Lake mentioned my lawyer, and he can't be here to defend himself. So I'd ask that he retract what he said about that.

Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member has called a point of order. He just read out his point of order. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has called a point of order. Does the Member for Frame Lake wish to explain.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. Of course, this has caught me certainly off guard. The point that I was trying to make, Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of privilege earlier was that there were actions taken by individuals, at least one individual, outside of this House that I perceived to have infringed upon my privilege in the House to not be intimidated. And that's the context in which I made my remarks. And all I did was simply quote remarks made by the MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh comments that his legal counsel made at a news conference that was actually under auspices of this Legislative Assembly. So I should be able to reference remarks made by someone outside of this Assembly. There's nothing in the rules that I can see that distinguish between whether a

Member's privilege has been infringed upon by someone within the House or, in fact, outside of the House. So that's the context in which I made my remarks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Does anyone else wish to speak to the point of order? I see none.

Thank you, Members. I will rule at a later date. I'll take this under advisement. Thank you.

Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 178-19(2): SESSIONAL STATEMENT – NOVEMBER 2021

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleagues back to the House for the resumption of the second session of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Despite this sitting being delayed as a result of the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in the territory, I expect this has been a busy time for all of us as we focus on the important work that we have been elected to do by the people of the Northwest Territories.

It was almost 20 months ago that the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic, and since that time we have been able to limit the spread of the virus and protect the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities. Mr. Speaker, it has, and continues to be, our top priority. However, the last three months have put our great territory, its residents, communities, and healthcare system, to the ultimate test.

When we released *Emerging Wisely 2021*, we understood that there would be a risk associated with easing restrictions, and that we also need to transition to a world where COVID-19 is part of everyday life. Mr. Speaker, we knew there was a likelihood we would see an increase in cases. What *Emerging Wisely 2021* allows us to do is effectively manage our risk, to prevent and respond to outbreaks. We have eased restrictions as conditions and information has allowed. It also allows us to enhance restrictions where required and target restrictions as necessary.

While we continue to manage cases of the virus in the Northwest Territories, we have seen the success of targeted measures and how they have worked to ensure that we are able to protect residents and limit spread. During this current outbreak, we have put in place containment orders in Tuktoyaktuk, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Colville Lake, Behchoko, Whati, and K'at'l'odeeche First Nation, and put increased measures and

restrictions in Yellowknife, N'dilo, Dettah, Inuvik, and Hay River. They have been effective in stopping the spread of the virus.

While we have been largely successful, Mr. Speaker, together we have done our part to protect residents and our communities, especially those who are most vulnerable such as children who, up until recently, haven't been able to get vaccinated. We have also done what we can to protect the integrity of our health care system. It is welcomed news that the federal government has approved the use of the Pfizer vaccine in children aged 5 to 11, and we will be rolling out our plans for this part of the vaccination program in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, this outbreak has had a significant impact on our territory but we could have found ourselves in a much worse situation if it were not for the targeted measures we took and the actions of residents, Indigenous governments, community governments and the business community to curb the spread of COVID-19. This has been a difficult period for the Northwest Territories. But as we have in the past, we have stepped up and done our part when it was needed most.

This outbreak has not been without tragedy. I want to take a moment to remember the residents who lost their lives to COVID-19. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I want to extend our sincerest condolences to the families, friends, and communities of those the pandemic has taken from us. The COVID-19 pandemic has been unpredictable, and unforgiving. My heart goes out to all that have passed away and the people close to them who now grieve. We grieve with you.

Mr. Speaker, the work we do is for the people of the Northwest Territories. A strong territory needs a strong society. All residents of the Northwest Territories should have the chance to enjoy the benefits of living in a prosperous, well-governed territory, and to participate fully in a healthy, just society. Our government is committed to helping residents achieve their aspirations for themselves, their families, and their communities.

While navigating the challenges we faced as a territory because of the global pandemic, Cabinet has continued to advance the priorities and commitments outlined in the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The mandate of the 19th Legislative Assembly reflects the 22 priorities set by all members. It guides and focuses our actions to advance those priorities, Mr. Speaker. Despite the time and energy our government has focused on the pandemic, issues such as the lack of housing, climate change, and the infrastructure gap did not go away. If anything,

the issues that impact our residents most have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. They continue to be important to our government, and we are focused on showing progress on those important and urgent issues.

Mr. Speaker, considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of the Northwest Territories tabled a social and economic recovery plan for the Northwest Territories titled *Emerging Stronger: Planning the NWT's Social and Economic Recovery Together*, in the Legislative Assembly in May. Building on the commitments of the mandate, *Emerging Stronger* presents a set of actions the Government of the Northwest Territories will take to support long-term social and economic recovery in the territory. The Government of the Northwest Territories has committed to report on the status of the actions identified in the plan and to update the plan annually.

We continue to make progress in the right direction. Of the 149 actions identified in the mandate, we have more than doubled our fulfilled commitments, reduced our commitments in planning by a third, and reduced our delayed commitments. With *Emerging Stronger*, 21 percent of the commitments are fulfilled, 78 percent are in progress, and one percent is in planning. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with all Members toward fulfilling the government's commitments during the remainder of the term of the 19th Legislative Assembly and undertaking a more thorough review of our progress in the coming February to March sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we want to create a secure, sustainable, and prosperous future for the territory and its people. We remain committed to working in every sector to advance the priorities of this Legislative Assembly in a way that will provide for current and future needs and create a foundation for the long-term success of all Northerners. A big part of how we achieve this is by working together. We have always known the importance of this, and the partnership and collaborative spirit that has helped us get through the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed we can do so much more together, rather than alone.

We all want the same thing, Mr. Speaker. We all want to see residents succeed, communities and businesses to thrive, and governments at all levels to work together for the common good of the Northwest Territories.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to finding ways to make things better for our residents, Mr. Speaker. In order to achieve this, we need to continue to build on the strong partnerships we have developed with the Government of Canada. Collectively, we need to be

able to take action on priority areas where Northerners have said that more needs to be done.

We are committed to addressing the gap between the north and southern Canada that has existed for decades but has been made even more apparent because of COVID-19. We need a supportive federal government partner that acknowledges our residents are important members of Canadian society who should experience the same level of services and opportunities compared to the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the weeks after the federal election. Our discussion focused on the need to continue to advance our partnership and the shared priorities that will have a positive impact on the Northwest Territories. The Prime Minister confirmed reconciliation is a priority for his government, and I am encouraged by this.

When we marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we spent September 30th reflecting on the impact of the residential school system on Indigenous people in the NWT and across Canada. We honoured the survivors, their families and communities, and the thousands of children who never made it home. The number of unmarked graves across the country in recent months is now in the thousands. We cannot ignore this tragedy, and we are committed to working with Indigenous governments and organizations in the Northwest Territories on this issue.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is determined to advance reconciliation, Mr. Speaker. We met with the Northwest Territories Council Leaders and Modern Treaty Self-Government Partners Forum last week. We had thoughtful discussions on how our government can best support Indigenous governments and organizations in their efforts to address the residential school legacy in our territory.

The federal government committed \$320 million in new money for programs to help Indigenous communities search burial sites at former residential schools and to support survivors and their communities. The Government of the Northwest Territories can support Indigenous communities in developing strategies for recording unmarked burial sites at residential schools including leveraging federal funding and resources. To help support the work of reconciliation and healing, the Government of the Northwest Territories is examining its own files to identify any information that can help communities study and document their own residential school history.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister also said in our discussion that the relationship with our

government goes beyond the portfolio of northern affairs. I agree.

The Northwest Territories requires investments in strategic infrastructure that can help to unlock our natural resource potential, transition us to a lower carbon economy, and better connect people to opportunities and each other.

Mr. Speaker, new infrastructure stimulus funding is key to Canada's recovery from COVID-19. Take the Tlicho all-season road as an example. It connects residents to new social and employment opportunities, reduces the cost of living in the territory, increases our resiliency and our ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and provides better access to natural resources. It created economic and business opportunities for small communities and helped put people to work.

The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to work with Canada on building infrastructure and adapting to climate change, lessening the ever-widening northern infrastructure deficit and supporting implementation of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. We know that we need Canada's help, and we will be seeking additional support in the coming years.

On the issue of climate change, we are the canary in the coal mine. Our region is living with the rapidly accelerating effects of a changing climate. The Government of the Northwest Territories' recent presence at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland earlier this month sent a strong and pointed message: Canada's Arctic cannot fight this battle alone. We need climate action across the globe to secure a healthy and safe future for our residents and communities. We must also ensure that we have the means to transition to a lower carbon future.

Mr. Speaker, significant investments and supports are needed to reach climate goals. Investments in climate action are investments in the future of the Arctic, our communities, our businesses, and the people living here. Through partnerships we can green our economy, lower our greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt our communities and critical infrastructure for the future.

We have the blueprint ready for action to reduce the impact of climate change and climate-related disasters, and to make our communities safer and more resilient. Our 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework was developed by and for Northwest Territories residents including Indigenous governments. This session we will report on the progress under the action plans associated with the framework.

Mr. Speaker, as I said we need federal support. We need federal support to enhance climate adaptation

and resilience efforts, facilitate greater understanding of climate change impacts, and adaptation options through monitoring and research; and support Indigenous-led and community-based approaches to planning and adaptation.

Mr. Speaker, the resource sector accounts for nearly a third of the NWT's gross domestic product, directly employs over 3000 people in the NWT and contributes over \$800 million in spending each year. A healthy and vibrant mineral exploration and development sector is critical for the NWT, its people, and our future prosperity. Critical and strategic minerals that play a key role in modern technology are an important part of future resource and economic development for the Northwest Territories.

Earlier this month, the Government of the Northwest Territories held workshops with resource sector stakeholders and rights holders to gather input to help in the development of a new critical minerals action plan for the NWT. Critical minerals are important for existing and new technologies that support the transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy. The NWT can potentially benefit from the growing interest and increasing demand for these minerals by positioning itself for this socio-economic transition, both in a Canadian context and with respect to emerging global trends and needs.

In collaboration with Canada, Indigenous governments, and industry, we can improve mineral security, strengthen the competitiveness of North American critical mineral industries, and support the development of secure and reliable supply chains.

The NWT has substantial energy resources that can help the world transition to a low-carbon economy, from natural gas that can displace higher carbon, and more polluting coal and oil, to future opportunities in hydropower, hydrogen and geothermal energy.

Mr. Speaker, realizing the territory's resource opportunities will require an investment partnership with Canada, particularly in transportation, energy, and communications infrastructure and building the capacity of Indigenous businesses and communities to fully participate and benefit from development projects.

Securing investments and support from federal partners is critical to our future success of the Northwest Territories and the future success of Canada. Residents, community governments, businesses, and Indigenous governments have made it clear this is necessary to their success and wellbeing, and I look forward to continuing to build a

strong relationship with the federal government for a better future for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, while we continue to manage a significant outbreak of COVID-19, we are focused on getting on with the business of government. Residents expect us to continue to deliver high quality programs and services and advance the priorities they have set for us to ensure a better future for all residents and communities. We are committed to this work, and I look forward to continued collaboration with regular Members to advance the priorities we have been entrusted with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID-19 VACCINATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the residents of the NWT have stepped up when it comes to protecting each other from the serious and deadly effects of the COVID-19 virus. Our vaccination rate, as it stands now, is about 80 percent for those over the age of 12 years.

Mr. Speaker, I have been healthy all my life. I have resisted taking medication. I only just received my second ever flu shot along with my during the 19th Moderna vaccine booster. I did this for the protection of my family, my friends, and those who I come in contact with. In making my decision to be vaccinated, I had to rely on the experience and knowledge of the medical and scientific community.

Mr. Speaker, this government has asked the residents of the NWT to get vaccinated for their own protection and for the protection of their families and those who they come into contact with. Can we do more? Or have we reached the ceiling with vaccinations?

I hear from constituents who are eager to take the vaccine but I also hear from those who are hesitant and from some that say they will not and may never take it.

This is a decision each of those people will have to make for themselves, but it should not stop us from continuing to provide all residents with updated and accurate information on vaccines so informed decisions can be made.

Mr. Speaker, I know of residents that will not take the MNRA vaccine but may consider a viral

vector-based vaccine as an alternative. We need to provide choice when it comes to vaccines.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a daunting year and a half. It has pitted members of our community against each other, family members against each other. It has impacted workers, employment options, forced businesses to close down, increased mental health issues, limited access to sports activities, and contributed to medical staff burnout.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our vaccination numbers have reached a threshold where we will not see any significant change or uptake. The question is, Where do we go from here. Do we tell people we cannot fully protect them? Tell workers they cannot make a living for their family? Tell children they cannot participate in sports activities with their friends? Tell students they cannot go to school? And tell those in care homes they will continue to be locked up even though vaccinated?

Mr. Speaker, I do encourage people to get vaccinated. And I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRESS DURING THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have now entered the third year of the 19th Assembly, signifying the halfway point of our mandate. As we begin this winter session, I'd like to welcome our colleagues back from the six-month-long break since our last session.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to take a moment to acknowledge all the staff of the Legislative Assembly. Our staff are important to our work as legislators here in this Assembly, and I want to thank them for their service.

In addition I would like to thank, as always, the amazing constituents of Fort Smith for their continued support of their MLA for Thebacha. It is an honour to serve and represent my community in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I want my constituents to know that everything I do here at the Legislative Assembly is to serve the people of the NWT, along with the interests of Fort Smith and the broader South Slave region. I take my job seriously, and I'm very mindful with what I say and how I conduct myself because I always want to be respectful of the office that I hold.

Mr. Speaker, I'm someone who speaks my mind and who stands up for what's right. I am true to my convictions. I'm not afraid to stand alone if I know in my heart it is the right thing to do. Leadership requires strength, heart, trust, and willpower to get things done. And those are the qualities which I strive to accomplish every day in my elected leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I want the people of the NWT to succeed and to have good representation in the Legislative Assembly. For these reasons, I will do whatever I can within my position to ensure that good governance is always done in the name of the people of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COP 26 AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Like many on this planet, I was very disappointed with the lack of concrete progress and agreement at the recent Conference of the Parties 26 or United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. I was happy that the NWT had a delegation there.

What I've heard so far from our government is that we need federal assistance, more Indigenous representation in our delegation, and work with our circumpolar neighbours. Mr. Speaker, that's just not good enough or going to get us where we should and need to be. I'm going to make it easy for my Cabinet colleagues and lay out a path forward on the climate crisis.

One, we need a reorganization of this government to clearly set the climate crisis as a priority and to establish the authority to deal with it. There should be a new department of environment, natural resources and climate crisis. Take the energy projects and mandate out of infrastructure and even bring in the NWT Power Corporation, have one Minister responsible for all of this. This would address the failures identified by the auditor general of Canada in her climate change audit.

Two, make a clear and unequivocal commitment to drop the climate change approach from the last Cabinet, ditch the 2030 energy strategy, the Climate Change Strategic Framework and elements of the carbon tax, develop a real and focused climate crisis response that includes adaptation and mitigation for the widely-accepted carbon neutral target of net zero 2050 or even sooner, if you dare, and you should.

Three, face the crisis at the NWT Power Corporation and its entities head on. We have a

crumbling set of antiquated assets and grids designed for an infinite planet and old technology, develop a real and just transition plan that builds community and household energy self-reliance, not bigger grids and mega projects like the Taltson expansion.

Four, stop pretending big petroleum development is ever going to come back to the Northwest Territories; wind down the so-called petroleum resources strategy, local transitional use of fossil fuels is okay, but plans for export are inconsistent with life on this planet as we know it.

There you have it, Mr. Speaker, the elements of a real plan to finally start realistically to recognize and address the climate crisis and establish necessary leadership that NWT residents deserve. I'll have questions for the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Crisis later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PROPERTY LEASES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a new seating plan. Mr. Speaker, as I've spoken about before in this House, there is a rental monopoly by Northview in our town, our city of Yellowknife. Going back to the history, this is largely something that was created by the GNWT. In fact, the original founders of Northview were former GNWT civil servants who took advantage of government contracts. In time, as with many of these REITS, they got bought up and became larger and larger to a point where approximately 50 percent, as Northview advertises of the rental space in our town, is owned by one company, and our government gives them over \$20 million every single year, most of which does not go out for tender and, in fact, often the leases are renewed without competition. We inherited quite a few of these leases from the federal government at devolution.

Mr. Speaker, the real question is what are we going to do about it. And I want to speak today to some of the solutions and some of the barriers.

Firstly, I believe some of the hesitancy to do something about this is because, under our contractual obligations, we actually have \$186 million in leasing obligations going forward in the next couple of years. As we well know, our fiscal situation is tight and to enter into longer term leases will exponentially increase that number. I believe that both departments and the Department

of Finance like to keep our leasing to shorter terms to keep that contractual obligation off of our books.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, when building the new government building, or the Tatsaotine Building, it was said that that building would save the GNWT a hundred million dollars over 40 years. This was set out in a general purpose office space review that said it is much cheaper for the GNWT to own their buildings outright as opposed to lease them. I've asked multiple times for that document and for some reason, the Department of Infrastructure will not save it. But I'll take them at its word that it saves us money to own our buildings as opposed to lease them.

However, Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to look at this \$20 million with a purpose of divesting it from Northview. I believe we need to approach Indigenous governments and development corps, nonprofits, and local landlords - basically anyone we can - and offer them favorable lease conditions if they are willing to build a new building or purchase one of the existing assets in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. I believe if we went to a nonprofit and offered them some of the public housing leases, they would take that money and get more from the federal government.

I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure about what we are doing with this \$20 million a year of public money.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING NEEDS IN MONFWI

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, masi. [Translation] Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I'd like to ask about housing in Tlicho region. As all of you all in here are aware about housing in all communities but for our region, we know our housing is in crisis, and our homes are not very happy [Translation ends].

[Translation] housing so right now, as a household, we are all know that there's just too many people in one household and it's just too much.

In homes that are not suitable and not adequate. This is a problem, Mr. Speaker. Where we have some of the young people, some of the young children that are in care, they are not in care by their choice. A lot of families, parents, they love their children. Children love their parents too as well. So we are in the situation like this for housing shortage.

A suitable house has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of family living in it. We're 33.5 percent. The Tlicho has the most household of all of NWT living in homes that are not suitable. This is according to the NWT statistics. Thirty-nine percent of household homes in Behchoko, there's Whati, Gamèti, and Wekweèti, but Behchoko is the most affected one were not suitable.

About 20 percent of the household has six or more people living in one household and it is a bit too much and crowded condition, and it has very negative impacts on our health and wellbeing. And so that we need immediate long-term help. And so for that reason, we are asking that we need help. [Translation ends].

With 46.7 percent, the Tlicho region has the most household living in homes that are not adequate. This means that almost half of all houses in the Tlicho region are in need of major repair compared to 20 percent of the houses in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, this means that half of the Tlicho household live in inadequate housing, and one third of household live in unsuitable housing.

Mr. Speaker, [Translation] so, Mr. Speaker, according to the Housing Minister that most homes were going to be repaired and it does not -- has been addressed for a very long time, and we also have a long list. And the homes that we have from six -- '50s, '60s, and '70s, all these homes should be handed over to the people because we have a major -- people on the waiting list right now, at least 200 people on the waiting list so it will not go down. So this is -- for that reason, this is about ten percent of Tlicho and residents on waiting for a home. So if that's going to be repaired and worked on right away, we would really appreciate that. And so, again -- so however they do it and give homes to a home, it should be in the ratio of where it is needed more. So that would be also greatly appreciated [Translation Ends].

And social issues and social lives. And we all know this but yet we seem to have real difficulties in giving houses, the priority it holds in the lives of our family, of our community members.

Mr. Speaker, I will have a question for the Minister of Housing after this regarding my Member's statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. It's tradition that we don't interrupt the Member on their first Member's statement so that's why we didn't interrupt. But congratulations, once again, on your maiden speech. All the rest should be two minutes and 30 seconds.

---Laughter.

Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COP 26 AND CLIMATE CHANGE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this month I was very fortunate to attend COP26, the United Nations Conference of the Parties on climate change with the Minister of ENR and his delegation. In attendance in Glasgow, were leaders and politicians from around the globe with delegates hailing from all walks of life, including industry, NGOs, and activists.

The message from the conference was clear: The world is not on track to limit global warming to the extent agreed upon at COP21 in Paris in 2015. If we carry on as we are, temperatures will continue to rise and we will experience even more catastrophic events such as flooding, forest fires, extreme precipitation, and a loss of unprecedented number of species.

The world needs to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade and reach net zero carbon emissions in order to limit global temperature rise by one and a half degrees by the middle of this century. So far, the outlook is not very promising.

The four main goals of COP26 were this global net zero by 2050 commitment, to adapt to protect communities and natural habitats, to mobilize finance with a minimum of \$1 billion committed for climate financing, and a commitment to work together to deliver on these goals.

Commitments were also made to cut methane emissions, address deforestation, and to develop clean technologies. The five sectors focused on at COP26 were power, road transport, hydrogen, steel, and agriculture as these sectors represent more than half of global emissions.

One only has to look in our own backyard to see the impacts of the changing climate firsthand: coastal erosion in Tuktoyaktuk, the extreme fire season of 2014 or last spring's devastating flooding in Simpson and Jean Marie River.

When we look around at the rest of Canada, we see this repeated elsewhere, such as the current flooding in BC that has led to highway washouts and closures, that has cut the city of Vancouver off from the rest of the country.

We cannot wait for the rest of the world to live up to their promises to curb global emissions, and must begin to look for our own solutions here in the North. It is imperative that our government utilizes

all avenues of disaster mitigation and adaptation funding and work towards building our communities' resiliency. This would include assessing our communities and infrastructure for risk and incorporating nature-based solutions such as bank stabilization projects or the reestablishment of wetlands.

This government must take a proactive approach to dealing with climate change as it is no longer an issue for the future but is happening here right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GREAT SLAVE LAKE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of my favorite summer activities is fishing. Fishing to me is the quiet lapping of the lake, midnight sun, and family time. We live in a remarkable part of the world where each of our constituencies have access to pristine freshwater fish.

The GNWT is moving forward with the revitalization of the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery so we can share northern fish with the south, and many moving parts are underway. The design and construction of a \$13 million fish plant in Hay River, the development of remote community collector stations, training and support for winter fishery, and the development of a marketing strategy.

Central to the plans for commercial fishery growth is the construction of the fish plant. But, Mr. Speaker, I suggest it's equally as important to remove the regulatory requirement for any commercial fisher in the NWT to sell to the freshwater fish marketing corporation.

The NWT is the only remaining participating Canadian jurisdiction still under the authority of the Freshwater Fisheries Marketing Corporation Act. Freshwater holds the exclusive right to export fish from the NWT and all NWT fishers wanting to sell outside the territory must sell their fish to the corporation. For many fishers who only want to sell to the fish plant and leave the marketing to Tu Cho Fishers Cooperative, the current system under Freshwater Works. But for fishers who have made the investment and taken the risk to establish their own certified processing plants, they are limited by this regulation.

The GNWT has created barriers for existing fishers who are business savvy enough to find their own higher value markets down south and have

invested in growing this industry alongside the corporation.

To grow the NWT fishing sector, fishers require access to southern markets but right now this is only legally possible if local fishers can obtain an exemption from Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. This process, Mr. Speaker, is arduous, burdensome, and time consuming.

The GNWT needs to ensure that the \$13 million investment into a fish processing plant translates into higher compensation for local fishers. Without creating access to new markets and retail channels that empowers certified fishers to sell outside the NWT without being penalized by existing legislation and regulations, fishers will struggle to revitalize this industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROGRESS ON HOUSING DURING THE 19TH
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been two years, and we have passed the halfway mark as our term of MLAs. During the last two years, we've faced many challenges, many issues from our constituents have been raised in this House. Many of the challenges and issues remain with us today, as I read through my Member's statements from the start of this Assembly, from housing to many of our social programs, from jobs to sustainable economy, from the health of our residents, our territory, Mr. Speaker, we continue to face outstanding challenges as well as new ones.

We've been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic six months into our term, and then this past summer, major floods.

Mr. Speaker, I, like my colleagues here today, am up for the challenge and I look forward to continuing to try to find solutions for those challenges.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, housing has continued to be a challenge and is an issue for not only my community but other communities across the north, and we have talked in many of our meetings of this being one of our top priorities as it affects everyone throughout the Northwest Territories. Without housing, we can't even begin to tackle many of the issues our territory is facing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll have questions for the Minister of Housing, how the department is dealing with this critical issue.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF
CONSTITUENTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to wish everybody back home in Nunakput all the best today. Since our last sitting, we had deceased members of my communities. The loss of Samantha Lucas, our thoughts and prayers are with John and the family. Samantha was a real pillar for the family in Sachs Harbour, and she'll be missed. I give my regards to the Lucas family in Sachs Harbour and to the Pokiak family in Tuk for the loss of their sister.

Mr. Speaker, this -- we had four deaths in Tuk since our last sitting. The first one was my stepfather, Barney Masazumi, and he's really being missed by his other -- his stepson Seth and the rest of the family. And -- not very often.

Mr. Speaker, next was one of my good friends and Elders, Stanley Keevik. Stanley was a respected Elder in our community and a herder back in the day. And he had so many stories and so many good things to say. He'll phone you almost on a daily basis to encourage you to keep moving forward and giving little key advice and stuff. But he'll be really missed. So to the Keevik family of Tuk and the surrounding areas, I'm sorry for the loss of Stanley. He'll be missed.

Also, we had Eva Ratti, a well-respected Elder in our community, a seamstress. To Gary and Bernice and the family, thoughts and prayers are with you.

And to Roland Kikoak, Oats, he's gonna be really missed because I grew up with him and, yeah, did a lot of hunting with him. And just one of the guys that you could always call upon for help and he'll be there for you. And he did that to everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I just wish all the families and whoever's hurting across our territory of loss of loved ones, our thoughts and prayers are with you. God bless. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Our thoughts and prayers are with your communities and your family as well. Mahsi. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EULOGY FOR MARY (BERNICE)
BONNETROUGE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mary Bonnetrouge known as Bernice was born on September 17, 1957 to Xavier and the late Marie Bonnetrouge. She was the eldest daughter of the family. She passed away on June 2nd, 2021, after a long battle with her sickness.

She grew up in Fort Providence where she attended school and was a very happy child and a favorite among many in the community. She lived in Yellowknife and in Fort Simpson, which became her home for over 20 plus years with her partner Barney Ryan.

Shortly upon her arrival in Fort Simpson, she earned a Slavey nickname which translates to "popcorn." She loved to hear that nickname and felt that it made her at home. She had the honour of representing the community at the 1996 EXPO to showcase her traditional craft in Moose hair tufting. She's always been recognized for her beautiful work in this forum.

Bernice was a valuable medical interpreter and escort for the Elders in Fort Simpson. When she was not doing that work, she loved to work at the camps as cook or cook's helper.

She was known for her contagious and uplifting and unique laugh. Just listening to her would start a chain of laughter from those around her. As well, she was a caring, compassionate, loving, and an understanding person.

Bernice leaves behind two daughters - Veronica and Jessica - grandchildren, siblings, and many other family members and friends.

Bernice will be greatly missed and will be remembered by her family, friends, and many who known her.

The family would like to express gratitude for all the community kindness and generosity at their time of grief. As well, thank you to Fort Simpson and Stanton's medical staff for all their help during this difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and the community at this time. Mahsi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ISSUES RELATING TO FIRST NATION ACCESS ALONG WATERWAYS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I know it's been a very long day. Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise an issue of my First Nations members are having with the Department of Lands regarding riverbank lands. One of those communities, and it is

a very small community, is off the main highway and very seldom do people, including tourists, venture into the community.

Mr. Speaker, this probably goes for many other small communities not accessible by highway. In most instances, the river is the only mode of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, the waterways, which includes rivers, are sacred to First Nations peoples, and this provides a means to sustain their livelihood through transportation, hunting, fishing, homesteading, and a host of other activities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the known activities that First Nations people have come to enjoy, as this activity was passed down from one generation to the next and will continue into the next millennia, Mr. Speaker, those activities is having gatherings, meetings, and drum dancing. There are many known places along the riverbanks where people have built homes or cabins near a place where First Nations people have gathered, have camped, shared food, shared stories, and end the day with all night drum dancing.

Currently, First Nations have built arbors which are circular in nature and important spiritually to the people that gather within these structures, and they are built as close as possible to a riverbank to be near a river. Many First Nations people and others have grown accustomed to standing atop a riverbank and watch the river flow, which is soothing, curing, and sacred to all who live along the rivers.

There are many arbors around, including the Papal grounds in Fort Simpson, the meeting arbor at Fort Resolution, and the busiest one at the K'atl'odeeche First Nations. And they are all near a riverbank and a waterway.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations have always asserted their right to hunt, fish, and build homesteads on waterways within their homeland. Mr. Speaker, this homeland is Denendeh, land of the people.

Our First Nations people up and down the valley are struggling with a department that is newly formed, the Department of Lands, in that the Lands people, who are government employees, and are asserting their right to ownership of the lands within Denendeh.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you Mr. Speaker and mahsi, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I think we get the picture of First Nations' ties to the land and the waterways to sustain their way of life and to practice their cultural activities.

I will have questions for the Minister of Lands at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 775-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the questions are for the Minister of Finance. I'd like to know how is information being disseminated to GNWT management, GNWT employees and contractors, on whether or not they need to be vaccinated or have the option of PPE when on the work site. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those communications have gone out in a variety of forms. At this point, our website is currently up to date explaining the policy and has a fairly detailed Q and A on it.

One of the next steps though, Mr. Speaker, and I expect it will be out this week, if not early this week, is that each department was asked to look at their specific work site and provide a determination of what appropriate PPE might be. Everyone's individual work site certainly will have individual requirements that allow them to operate safely if the worker is choosing not to submit their proof of vaccine. So that again, I will say I'm expecting it this week, and indeed, may well be out even early this week that will go through each department, to each worker, and every workplace should be able to access that through their supervisors and as it becomes available, it continues to get posted on our website as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm how many GNWT employees are currently vaccinated? Better yet, can she provide those numbers by department and how many may require accommodation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we don't monitor who is in

fact vaccinated or not. What we are monitoring, Mr. Speaker, is individuals who have had their proof of vaccination documentation verified. So what employees in the GNWT will do, they go to the HR website and upload their proof of vaccine and it takes, you know, 24 or so hours for someone to simply review that and verify it, and then they're marked as having had that submitted and been verified. It's fairly quick. And I do have the numbers in terms, I think of a few days ago, of how many in total and by department have done that process.

We're sitting right now at just over 60 percent last time I had the numbers given to me in terms of, again, which ones have been verified. There is no doubt some further ones who are in the process of being verified. And I fully anticipate that we're going to have a number coming in over the next few days. I certainly can provide it by department, Mr. Speaker, but I'd suggest I do that in writing. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, has the department considered the cost associated with accommodation, including the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and the NWT Housing Corporation, and can the Minister provide those costs. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, firstly, just the Northwest Territories Power Corporation has its own policies so I'm not in a position to speak to what efforts they may or may not have done on their end.

With respect to the GNWT's policy, we certainly did consider the cost mainly in the form, obviously, of the PPE but particularly of testing. I anticipate the costs of PPE, we're not expecting that to be significant. But certainly the cost of tests can grow to be more significant over time. We do have some estimates. There's ranges of low to high. It depends obviously on what number of public servants we are dealing with. It depends on whether or not that changes over time. So I'll certainly be in a position to provide some of those ranges. And it's something we're going to be very closely continuing to monitor as the numbers come in and we know exactly what numbers we're dealing with. 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, when it comes to GNWT employees or contractors entering small communities, will the community have a veto power over or on whether or not persons have to be vaccinated even though some community residents remain unvaccinated? I ask that because in this past week, we had a

couple contractors from Hay River go in to a small community one day and they did some work. Next day, they went in and they were told to leave because they were unvaccinated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so at this point we know what we can control are the -- is the policies as they apply to GNWT employees, and that is the policy that we came out with I'd say fairly early as other governments in other jurisdictions were looking at what they could do to ensure that they are protecting their staff, ensure that they're protecting the people they serve. Any GNWT employees are certainly going to have to follow not only our policy but policies that might be applicable to them if they, for example, attend a municipal building or in any community; if they are required, for example, to do air travel, which, of course, comes with federal requirements. So in that sense, there may well be a number of overlapping guidelines that workers are going to have to follow owing to the fact that a variety of levels of government and private organizations are taking those steps to keep -- to taking all the steps that we know are best placed to keep people safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 776-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES PROPERTY LEASES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I spoke about earlier today, we've ended up in a situation where we're giving \$20 million a year to one company in Yellowknife. And, really, looking at the fact that the GNWT averagely occupies a building for 20 years, some of them we've been in for 40 years continuously, we're talking about hundreds of millions, if not a billion dollars of contractual obligations here. And, really, when looking at how this happened, there is one policy. It is the leasing of improved real property policy that was written in 1986, Mr. Speaker. And it speaks to trying to create northern ownership but clearly that has not happened.

So my question for the Minister of Infrastructure is will she commit to changing the leasing of improved real property to get our leasing portfolio into northern hands? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the last substantial update to this policy was more than 20 years ago,

as the Member probably already knows, and also note that there were concerns that were raised with the policy that is related to the procurement of the leases. So the GNWT, as we all are aware, is going through a procurement review, and we have recommended that the procurement of these leases be included as part of the overall review.

The results of the procurement review should also inform any proposed changes to the policy in order to align the principles of northern business development. And I also want to note that in recent discussions with the NWT Indigenous Economic Coalition, Infrastructure did commit to reviewing its existing leases with the Indigenous development corporations and also to bring forward a proposal to Executive Council because that is the process that we -- you know, we have to go to Executive Council in support of stability and economic growth across the territory to have a look at some of these leases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that. I think that was almost a yes, and it even led into a bit my next question.

Mr. Speaker, I really do believe there is potential to leverage this money we're being spent by getting creative with our leasing portfolio, by approaching Indigenous dev. corps and saying listen, if you want to build us a building or buy an asset, we will give you the long term lease. They can go and then finance such a project. We could do a similar thing to nonprofits with the 160 housing units we presently rent from one landlord. Why don't we distribute that to nonprofits to run public housing.

So is the Minister willing to make those offers, that I think actually many of them may not be allowed under the policy right now, to Indigenous governments and nonprofits to diversify this leasing portfolio and let others leverage it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned we are looking at the policy and, you know, we respect that, you know, this has been the Member's second time bringing up leases so it is something that we need to have a look at as well.

Having said that, there are a number of exceptions. We are required under our legislation and trade agreements to have an open and fair procurement, which means government cannot exclude a single business from participating in a public procurement opportunity when that business is not in either default with the GNWT regardless of the location of that building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess, you know, there's a couple of things that have

happened over the years. One is leasing was largely across all departments and they were slowly moved into the Department of Infrastructure. A lot of our leases are from the federal government. We have over actually 90 leases for various periods of time, many of them short three-five year periods. And the reality is you can't go to any northern landlord and say build us a new building or, you know, buy an asset without giving them years' notice. By the time we get to the end of a three-year lease, we just simply renew it and this is the kind of cycle we've got in. So I really think there needs to be some political direction from the top to the department to look at that all leases across the board and give direction now, even if they have five years left, of find a plan to get them out of the hands of large southern REITS.

Is the Minister willing to give that direction to revisit all of these leases and give some centralized clear purpose to this portfolio? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for existing leases, the GNWT must comply with the terms of those leases. So our standard lease agreement does not include any early termination clauses. Under our standard lease agreement, an existing landlord may assign the lease to a buyer as long as the buyer honours the existing terms and condition of the lease until it expires.

So there is an option for NWT landlords to purchase buildings with existing leases in place. Infrastructure is in a position, however, to procure new lease space when there is a need for commercial office space that has been identified either at the expiry of the existing lease or when a new program is established. If the GNWT was approached with the request to negotiate a lease at this time, Infrastructure, yes, would prepare a recommendation for Executive Council's consideration.

This recommendation, again, would take into account many things, such as including supporting the priorities of this 19th Assembly, such as maximizing economic development benefits to Northerners and also, again, supporting Indigenous businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 777-19(2):
FIRST NATION ACCESS ALONG WATERWAYS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke at length of the relationship First Nations have with waterways and riverbanks. The small community of Kakisa has been denied access to a riverbank to build an arbor. Mind you, there is a

new community hall that is built right next to the riverbank. There's a road marked on the community map by the GNWT, and that is right near and on top of the riverbank. The Indian Affairs branch has lands on the riverbank, and the community has built lookouts at these locations without being threatened of any legal action.

My question to the Minister is when was the community land use plan imposed by the GNWT to the community of Kakisa? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, community land use plans are actually communities. In 2007, the community of Kakisa developed it with the support of Municipal and Community Affairs. In 2017, the community redid their draft or looked at improving it and, again, without anybody's help except from the community's level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that answer. I'm not sure who the leadership of the day were at the time, but we have to be mindful of the fact that there's never any meaningful consultation by the federal government, nor the Government of the Northwest Territories in deciding to impose land use plan into many communities, including this community. And a lot of times, they go on a plan, well, this is square so we're going to keep it square. You know, it's so...

Can the Minister enlighten this House to whether or not the First Nations community was invited for input on the government imposed land use plan and did they have any consultants that were working with them on their behalf? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I should reiterate, the community developed the plan in 2007 with the help of Municipal and Community Affairs. They reached out to Municipal and Community Affairs and asked to be part of it, asked them to be part of it so they could develop it. In 2017, the community went and redid the plan. They did it, not the federal government or GNWT. It was the community that dealt with it, and then in 2017 it's my understanding it's still the same Chief that is presently there now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. The Minister, in email, states buildings should be set back a hundred feet from an ordinary high watermark. The ordinary high watermark at this small community has ever only gone over the boat dock. It has never, in history, crested the riverbank. If it ever does, and probably

will never, then the whole community would be flooded. Why worry about what is on the riverbank and don't forget there are currently many buildings and establishments on top of riverbanks in every community up and down the valley.

Can the Minister revisit his decision and stance and allow a simple arbor to be built on the riverbank as per the First Nations wishes? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would never ever say never. I live in the community of Fort Simpson. I represent the community of Jean Marie. We saw our arbor go under water. So we saw that impact. We've seen what the floods do. The fallback plan is a hundred feet is across if -- the Member talked about the K'at'l'odeeche, their arbor; the one in Fort Res; the one in Fort Simpson. It is actually further than a hundred feet back there. So, again, we need to be respectful that Mother Nature does not allow us to do it, because sometimes they do the 200-year flood which what I've seen in my community of Fort Simpson. So there is a community plan in place. We've reached out to them to come up with an alternative solution. So we've been talking with them.

And you heard today from another Member here talked about the flood in BC. That is the reality of Mother Nature and climate change right now. So we need to be respectful of that. So, no, I'm not going to revisit it. We need to follow what our rules and guidelines are. But we're willing to work with the community, and our staff have been reaching out to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mr. Speaker, and mahsi, Minister, for that. He talks about floods and everything. But First Nations people have lived on these lands for centuries. You would think that they would know that if they would ever have floods or any problems along the riverbank.

Mr. Speaker, government is great at suppressing and taking away life's liberties to First Nations for centuries. This government is no different from those governments. That is a shame. This government talks about reconciliation with First Nations but does not walk the talk. The Minister should be mindful that he represents a majority of First Nations communities in his riding. Government should be mindful that they are to represent all First Nations communities in their day-to-day decisions.

Will the Minister revisit his decision and stance on the riverbank issue and allow dwellings such as arbors at the wish of the First Nations community of Kakisa? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quick answer, no, I'm not going to revisit it. The flood that happened in Fort Simpson and Jean Marie. You listen to the historical history from our elders there, I had an elder who is very much a supporter of mine who gives me advice, and when we were sitting there talking about the flood in Fort Simpson, he said oh, don't worry about it, Shane, it's never ever happened. Then he went, oops, it happened. That is the reality of it.

And the Member talks about working with Indigenous governments. We are very much working with Indigenous governments. We're talking with the Band. We're talking to them about alternative solutions. We've reached out to them. And we're trying to come up with a solution that works for the rules and regulations that we do have and that helps the community build the arbor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 778-19(2):
COP 26 AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question's for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and I'll squeeze in he's also in charge of the climate crisis.

I was thankful we had a delegation at COP26 but we need to move beyond blaming the feds. Can the Minister tell us whether there are any plans to centralize responsibility for the climate crisis including energy projects in the Power Corp and have one Minister responsible for all of this. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member is well aware, the Power Corp is with Minister Archie so whereas the energy climate -- energy plan is under Minister Archie's portfolio. However, in saying that, we don't have any current plans in place; however, we've been having conversations on how we better deal with the climate change and energy issues. So we've been able to work with that there.

So also we have to be aware is that the Department of ENR and Infrastructure has a couple of -- a number of departments working -- or groups, collaboration between a couple of groups. So the director's climate change working group, the ADM climate change -- climate change working group, energy and climate change deputy ministers, and a

committee of Cabinet. So we do have a number of people working together to address this. But presently, we do not have any plans to amalgamate things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'd be happy to be part of those conversations when he wants but it's no surprise to this House that I don't support -- I've never supported the climate change approach from the last Cabinet. We need to develop a real and focused climate crisis response; ditch the old approach from the last Cabinet and Assembly.

Can the Minister tell us whether he considers the current state of the climate a crisis; and, if so, can he commit right now to adopt the widely accepted carbon neutral target of net zero by 2050, or even sooner if he wants. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I agree that we are in a climate change crisis. We've been in it over 15 years. So I'm not saying anything new. When I was at the opportunity to attend Scotland, that was the climate change, we talked about it. Everybody was talking about when it was going to happen. This is the reality. The sad part about it I found even more frustrating is I had to educate Canadians. Canadians weren't understanding our challenges that we face day-to-day.

So in saying that, though, as for the net zero 50 -- in 2050, unless we get more money from the federal government, we're in trouble. We're not going to be able to meet the needs where we want to get there. And so, you know, we have the Department of Infrastructure working on the energy action plan. There's a new one coming up, and I believe it's supposed to be starting to look at 2022. So we're starting the process that will be involving committee, involving Indigenous governments moving forward. So presently, right now, unless the federal government wants to give us some more money, we're in trouble, folks, and I'm not lying. I'm not trying to hide anything. That's the reality of it.

And I had the opportunity to talk to Minister Guilbeault about that. Minister Archie had recently had an opportunity to talk to Minister Wilkinson about it. So, again, even though the federal government is spread out in two different departments or three different departments, similar to what we are, we are trying to work with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that and his passion. Earlier I spoke about the need to face the capitalistic crisis at the NWT Power Corp and its entities head on. So just as the Minister spoke

about, we need a real plan in place to -- and we don't have one.

So can the Minister commit to working with his colleagues and the public to develop a real and just transition plan for energy in the NWT? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we're -- me and my colleagues, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, we're talking all the time about climate change and how we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that the GNWT has a plan under the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the 2030 Energy Strategy. The energy strategy guides the development of affordable, secure, and sustainable energy for transportation, heat, and electricity, as well as supporting energy efficiency, conservation, and promotion of renewable and alternative energy solutions for the Northwest Territories. The energy strategy takes an adaptive approach and remains flexible to take advantage of new technology and opportunity as they arise, including accessing federal funding.

And as I said, 2022 is when we're starting to go through this. So there is this opportunity to look at the plan that we are in place, enhancing it, and improving it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I can hardly wait to work with the Minister in 2022 on all of this. But I spoke of, you know, we got to stop pretending that big petroleum development is ever going to come back to the Northwest Territories. So can the Minister tell us what he is doing to convince his Cabinet colleagues that we cannot and should not promote large scale fossil fuel development and exports in the interest of this planet? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost is the working with the Arctic communities out there. If you look in the High Arctic, basically they're on fuel. They're on diesel, and they're having an impact there. How do we get off them, how do -- we able to deal with that?

So, again, it is working with the municipal governments and other -- I would call them regions and -- when we were at COP, we had the opportunity to talk about in the southern hemisphere where they have regions working together. And one of the things that I talked about after coming out of that meeting, we need a regional approach to it. When I say a regional approach to it, I'm talking about Nunavut, Northwest

Territories, Yukon, Alaska, and Greenland. We've had the opportunity to talk to Greenland, and some of their ideas and some of the things they're able to achieve. So we are willing to work.

And as for right now, we have to understand if you look up in the Beau-Del, they're talking about the potential of turning -- of changing it to gas right now. They have this opportunity, they're working on it, so we cannot dictate to the communities or the regions on how the best way to do it but we can work with them, and I think that's the most important aspect of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 779-19(2):
GREAT SLAVE LAKE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

My first question is will the department commit to advocating on behalf of NWT fishers on the FFMC board to ensure any NWT fishers who wish to supply southern markets can obtain broad exemptions from the corporation within a timely manner? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly was listening earlier to the Member's statement to the concern that the process is unwieldy and difficult. It is not a GNWT process, Mr. Speaker. It is a process governed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to which we're a member. But it is not unfortunately, a process that I can directly change. We have offered support in the past. And I've not had anything raised to me until now that there's been any delays. So we're going to keep an eye on that. I'll certainly make inquiries to see if, in fact, there's been other delays. And if so, we can certainly work with proponents in the industry to make sure they are navigating that system so long as we are still in it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to how much more per pound of fish will the fishers receive at the plant after the new plant is constructed and renovations are done? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish I could give an exact dollar figure that would -- I think it would actually be

good news. The work that's being done right now has done initial look at what the markets are anticipated to be and certainly is well aware the potential of our industry. But as far as knowing exactly the state of the market in a year or two years from now, that is not something I can directly predict.

That said, again, in the work that has been done both in terms of understanding the markets, understanding the marketing potential and what's anticipated by the fishers themselves who have done some of that, looking as well, we certainly are expecting, without a doubt, increased prices. How much more, I don't know. That is -- it's a question that the closer we get, then the more we'll be in the moment of knowing what the markets are doing, the better I'll be able to give a direct answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that. I think that's important information. If we want a viable market, it needs to have value.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is does the department expect to remove the authority of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in the Northwest Territories; and, if so, what timeline is the department working toward?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now the reason that the Northwest Territories continues to be a part of FFMC, it provides a stable and consistent floor for fishers to receive a price for their fish. It provides them a stable paycheque. And that's not a small thing in what is a -- what can be a very challenging industry.

But that said, it's a floor. And it's not necessarily one that markets the product to the extent that we believe it can be and should be and certainly doesn't get that high value for some of these side products that we also recognize that there are markets for.

So having said all that, Mr. Speaker, there's a process underway. And, again, it's led by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans by the federal government. It's not our process. The FFMC is not our entity. But there's a process underway right now, and we're certainly involved and aware of what's going on, to map out a change at the FFMC to turn it into a cooperative of fishers which would certainly change the dynamic that operates there.

I would just also note, though, of course, that a CFIA plant, a certified plant, which is the vision we have, would give more options as well. So there's a couple different tracks that we're on. We're participating in the change that may be happening

over at FFMC, and we're looking to get our plant operating so that we have some of those options.

But, again, in the meanwhile, for now, we're certainly allowing fishers to keep the threshold that they have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the unique things today as well as we go forward with the Great Slave Lake fishery is this plan to have supports in place for marketing and sales for northern fishers. And so I think that that's one of the really exciting parts, it gives the autonomy to northern fishers potentially to increase the value of the market, and to really market themselves in a really unique way to the north. The north has a huge reputation around the world for the fish that come out of our lakes, as it should. And to be able to sell that for the value that it so holds is a really exciting opportunity.

My next question, and last question, Mr. Speaker, is when will the department complete the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery marketing strategy, and will the strategy identify the operations to manage sales with higher value clients than the FFMC? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the sales and marketing strategy is expected to be complete, right now the target is March 31st 2022, so a few months -- a few short months away, I would say. And, Mr. Speaker, the point is I think exactly what the Member is getting at, which is namely that we are looking to provide information to the industry here, but what channels, what clients are available to them, that is something more than -- something more that's higher end that's going to really bring the value that we see, that we believe exists for freshwater fish in the Northwest Territories, and to add the higher value products that right now, they're not accessing but relying solely on the FFMC or primarily on FFMC.

So a few months away, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the Member's written that date down, and I can look forward to discussing it further. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 780-19(2):
COP 26 OUTCOMES

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask some questions about energy which could be directed to the Minister of

Infrastructure; however, I had such a great time with Minister Thompson on our trip that I'm going to ask ENR about these questions.

So my questions for Minister Thompson are, is what new innovation discussed at COP26 does the Department of ENR feel can best help the North to make a transition to clean energy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I have to say the Member from Great Slave did a great job representing SCEDE and the Northwest Territories at the conference. She was able to meet with a number of people that I didn't get to meet with, so kudos to her.

One of the interesting new innovations discussed at COP was green -- or green hydrogen. Green hydrogen came from a renewable -- or power resources. These power sources would include wind, solar, hydro, or geothermal. Green hydro products produce no carbon dioxide. Currently, around 5 percent of the world's hydrogen is produced in this way. This new technology is a significant part of Greenland's climate change plan which shows opportunity in the North. And I've had the opportunity to meet Minister Lund and have that conversation with him.

I understand that the Department of Infrastructure are hosting to participation -- or practitioners workshop in 2022 at the hydrogen -- on hydrogen and its feasibility in the North. We are looking forward to discussions, this further with Infrastructure and the climate change council moving on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for his kind words. It was a great conference, and I was really excited to hear about the green hydrogen as well.

Can the Minister speak to whether he or any of his colleagues have plans for there to be -- to introduce incentives for industry in order to encourage them to reduce their carbon footprint by changing out their operations. For example, taxi companies moving towards electric cars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently, the GNWT has a greenhouse gas grant fund for buildings, an industry that provides up to 25 percent grants to industry for greenhouse gas reduction projects. This fund is approximately 8 million until 2024. This could include support for retrofits of vehicles to make them less greenhouse grass initiatives.

Under the carbon tax system, industry not only pays an increased tax on fossil fuel use, but part of the carbon tax revenue goes into admittance special funds that can be used to support greenhouse gas reduction projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that answer and hope that there will be some newer innovations, sort of incentives, to come.

What is the Minister -- in the Minister's opinion and the department's opinion are the biggest barriers to the Taltson hydro expansion project from an ENR perspective? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is working with our partners to address barriers to the project itself. We, as ENR, are very confident that the environmental concerns related to this project will be addressed for the NWT's robust regulatory process. So right now, we're confident in the process that we're moving forward and we'll be able to complete this project besides the money that we need from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a great segue to my next question which was in the Minister's opinion, was the GNWT successful in making headway to getting additional funding from the federal government towards transitioning the NWT off of fossil fuels? I know there was a lot of conversations happening, but could the Minister share whether or not he felt they were successful. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to talk to Minister Guilbeault about the adaptation program that's going to be happening, and it's going to be done in 2022. So we had that opportunity to talk about there is money available that they're going to be talking about and how it's going to be impacting.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the Minister from Ontario, and we talked about this exact same issue. And, again, we stressed them to the fact is it can't be population based, it has to be needs based plus. And so we've had that conversation.

So the GNWT is currently eligible for 254 million until 2020 in federal funding under the Investment in Canada Infrastructure program to fund a total of 338 million in infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as keeping our system reliable and affordable.

The GNWT also received 31.2 million until 2024 under the federal low carbon economy fund to address greenhouse gas emissions mostly in buildings and industry.

I was able to meet, like I said, with the federal Minister, and I've also said previously Minister Archie has been able to meet with Minister Wilkinson as well and talk about future funding opportunities.

What we need is funding that is specifically tailored to meet the needs of the North with more flexibility and lower NWT contribution percentages. We continue to lobby the federal government in this regard. And I do have a meeting with the federal minister and my provincial colleagues and territorial colleagues in December to talk about this very topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 781-19(2): PROGRESS ON HOUSING PRIORITIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a commitment in this House as part of the 19th Assembly priorities to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing needs, and then that -- and part of that mandate there would be a hundred houses built over the four years.

Mr. Speaker, as we are halfway through our term, how many of these hundred houses have been completed as it was stated that there would be 25 per year as part of the mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I also had the chance to visit Inuvik a couple of weeks ago and in looking at the homelessness initiative in the community as well too so I was able to see firsthand on the housing -- the huge housing need in her riding. So I thank her for that, to that invitation.

Right now, the Housing Corporation has submitted a co-investment application. We did get the approval for a 60-unit delivery. We also received an additional funding in April of this year that was -- that was given to us from the federal government for an additional 30 units.

The agreement has only been signed in August of this year, and money has flowed in September. So right now, that we're looking at a 90-unit public

housing delivery for the Northwest Territories. Four of them have been completed, and 51 have been awarded. 60 percent of that delivery is either completed, awarded, or in progress.

I will keep the Member updated for the delivery in her riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my question was how many were completed. So I think I got four out of the Minister. Can she confirm how many are actually in the process of being built right now in the Northwest Territories, of that hundred? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct, it's four that have been completed, and we have 51 right now that I had said that are either -- they're in the process right now either being awarded or completed. The thing that has slowed us down as the Housing Corporation is the delivery of material coming to the territory and also the transfer of the funding from and the agreement finally signed by the federal government. So we actually do have the federal funding that is -- that we do have as a corporation. We will be looking at the unit delivery.

The other information I want to provide to the Member is the completion of the 90-unit delivery should be year 2023-2024. All units should be built, and people should be living in them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we should have 90 completed by the end of this term going into the next term. So how many actual units will be built in my community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to add as well, too, to the 90-unit delivery, the Housing Corporation did submit a co-investment application for an additional 14 seniors units that will be built throughout the Northwest Territories. And out of that 90-unit delivery, 33 communities, the Member's riding will be getting two. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a final supplementary, you know, I go back through -- like I said, back through my Member's statements and throughout the two years I've been stating that we have over -- we've had over a hundred people on the waitlist and for my community to get two units, you know, it is hard to hear because as the Minister was there, we have many, many residents that are living in emergency shelters, in the homeless shelters, and couch surfing. So as a priority, we've talked about many different things in

this House, a lot of social impact. So I think my question to the Minister is when is this department going to get serious and go to Ottawa and get some money, more money, and get more houses on the ground in our territory so we could start to deal with some of the issues that relate to not having homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted, you know, to speak to the territory and also speak to the Member that this is the largest delivery that the Northwest Territory has had in a certain amount of years, to be receiving 90 additional public housing units throughout the territory. The advocacy for the federal government does not stop there. It's still continuing.

The Housing Corporation has been working with the council of leaders. We have worked with Indigenous groups and have now created a housing working group where we are working collaboratively and supporting their initiatives with the federal government as well to afford them to receive additional federal funding that will be coming to the territory but directly funded to the Indigenous groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 782-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION COVID-19 VACCINATION
POLICY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to COVID-19 and the devastation it's caused, you know, I'm concerned that, you know, I don't want to see people die, I don't want to see people sick, I don't want to see them in the hospital, but at the same time I also don't want to see people unemployed. And in the Northwest Territories, we have a number of people that are working with the Power Corporation, the government, the

Housing Corporation, private sector. And many of them are in the position to lose their jobs. Many of these people are long-term northerners, they're Indigenous, and I can't believe that we as a government cannot sit down and come up with some solutions to mitigate that.

So the first one I want to start with is I have questions for the Minister of the NTPC. The first question is does NTPC have a vaccine policy in effect right now, and what is it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have a vaccine policy. From what I've read, it's quite vigorous, more vigorous than the vaccine policy for the GNWT.

We are looking at -- you know, all NTPC employees will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID as a condition of employment. That's effective November 30th. That kind of goes in line with the GNWT vaccine policy as well. Also, employees in remote communities will have to be given two additional weeks to achieve compliance due to potential logistical challenges if they're not yet vaccinated.

So to answer the Member's question, Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have a vaccine policy. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess I look at the GNWT and we have a policy for some of the departments. Now I hear the Power Corporation has a different policy. Then we have the federal government has their own policies. And I would ask the Minister what criteria was used to develop that policy and why would it not be in line with the GNWT policy? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is a -- it's a corporation which is perhaps a little bit different than the GNWT as a whole. Having said that, the Power Corporation has -- have different rules on policies and procedures, but, I mean, you look at the corporation as a whole, and you know, predominantly many employees have to travel in the communities. That's where, you know, majority of the work is in the communities and therefore, you know, we've been challenged in the past by members in small communities that, you know, have really -- not really welcomed some of the employees because they are either not vaccinated or coming from outside the Northwest Territories. So we struggle with that. Then, you know, we've been working with the communities and the office of the Chief Public Health Officer to be able to deliver -- and deliver capital projects, perform required maintenance in a way that manages exposure and risk so that we could protect our public and also our workers. But not only that, but we have, you know, small communities as well where we need to send our employees into. So we take that into consideration working with the office of chief public health officer. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that answer. But it still -- I guess I still have a hard time wrapping my head around when she says that, you know, we send employees in there, and I know we're concerned about the small communities, or any community and about all people, but if we send in unvaccinated people, we're sending in vaccinated people as well

who can still pass on the virus. So -- and I know in some of the GNWT policies is that if you're going to go in, you've got to be tested. So I would expect that vaccinated people would be tested as well.

But any ways, the question that I have is because of the policy, how many employees will be affected, and are there any discussions with the employer or unions to find the means for accommodation ongoing? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that number in front of me right now but if I can commit to getting back to the Member in terms of what the numbers are like. I do want to make a note, and perhaps maybe I didn't say it in the earlier question, you know, maybe the Member may ask me in his final supplementary, but I do want to note that, you know, within the Northwest Territories, all employees travel by air, and we're also impacted by federal aviation restrictions. So we have to keep that in mind, that when we send our employees out to the communities it's predominantly by air, but we have restrictions as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure how many people will or how many employees will be affected. But I'd like to ask the Minister will there be any supports for transitioning these employees once they're let go? Will there be any financial support for them as well? Because when I talk to some of them, they're looking at moving out of the NWT. That's pretty well what they've got to do if they're going to be looking for employment. These are people that have lived here all their lives, some of them. And, you know, I don't want to see them go and it just -- I guess I'm still amazed that we cannot find a way to ensure that we can keep them somehow. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member's concerns about, you know, what the impact may be as a result of not getting vaccinated. And, you know, it's the same as the GNWT's policy that'll come into effect November 30th. So I mean right now within the GNWT, and maybe the Minister maybe correct me, but it is predominantly a voluntary system that you show. But I mean it will come into effect on November the 30th for employees of NTPC.

So having said that, we won't know the number until then. And, you know, yes, we will commit to working with the employees to, you know, try and look at some options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Returns to oral questions.

Mr. Clerk? Oh, yes. Recognition of those -- oh, sorry, sorry. Must be getting late here.

Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 30-19(2) asked by the Member for Kam Lake on May 28th, 2021, to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding self-isolation exemptions.

There is no single policy document that guides travel exemption decisions. Each request is unique, though they do fall into overarching categories. Decisions are based on a public health risk assessment conducted by public health officials. According to the Public Health Order for Travel Restrictions and Self-Isolation Protocol, as amended on December 1, 2020, travel within the Northwest Territories, or NWT, that originated across any interjurisdictional border is prohibited for all persons. However, the order lists categories of travellers who are considered exceptions to this prohibition.

Each exception under the order is subject to further conditions, and in some cases, a person must receive approval from the Chief Public Health Officer, or CPHO, in order to receive the exemption. CPHO approval can provide the person permission to travel within the NWT, as is the case for compassionate or family reunification requests; permission to work during the self-isolation period, which will include further requirements; exemption from the self-isolation requirements; or permission to isolate in a community outside of one of the four communities, such as Norman Wells or Fort Simpson. The process for submitting a travel exemption is described on the GNWT COVID-19 website.

Nunavut travellers may also apply for an exemption from self-isolation requirements. They are asked to provide their location history, vaccination status, isolation hub community, and to respond to a variety of questions used to measure their risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Non-residents can apply for exemptions from travel restrictions within the NWT on a case-by-case basis for family reunification, compassionate reasons, and other exceptional circumstances, such as the care or retrieval of property and the management of an estate.

If the applicant demonstrates a legitimate need to travel within the NWT and has a suitable self-isolation plan, an approval will be granted. In the case of family reunification, an applicant must have a familial relationship to an NWT resident. If the applicant is seeking to reunify with a family member in one of the four hub communities, or Fort

Simpson, or Norman Wells, and has demonstrated a suitable self-isolation plan, the applicant will receive an approval. ProtectNWT will ask the applicant various questions to determine the suitability of the self-isolation plan and to inform the public health risk assessment.

Questions typically focus on an assessment of the dwelling, the number and risk level of those living in the space, and the vaccination status of those living in the space, but additional questions may be asked depending on the situation. In order to isolate in a non-hub community, the applicant must demonstrate that there is an important circumstance or reason they are unable to isolate in a hub community.

The threshold for these exemption requests is higher, as non-hub communities do not have the same level of health resources to deal with a COVID-19 outbreak. Some of the reasons that may be considered include an illness in the immediate family that the applicant needs to tend to, someone in the immediate family that is terminally ill, an elderly applicant or unaccompanied minor who is unable to safely stay in a hotel in a hub community, etc. While these reasons do not constitute an exhaustive list, they are some of the more common examples considered.

The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer, or OCPHO, reviews requests and if an exemption is granted, a letter will be emailed to the applicant from ProtectNWT. Each day, a committee consisting of the Chief Environmental Health Officer, Deputy CPHO, and other staff from the OCPHO meet to review exemption requests received from the previous day. Exemption requests are received and processed over weekends and holidays as well, with two staff members responsible for processing, reviewing and approving urgent requests during these periods.

Staff from the Department of Health and Social Services Public Health and Communicable Disease Unit are also notified, and their advice sought when an applicant identifies that they were a contact of COVID-19, were part of an outbreak, or have previously tested positive. If an application is denied, the individual will receive a denial letter which outlines the rationale for the decision. The most common denial will be for travel to a small community if there is no urgent circumstance or reason why they are unable to complete the isolation period in a hub community.

The applicant may seek a reconsideration of the request, and if they can demonstrate a need or provide supporting rationale, an approval may be granted. If the request does not meet family reunification, compassionate or other exceptional circumstances criteria, it could be considered as

“leisure travel.” Currently, leisure travel is not permitted under the Public Health Order. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table self-isolation exemption data for March, April, and May 2021. We now include the reason for exemptions in the Consolidated COVID-19 Statistic Report, which is posted weekly on the GNWT’s Response to COVID-19 website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Thebacha.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 23:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BILL

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act.

Bill 23 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 11th, 2021 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

On September 29, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the sponsoring member on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. We will now do Bill 32, Member for Thebacha.

BILL 32:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHERN EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SERVICES PENSION PLAN ACT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefit Services Pension Plan Act. Bill 32 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 2nd, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for a review.

On September 16, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister responsible for the Department of Finance on this bill and completed its clause by clause review of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 32, an Act to amend the Northern Employees Benefit Services Pension Plan Act is ready for

consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Martselos. We will now do Bill 33. Member for Thebacha.

BILL 33:

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY ACT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act. Bill 33 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 4th, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

On September 23rd, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs on this bill and completed its clause by clause review of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Bill 24.

BILL 24:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 24: An Act To Amend The Revolving Funds Act. Bill 24 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 30, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee On Economic Development and Environment for Review. On September 21, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Infrastructure on this bill and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 24: An Act To Amend The Revolving Funds Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Bill 29.

BILL 29:

RESOURCE ROYALTY INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATUTE AMENDMENT ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 29: Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act. Bill 29 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 1,

2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development And Environment for review.

On September 15, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Member For Frame Lake on this private member's bill and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 29: Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act is ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Bill 30. Member for Kam Lake.

BILL 30:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE AURORA COLLEGE
ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act. Bill 30 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 2, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee On Social Development for review.

On September 9, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing on this bill. The committee completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill publicly with the Minister Of Education, Culture, and Employment on this bill on September 27, 2021.

Mr. speaker, the committee reports that Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Bill 31.

BILL 31:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PHARMACY ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 31: An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act. Bill 31 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 2, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee On Social Development for review.

On September 28, 2021, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Health and Social Services on this bill and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill. Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 31: An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Member for Thebacha.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 23: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you. Bill 23 received second reading on March 11, 2021.

Introduction

Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act, received second reading on March 11, 2021 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations ("SCOGO" or "the Committee") for review. MLA Jacobson introduced Bill 23 as a Private Member's Bill.

Bill 23 would prohibit a public utility from disconnecting a residential customer's electricity between October 1 and April 30, or whenever the temperature is forecast to be below 0°C. A customer's electricity, if it was disconnected during the summer months due to non-payment of bills, would have to be reconnected by October 1, or as soon as practicable. Bill 23 would also prohibit a public utility from installing a load limiter on a residential customer due to non-payment of a bill and would allow a public utility to enter a payment plan with a customer prior to reconnecting electricity service during the May 1 – September 30 timeframe.

I will now turn this over to MLA Bonnetrouge.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Public Engagement

On September 29, 2021, the committee held a public hearing with the sponsoring Member and invited public presentations. The public hearing was live streamed on the Legislative Assembly channel.

In advance of the hearing, the committee received five written submissions from:

- The Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC)
- Northland Utilities
- The Northwest Territories Public Utilities Board (PUB)

- Two members of the public

Almost all stakeholder submissions were opposed to Bill 23 (see Appendix A). Public utilities viewed current legislation, which permits the use of load limiters in the winter, as a balanced approach between the needs of individual customers, the utilities' interest to encourage payment of outstanding balances. They noted that the use of load limiters is common practice in the industry as a last-case scenario. The public utilities expressed concern that the bill would create larger, potentially insurmountable debts for non-paying customers, increase the utilities' bad debt expense and revenue requirement, and ultimately put upward pressure on electricity rates for all customers. As a result, one Standing Committee on Government Operations report on Bill 23 on November 22, 2021 utility asserted that the Bill is contrary to the 19th Assembly's mandate priority to "reduce the cost of power."

Submissions from members of the public expressed similar concern that the bill creates a disincentive for customers to pay their electricity bills in the winter, with the effect of increasing electricity rates for all customers.

I now pass it on the MLA Cleveland.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Concerns

The committee was grateful for the sponsoring Member's work to draw attention to and advance solutions for the impacts of unaffordable electricity bills on NWT residents, particularly some of his constituents in Nunakput. The committee admired the advocacy and compassion of the sponsoring Member and was sympathetic to the intentions of Bill 23. However, the committee had concerns about some of the potential impacts of Bill 23, most significantly that the bill would likely increase residential electricity rates for all customers.

The committee noted contrary anecdotal evidence that Hydro One Remotes, a public utility that provides electricity to 22 remote communities across Northern Ontario, did not experience an increase in arrears due to similar legislation in Ontario that banned disconnection and load limiters in the winter.

The committee was also concerned that Bill 23, as a whole, would not address the root causes for which some NWT residents cannot afford their electricity bills. The committee recognized that the root causes of the issue are numerous and complex, and responsibility spans multiple

organizations including the NWT Housing Corporation, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Public Utilities Board, and the public utilities themselves.

Ultimately, the committee was unable to reach agreement on how to proceed with Bill 23, and therefore moves the bill forward for consideration in Committee of the Whole. The committee believes that Bill 23 brings up important issues that require further exploration and action. The committee urges the government to undertake policy work to better understand the root causes of electricity unaffordability and take coordinated policy actions to address the issue. To that effect, committee proposes several recommendations to guide this important work.

Recommendations – Income Assistance

The committee is concerned that there are barriers, gaps, and policy redundancies that cause higher electricity bills and make assistance benefits and programs less accessible and less effectual for electricity customers. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the NWT Housing Corporation both design and deliver programs that support NWT residents who may also face difficulty paying their electricity bills. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation One

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work with the NWT Housing Corporation to address potential barriers that can cause higher electricity bills for people on income assistance in housing units.

This should include reviewing the 2018 policy change that transferred more responsibility for electricity consumption from the NWT Housing Corporation to tenants, and whether this change resulted in increased income assistance from ECE or an increased number of customers in arrears on their power bills and value of those arrears.

Mr. Speaker, I now wish to pass the reading of the report to the Member for Inuvik-Twin Lakes.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Public Housing

Committee Members heard anecdotal reports from constituents who must improvise methods to regulate the temperature in public housing due to poor build quality, deterioration of the units, and insufficient maintenance. The committee has heard

about tenants in NWT public housing whose units do not adequately retain heat in the winter due, for instance, to interior doors being installed on exterior walls. As a result, tenants may resort to using their stove to heat their unit. The committee also heard about tenants in NWT public housing who must open the windows in the winter because the broilers in their buildings release too much heat. Tenants should not have to resort to improvised methods that may be dangerous, energy-inefficient, and financially costly to regulate the temperature of their units. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation Two

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the NWT Housing Corporation ensure that all its housing units are fit for habitation, such that tenants are not forced to resort to improvised methods to regulate the temperature of the home.

Committee members also heard anecdotal reports from constituents about high electricity bills caused by the high energy demand of energy-inefficient appliances in public housing. Tenants in public housing do not own the major appliances in their units and depend on the landlord, the NWT Housing Corporation, to install energy efficient appliances that lower electricity bills.

The committee notes that NWT Housing Corporation's mission statement includes the goal of "implementing energy efficiency technologies" to enhance the long-term sustainability of housing assets. The committee welcomes investments that improve the energy efficiency of units and appliances in NWTHC's upcoming Energy Strategy. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation Three

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the NWT Housing Corporation conduct a review of all household appliances, heating equipment, water heaters, and lighting products in housing units to ensure they meet current federal energy efficiency standards.

I will now pass the reading of the report to MLA Martselos.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Customer Crisis Fund

Life events such as a loss of employment or benefit income, unexpected medical expenses, or a death in the family can cause electricity customers to fall behind on their bills. As a result, customers may

face disconnection or the installation of load limiters. Committee notes that in other jurisdictions, notably British Columbia, there are programs that provide supports to electricity customers experiencing a temporary financial crisis. A similar program in the NWT context merits consideration as a policy response to electricity unaffordability for some customers. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation Four

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Public Utilities Board work with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland Utilities to consider and study the implementation of a customer crisis fund, modeled after BC Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund, to provide grant payments to residential customers experiencing a temporary financial crisis and who have fallen into arrears.

Client-Centered Communication

During the COVID-19 pandemic, committee members received numerous calls and correspondence from constituents regarding how changes related to emergency income supports, like the Canada Recovery Benefit, impacted their eligibility to the Income Assistance Program. Constituents were sometimes unaware of these impacts and, as a result, faced unexpected difficulty in paying their electricity bills.

More generally, the committee believes that the public utilities can and should provide clearer, more proactive communication to customers regarding matters that may impact electricity bills, payments, and service. As the regulator and supervisor of public utilities in the NWT, the Public Utilities Board has a key role to promote more client-centered service to NWT electricity customers. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation Five

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland Utilities, with oversight and, if necessary, enforcement from the Public Utilities Board, improve communications with customers so that they are clearer, more comprehensive, more proactive, and more client-centered, especially with respect to:

- A) Eligibility for the Income Assistance Program, and how policy changes or new benefit programs, like the Canada Recovery Benefit, may impact customer eligibility.
- B) The terms and conditions of service document regarding details on:

- The types and minimum timeframes of notices that NTPC may send customers;
- The type and operation of power limiters; and
- Customer payment options.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on Bill 23. The committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

Recommendation Six

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 437-19(2):
CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2022-2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 438-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2021-2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 439-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 2, 2021-2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 440-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 37-19(2):
CREATION OF A NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

TABLED DOCUMENT 441-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
500-19(2): GOVERNMENT RENEWAL INITIATIVE

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following five documents: Capital Estimates 2022-2023; Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 2, 2021-2022; Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 2, 2021-2022; GNWT Response to Motion 37-19(2): Creation of a Northwest Territories Food Security Strategy; and a Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 500-19(2): Governmental Renewal Initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 442-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 29-19(2):
SYSTEMIC RACISM

TABLED DOCUMENT 443-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
717-19(2): DISASTER NAVIGATOR
RECOMMENDED FOR FLOODED COMMUNITIES

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 29-19(2): Systemic Racism; and Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 717-19(2): Disaster Navigator Recommended for Flooded Communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 444-19(2):
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
RESPONSE TO LETTERS RECEIVED FROM
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

TABLED DOCUMENT 445-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
723-19(2): MENTAL HEALTH AND FATIGUE

TABLED DOCUMENT 446-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
725-19(2): MEDICAL TRAVEL ADVOCATE

TABLED DOCUMENT 447-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
744-19(2): AGING IN PLACE WITH DIGNITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 448-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
763-19(2): NURSING HUMAN RESOURCES

TABLED DOCUMENT 449-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP FOR ORAL QUESTION 764-19(2):
CANCER PRE-SCREENING

TABLED DOCUMENT 450-19(2):
SELF-ISOLATION EXEMPTION DATA

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following seven documents: Minister of Health and Social Services Response to Letters Received from Health Care Providers; Follow-Up Letter to Oral Question 723-19(2) Mental Health and Fatigue; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 725-19(2) Medical Travel Advocate;

Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 744-19(2) Aging in Place with Dignity; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 763-19(2) Nursing Human Resources; and Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 764-19(2) Cancer Pre-Screening and Self-Isolation Exemptions Data. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 451-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 13-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2019-2020 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
OMBUD ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 452-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES TO COMMITTEE REPORT 15-
19(2) REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL'S 2020 AUDIT OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 453-19(2):
ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 497-19(2): CORRECTIONS
WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 13-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Ombud Annual Report; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 15-19(2), Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2020 Audit of Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the NWT; and Additional Follow-Up for Oral Question 497-19(2), Corrections Workplace Assessment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 454-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
720-19(2): AIRPORT TAXI FEES

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 720-19(2), Airport Taxi Fees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 455-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 16-19(2): REPORT ON HOUSING
PHASE ONE NEEDS FOR NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HOMEOWNERS AND PRIVATE
LANDLORDS

TABLED DOCUMENT 456-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 30-19(2):
ACTIONS FOR IMPROVED HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 457-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
707-19(2): CLOSURE OF THE INUVIK
HOMELESS SHELTER

TABLED DOCUMENT 458-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
710-19(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HOUSING CORPORATION LOCAL HOUSING
CONSULTATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 459-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
730-19(2): FLOOD RECOVERY

TABLED DOCUMENT 460-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
747-19(2): STATE OF HOUSING IN NUNAKPUT

TABLED DOCUMENT 461-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
749-19(2): SUITABILITY OF PUBLIC HOUSING
UNITS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following eight documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 16-19(2), Report on Housing Phase One Needs for the Northwest Territories Homeowners and Private Landlords; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 30-19(2) Action for Improved Housing Outcomes; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 707-19(2) Closure of the Inuvik Homeless Shelter; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 710-19-2 [sic], Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Local Housing Consultation; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 730-19(2) Flood Recovery; Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 747-19(2) State of Housing in Nunakput; and Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 749-19(2) Suitability of Public Housing Units. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 462-19(2):
LETTER RECEIVED NOVEMBER 8, 2021 FROM
MULTIPLE CONSTITUENTS REGARDING
COMPENSATION AND INCENTIVES FOR
ESSENTIAL WORKERS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a letter received from multiple constituents on November 8th, 2021 regarding compensation and incentives for essential workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Just one second. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for MACA.

TABLED DOCUMENT 463-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
754-19(2): LOTTERY REVENUES FOR HAY
RIVER SPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Environmental Right Action Annual Report 2020-2021; and, Follow-Up Letter of Oral Question 74 -- 754-12(2), Lottery Revenue for Hay River Sporting Organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 464-19(2):
INVESTIGATION DATED JUNE 14, 2021 OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY
COMMISSIONER, MR. DAVID PHILLIP JONES,
Q.C., INTO A COMPLAINT MADE BY MR.
RYLUND JOHNSON, MLA FOR YELLOWKNIFE
NORTH

TABLED DOCUMENT 465-19(2):
DISPOSITION REPORT OF THE SOLE
ADJUDICATOR, THE HONOURABLE R. L.
BARCLAY, Q.C. DATED NOVEMBER 17, 2021

MR. SPEAKER: Members, I wish to table the investigation dated June 14, 2021 of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner, Mr. David Jones, into a complaint made by Mr. Rylund Johnson, MLA for Yellowknife North, at the direction of the MLAs Caucus alleging that Mr. Steve Norn, MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, had breached the Members' code of conduct.

Members, I wish to table the disposition report of the Sole Adjudicator, the Honourable R. L. Barclay, dated November 17th, 2021, in the Matter of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, Northwest Territories 1999 C.22, in a matter of a complaint made by Rylund Johnson, Member of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, under the Act concerning the conduct of Steve Norn, also

a Member of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly; and in the Matter of the Inquiry directed by the Integrity Commissioner under section 12(11)(b) of the Act; and in the Matter of The Honourable R. L. Barclay, Q.C. having been duly appointed June 28th, 2021, as Sole Adjudicator for the Inquiry respecting the matters subject to the terms of reference duly approved on July 8, 2021.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Frame Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 39-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER FOR MONFWI TO
STANDING COMMITTEES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I'll move the following motion: Now therefore I move, second by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong, the Member from Monfwi.

And further that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong, the Member from Monfwi.

And, further, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development, Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong, the Member for Monfwi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 40-19(2):
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
VACCINATION POLICY

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Hay River North, that each Member of this Legislative Assembly must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to attending and participating in a sitting of this House, its committees, or any proceeding of the Assembly.

And further, that a Member who is fully vaccinated where two weeks have passed since the person's final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada has been administered.

And furthermore, that Members must provide to the Speaker proof of full vaccination status prior to attending and participating in a sitting of this House,

its committees, or any other proceeding of the Assembly.

And, furthermore, that a Member who has provided a valid medical exemption from vaccination to the Speaker may, at the discretion of the relevant or residing officer, participate in a sitting, committee meeting, or other proceeding of the House remotely.

And, furthermore, that this motion takes effect at the start of the first sitting day after this motion has been passed and continues until the current session is prorogued or is formally rescinded by the House.

And Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 41-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ELECTORAL
OFFICER

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Hay River North, that this Legislative Assembly, by virtue of section 5 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Mr. Steven Dunbar of Yellowknife as the chief electoral officer for the Northwest Territories for a term of four years commencing on November 25th, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask if I can get an unanimous request to return to the oral questions to my Member's statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions. Are there any nays? There's a nay. I will continue with motions. Motions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Motions

MOTION 40-19(2):
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
VACCINATION POLICY,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. That is the motion for mandatory vaccination, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted.

The motion of requirement of proof of full vaccination by Members of the Legislative Assembly, I will read this again, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS COVID-19 is a communicable disease which has and continues to put the lives and livelihoods of residents of the Northwest Territories at risk;

AND WHEREAS the chief public health officer of the Northwest Territories has recommended that all eligible residents become fully vaccinated;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada have adopted vaccine policies to encourage eligible individuals to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 virus and whereas elected representatives, Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly are expected to hold themselves to a high standard of conduct and set an example;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly retains the right to control its own proceedings according to the privileges or practices and procedures of the Assembly or parliament;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that each Member of this Legislative Assembly must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to attending and participating in a sitting of this House, its committees, or any proceeding of the Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that a Member who is fully vaccinated where two weeks have passed since the person's final dose of COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada has since been administered;

AND FURTHERMORE, that Members must provide the Speaker proof of full vaccination status prior to attending and participating in a sitting of this House, its committees, or any proceeding of this Assembly;

AND FURTHERMORE, that a Member who has provided a valid medical exemption from vaccination to the Speaker may, at the discretion of the relevant presiding officer, participate in a sitting, committee meeting, or other proceeding in the Assembly remotely;

AND FURTHERMORE, that this motion takes effect at the start of the first sitting day after this motion has been passed and continues until the current

session is prorogued or is formally rescinded by the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Look, I know it's all been -- it's been a very long day for all of us but I think it's really important to go on the public record as supporting this motion and what it's really all about.

So the board of management that governs the Legislative Assembly, the employees and so on, we already have a policy for the building itself so that anybody who enters the building, including contractors now, have to be fully vaccinated.

What this motion is about is about whether MLAs have to be vaccinated to enter into the building for committee work and sittings of the House. That's what this motion is all about because the only ones that -- the only authority to tell us what to do as Members of this House is the House itself, and that's what this motion is doing, is saying that we have to be fully vaccinated to be allowed to come in for committee meetings and for the sittings of the House.

I want to note for the record, Mr. Speaker, that this actually sets a higher standard than the GNWT vaccination policy as there are no allowances or accommodations for someone who refuses to get vaccinated. If MLAs refuse to get vaccinated, and I don't believe there's anybody like that in this House, they cannot get PPE and regular testing and come in here. Their only option is to participate remotely, which the rules of the Assembly now allow for.

So in any event, we're holding ourselves to a higher standard than the GNWT policy. I support this strongly, and I'm sure I would ask for a recorded vote, and I'm sure we're going to get unanimous support for this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nahendeh.

The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha. Hay River North. The Member for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 18 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Okay, sorry. Getting excited here. Bill 36. Minister responsible for Justice.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 36:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE TERRITORIAL COURT JUSTICE ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move that Bill 36, an Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Bill 37, Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 37:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move that Bill 37, an Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Bill 38, Minister of Justice.

BILL 38:

MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT 2021

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move that Bill 38, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act 2021 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Bill 39, Minister

responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 39:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24th, 2021, I will move that Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Tabled Document 436-19(2), Tabled Document 437-19(2), Tabled Document 438-19(2). Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole
of Bills and Other Matters**

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

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I just hear people saying 'agreed'.

Sorry, okay. All right. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order, non-debatable. All those in favour. Motion is carried.

--- Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 435, 436, 437, and would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for

Great Slave, sorry. All those in favour. All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, November 23rd, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' statements
3. Members' statements
4. Recognition of visitors in the gallery
5. Reports of committees on review of bills
6. Reports of standing and special committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Recognition of visitors in the gallery
9. Acknowledgements
10. Oral Questions
11. Written questions
12. Returns to written questions
13. Replies to the Commissioner's address
14. Petitions
15. Tabling of documents
16. Notices of motion
17. Motions
18. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills
19. First reading of bills
20. Second reading of bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third reading of Bills
24. Orders of the day

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---Adjournment

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

