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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, November 30, 2021****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 187-19(2):
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking about family and gender violence. This is a painful subject for so many people. I will now pause for a moment, Mr. Speaker, to give survivors the opportunity to choose whether they would like to listen.

We are in the midst of Family Violence Prevention Month. I would like to recognize that November 25th was the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The 16 Days are an opportunity to come together as Canadians and with partners around the world to call out and speak up about gender-based violence, and to renew our commitment to ending violence against women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA+, and gender diverse individuals.

In Canada, we also observe the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, remembering the women who were murdered during the tragic mass shooting at Polytechnique Montreal on December 6, 1989.

These months and days of recognition, action, and activism tell us that we are not alone in this problem. We see it elsewhere in Canada and across the world. But family and gender-based violence is pervasive in the Northwest Territories. We have the second highest rate of family violence in Canada. It is clear that colonization continues to have cascading impacts on Indigenous lives in the Northwest Territories. Because of intergenerational trauma, the legacy of residential schools and the systemic racism that continues today, we must

work even harder to educate ourselves and learn from each other to broaden our understanding of this history and the work that must be done.

The impacts of colonization are illustrated not only by high rates of family and gender-based violence but by high suicide rates, overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the child welfare and the criminal justice systems and the pervasiveness of addiction and poverty in Indigenous communities to name a few. These issues are interrelated and compounded by one another.

To interrupt the cycle of family and gender-based violence, we must not only take an integrative whole-of-government approach but also a territory-wide approach that includes Indigenous government partners. Our strategy must meet the unique needs and be reflective of the voices of Northerners. I am proud to say that the Government of the Northwest Territories is working to reconcile Indigenous experiences by taking steps to acknowledge and address the profound impact colonization has had on the Indigenous population. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Action Plan will highlight several innovative ways that departments are delving into the work required to begin and promote healing in the communities in the Northwest Territories.

The transformation of our Women's Advisory Office into a better resourced gender equity division is supporting improved cross-departmental coordination on gender issues, including family violence. To inform this approach, the GNWT plans to engage Indigenous governments, community stakeholders and service providers over the next few months. The goal of this work is to identify best practices, align existing GNWT work and, based on community input, identify priority areas for investment over the coming decade.

Mr. Speaker, within the Government of the Northwest Territories we are reaching across departments to bring programs, resources, and support together. We are listening to experts, partners, and allies like the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, the YWCA, shelters and victim service providers to inform our approach and continue to engage and listen.

Mr. Speaker, this is critically important work. Survivors have identified a need for overlapping, person-centered supports and services that make them feel comfortable when reaching out for help. We need to ensure our frontline service providers are trauma and violence informed and have a thorough understanding of the history of Northerners. We also need to shift perspectives when determining what those who use and perpetuate violence in their relationships need.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has many programs and services to support survivors of family and gender-based violence and those who have used violence in their relationships. There is a need to coordinate the many programs we fund and offer. The Territorial Family Violence Strategy that will be developed will take this into consideration and recommend ways in which to improve our current approach.

Mr. Speaker, we are making progress, but we have much more work to do. I commit to keeping the Members of this House advised on the progress of this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Minister.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 188-19(2):
UPDATE ON KEY DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has committed to transforming our education system with the goal of improving the lives of all our residents. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has some exciting initiatives being undertaken in collaboration with education partners, industry, Indigenous governments, and the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, it can be argued that the greatest returns on investment come from investing in early childhood education. That is one of the reasons that this Legislative Assembly has made it a priority to advance universal child care by expanding availability and affordability. We have gathered perspectives from Indigenous governments, licensed early learning and childcare programs, and early childhood educators, and have completed a review of our current funding programs. We will report on these engagements and findings in the coming weeks, and these reports will inform the development of the 2030 Early Learning and Child Care Strategy.

This strategy, along with the soon-to-be finalized Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, will mark a monumental step toward

improving the quality, availability, and affordability of licensed child care throughout the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, increasing education outcomes in the NWT to the same level as the rest of Canada is our mandate, and while investments in early learning and child care will go a long way to achieving this, we must do more. That is why we are also modernizing our Education Act and renewing our junior kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum.

Modernizing the Education Act is critical to ensuring we are able to make coordinated, system-wide improvements to meet the needs of students across the territory, so that we can better prepare our youth to succeed in life. As part of this work, we have conducted a first round of engagement with Indigenous governments, education leaders, the Northwest Territories Teachers Association, parents, special interest groups, and the public.

Mr. Speaker, during these engagements we heard clearly that this process should not be rushed, and we agree. In order to create an education system that truly reflects, engages, and supports all our residents, we will need to take our time and work collaboratively, and we are committed to doing both. That means that the development of a truly modern *Education Act* will extend into the 20th Legislative Assembly. During this Legislative Assembly, we will pursue minor legislative changes to address many of the operational issues identified during public engagement, while also continuing that broader conversation.

In addition to our legislative work, we are renewing our junior kindergarten to Grade 12 school curriculum. ECE began exploring and evaluating the curricula of the western Canadian provinces in 2019. Over the last several months, the department invited Indigenous governments and key education partners to attend consultation and engagement sessions, and welcomed public input through an online form. Five main themes have emerged as priorities through that engagement process:

- the importance of Indigenous ways;
- high school transitions;
- rigor in curriculum;
- accountability for learning; and,
- key learning for life.

In the coming weeks, I look forward to sharing the results of these engagements, and a decision on our future provincial partnership. As we move forward with this renewal, ECE will continue to engage with our education partners and will include them in planning for curriculum adaptation, teacher

training, classroom resources, and large-scale assessment tools.

Mr. Speaker, learning does not stop after high school. The Skills 4 Success initiative aims to improve employment success by addressing gaps in skills for in-demand jobs and by more effectively responding to employer, industry, and community needs.

Over the past summer, the department held virtual roundtables, interviews and online surveys with residents and stakeholders to find out how well the current programs and supports are working, and what we could improve. This feedback will shape the development of a new four-year Skills 4 Success Action Plan that we will release in the new year.

Mr. Speaker, careers in trades offer good pay, ample opportunities for advancement, and lifelong learning. ECE is always working to improve supports and opportunities for residents in the trades. For example, the department recently launched the Blue Seal Program.

A Blue Seal certificate holder not only meets the NWT's high industry standards in a skilled trade but also has the knowledge and drive to succeed in business. Last week I had the honor of signing the first two Blue Seal certificates ever issued by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

This program will increase opportunities for NWT residents to advance their careers and highlight their professionalism.

I am also pleased to announce that the department has released new trades entrance requirements, which will come into effect January 2022. This change, which is a result of our work with Indigenous governments and industry, will better align the requirements with our high school curriculum and will increase opportunities for our residents.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress on these key initiatives, and I look forward to updating the Legislative Assembly as they continue to move forward.

I also want to thank both the department staff, who have dedicated countless hours pursuing the ambitious goals we have set, as well as everyone who we engaged with over the past year. Their time and energy is laying the groundwork for the future prosperity of the Northwest Territories.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our JK to 12 and post-secondary educators, as well as our early learning and child care staff across the territory, for their hard work and dedication in supporting our

youth, families, and residents throughout the pandemic. Your resilience has been inspiring, and I am grateful for your professionalism during this challenging time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 189-19(2):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the Honourable Julie Green will be absent from the House later today to participate in a conference call with federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Health. 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 SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, today is the day where most government departments will require proof of vaccination from employees who wish to continue working, and for those unvaccinated employees not willing to follow PPE protocol, tomorrow they may be sent home.

Mr. Speaker, questions are asked of me as to how this government, as an employer, is going to guarantee the safety of those that are vaccinated in the workplace when working alongside someone who is not vaccinated. Could this be considered an "unusual danger" as defined in the Safety Act?

Mr. Speaker, any employee or contractor has the right to have this matter addressed in accordance with the Safety Act. The Safety Act, in section 13(1) defines "unusual danger" to mean, in relation to any work, "a danger that does not normally exist in that work."

Based on that premise one can then argue - because COVID-19 is new, was not something present in the workplace prior to the pandemic, it is a risk that does not normally exist in any workplace - COVID-19 may then be deemed an unusual danger.

The Safety Act, in section 13(2), further states that "a worker may refuse to do any work where the worker has reason to believe that (a) there exists an unusual danger to the health and safety of the worker."

Mr. Speaker, the Safety Act then goes on to state that "On refusing to work, the worker shall promptly report the circumstances of his or her refusal to the employer or supervisor who shall, without delay, investigate the report and take steps to eliminate the unusual danger in the presence of the worker and a representative of the worker's union..."

Mr. Speaker, upon completion of the investigation, and if the employee believes that the unusual danger is still present, can continue to refuse to work and the employer, worker or supervisor, is required to notify the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee; or, where no such committee exists, then a delegate of the chief safety officer. Upon such notice, a review by the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or delegate is required.

If the employee is not satisfied that the "unusual danger" in the workplace has not been eliminated or reduced, an appeal to the chief safety officer, who would then be required to conduct a further investigation as soon as possible. The decision of the chief safety officer is final, with the exception of an appeal to the Supreme Court of the NWT.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the point is that it may be likely we will see some employees consider the risk of COVID-19 to themselves, their family, and contacts, when working alongside those that are not vaccinated, and deem themselves to be at risk thereby utilizing to Safety Act as a means of protection. Are we prepared for this course of action? I will have questions for the Minister Responsible for Finance at the appropriate time. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATION LEAVE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before COVID, we sat as equals and set the priorities for the 19th Assembly. Even then, we recognized the shortage of resident healthcare workers and tasked the government to reduce the number of health worker vacancies and our reliance on locums.

Mr. Speaker, there is significant strength in Northerners serving Northerners, providing trauma informed care. This not only fulfills our priority, it creates sustainable succession plans and

recognizes the primary role education and meaningful employment play in connecting all community health indicators. I believe that, in essence, the GNWT recognizes this. But the existing process is subjective, inequitable, and not serving Indigenous northerners.

Over the last year, multiple public servants have been denied education leave to pursue nursing, or education leave supports for nurses pursuing higher certifications required by other units, or to work in remote northern communities. But while they continue to pursue their education goals on their own, they landed in courses with non-Indigenous non-Aboriginal public servants who were receiving the support of the GNWT to be there.

One of my constituents found themselves in this situation. An Indigenous Northerner from a small community graduated Aurora College nursing through the University of Victoria, employed by the GNWT, now raising a family and supporting trauma-informed client-focused nursing with a desire to increase education levels and ultimately their skill set leveraged by the people of the Northwest Territories.

It took five months of ongoing advocacy to get this Northerner the same supports their colleagues were receiving. These approvals are at the discretion of each employee's supervisor and often based on operational requirements. But from the perspective of the public servant, this leaves room for inconsistencies and inequitable distribution of education leave and government support.

This failure is a symptom of the GNWT silos with a clear lack of process to operate as one government supporting professional development of Northerners for hard-to-fill positions. Constituents either accept the ruling of their supervisor or enlist their MLA to advocate on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a global shortage of healthcare workers. If we want recruitment to meet the priority set by this Assembly, we need to retain the ones we have and support the public servants who want to fill these roles. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to thank the Minister of Infrastructure and the Marine Transportation Services. I know the ice

is frozen right now but I'm thanking them because we're only sitting now. Thank them for the service that they did for my riding of Nunakput. The communities of Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour received their shipments in good order however the timing was delayed, Mr. Speaker. We have a limited number of barges in operation and in some cases it looks like contracts to generate revenues may have been prioritized over servicing my communities. This is a concern.

Mr. Speaker, a window of service to our communities and the barge is so short. The barge services if declines get prioritized over the communities, delays in schedule, the barges may have to fight against the ice our delivery essential for bad weather.

I don't need to think back too far when these barges didn't make it into the communities in 2018. Some of the -- all the communities that didn't receive any shipments of freight cost us -- due to ice blockages and weather, cost this -- former government millions.

This year the barges arrived in Nunakput at the end of September, before freeze up. Mr. Speaker, they have arrived but were delayed. Hunting equipment and boats that were supposed to come in the start of June only come in September so no use.

I will echo the Member's statement from last year to remind the Minister of the importance of barges for Nunakput, that these barges give people access to lower cost of fuel, food, building materials, shipments. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing less than an essential lifeline to the region. And this is part of the reason that the GNWT assumed the management of MTS at the time.

I would like to thank the Minister, again, and her staff for servicing our community successfully this season. I am concerned about timing, deliveries and priority to serve these communities ultimately at the residents' cost, Mr. Speaker. We have six and a half months before this next barge sails north so we have six and a half months to plan to get it right. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REGULATION OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, The NWT has always been a resource-based economy. Even before the onset of colonial settlement, the Yellowknives Dene made

tools from copper mined on the banks of the very lake that my district is named for. Later today, we will hear SCEDE's report, and my opinion, on the GNWT's approach to the Mining Regime Fiscal Review. In my dissenting opinion, I lay out what I see as the reasons why this has not been a good use of committee resources. One area upon which I touch is exploration.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to expand upon this point further as I feel that at times residents, and my colleagues, miss the point when it comes to how important exploration is to our resource sector and therefore our economy.

In the NWT, it might be 15 years from deposit discovery to the onset of mine development, a sad fact that has been pushed to the extreme by our robust permitting system. Mr. Speaker, I fully support this regulatory system and the people that participate in it. I'm proud of our efforts towards social and economic responsibility that puts us at the forefront of responsible sustainable mining globally. Our agreements with First Nations and Inuit people are unparalleled to none. However, we must now acknowledge that we have developed a regulatory system so complex that it is expensive to get through, making it extremely difficult for new explorers that may want to come here.

None of this is new. It's been discussed for years; however, the effects of COVID have decimated this already struggling industry. The diamond mines, which in 2020 still accounted for 21 percent of our direct GDP despite COVID, will be sunsetting over the next decade. Add in the indirect economic impact as they leave, and we have a territory that is quickly becoming a welfare state. Currently, NWT exploration expenditures are mainly for advanced exploration projects and deposits, with very few grassroots projects on the horizon. These deposits are generally metallic, and metal mines do not have the same economic impact as diamond mining, contributing one-sixth to one-tenth economically in comparison.

The future of exploration, and therefore mining, in this territory is critically dependent on the partnership between industry and Indigenous governments and businesses, ensuring Indigenous voices are leading the conversation, not bureaucrats or legislators whose ancestors did not walk this land.

I encourage my colleagues on the other side to ensure that this engagement occurs at all opportunities and they actually listen to the people when it comes to the future of this sector.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CANADA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
CHILDCARE AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. One of the federal government's major promises of recent years has been the creation of a national affordable childcare system in partnership with provinces and territories. While other jurisdictions have completed agreements, the Yukon signed its \$10-a-day deal in July, parents here are still waiting. Media reports quote our childcare Minister as saying our deal with done by the end of the year although problems exist. One major obstacle being reported is lack of suitable buildings for new childcare spaces. Presumably creation of new spaces has to be a feature of any new agreement with the federal government.

Likewise, trained and quality staff are also a challenge. To provide the staff needed for the NWT to offer a truly universal childcare scheme, we will have to train a lot more staff we will hire outside the Northwest Territories. As we see with nurses, that can be expensive but without staff an agreement with the federal government is not a solution.

Then there is the issue of how any new childcare programs are going to be coordinated with existing programs, much of them offered by regional Indigenous governments.

These problems - space, staff, and flexible rollout - may be big but the need for affordable and universal childcare is the bigger problem by far. As I have been calling for since the last Assembly, we still need a new costed plan that deals with all these issues of space, staffing, and coordination, not some vague priority such as "advanced universal childcare by increasing availability and affordability." We need a costed plan for universal childcare and an agreement with the federal government to implement it now.

I will have questions for the Minister of childcare about when universal affordable child care is coming to the Northwest Territories and how an agreement with the federal government will make that happen. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CHANGES TO RUNWAY AT FORT SMITH
AIRPORT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak once again about the change in runway width at the Fort Smith Regional Airport. At this point, it is well known that I am deeply disappointed with the Department of Infrastructure's decision to reduce the size of the Fort Smith airport runway. And I am not feeling alone in this decision otherwise I wouldn't have had the support of 550 people, or the entire Fort Smith leadership, on side on this issue.

I just want to reiterate that leadership must prevail over bureaucracy. Government decisions need to be re-evaluated when a wrong has been done, and they need to know how to correct and respond to those decisions, especially when it has to do with public funds. Rational, reasonable, and financially responsible decisions that affect regional centres, such as Fort Smith, must be a priority.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how the Minister wants to spin it, there's a fundamental difference with how my constituents see the runway width changes compared to that of the perception of the Department of Infrastructure.

So the department sees no evil, hears no evil. Despite the will of the people rejecting these airport runway changes, apparently that doesn't matter. Apparently the department can do as it pleases to Government of the Northwest Territories infrastructure, despite any public outcry against any such decisions. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING SITUATION IN TLĪCHQ REGION

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I've been talking about housing since the beginning of session, and I will continue do so because we need real solution for our communities in the Tlicho region and NWT.

Every person has the right to live in a safe and secure home. The well-being of our children, youth, families and communities depends on that. Canada has recognized housing as a human right in international law but here in the NWT we are struggling to provide housing. Each home should be a place of togetherness where our families have enough bedrooms and space for peace and privacy.

We all know in the communities how stressful overcrowding is in the home. It impacts our

community members' mental wellness and makes things worse for those who are struggling with addictions. The spread of COVID-19 has shown how dire the housing situation is here in the North. When COVID-19 got into Tlicho region, many of our families were defenseless because they did not have room to isolate. COVID-19 spread quickly because of overcrowding. We had to send our own community members to the gym and other places in order to isolate safely and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has been failing to provide adequate housing for years and years. This is not a new problem. The NWT Housing Corporation has a homeownership initiative that gives people the opportunity to go into a loan agreement with the Housing Corporation. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Housing how many of the new housing units in the Tlicho region would be allocated for private ownership. She said none. How can people own homes in the NWT if the NWT Housing Corporation is more invested in maintaining a rental portfolios than making homes available for people to own?

Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents have lived in their home for years and years and have paid as renters. When they want to purchase their home, they are often -- they are often being asked to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars on homes that have not been maintained and have little market resale value. The programs available to assist our constituent buy a home is not working. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I will have question for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHALL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February of this year, to much celebration, Minister Green and Minister Chinna opened an Elders complex in Fort Good Hope. They went and cut the ribbon. And then, Mr. Speaker, we were even going to hire some people and then the complex never opened. The Office of the Fire Marshal would not give them their occupancy permit. That community then flooded, Mr. Speaker, and many people were evacuated and I'm sure they would have liked to have nine units to house people. But we never opened it. The GNWT said that they'd get it done by

the end of summer, Mr. Speaker, and then they never opened the facility, Mr. Speaker. I'm still unsure if the facility is opened. That community then got hit with COVID. It was one of the first communities to experience a death, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Fire Marshal does not look at these other risks. It does not look at Fort Good Hope and see that it is a community with overcrowded housing. It does not see a community with 65 households in inadequate condition. It looks at one building and disagrees with the GNWT's engineers and architects.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you can say this is a one-off debate between one hand of GNWT experts and another hand of GNWT experts. But just two years previously, in Norman Wells, where many of the Fort Good Hope Elders go, we built a \$40 million facility with long-term care housing, and the GNWT actually took the GNWT to court in that facility because they would not let it open, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are just the fights that the GNWT is having with itself. I repeatedly get reports from my constituents, from the construction association, from people building in this territory, that it is much easier to deal with the Office of the Fire Marshal in either Yukon or Nunavut. Plan reviews there can take a matter of days. Here they take a matter of weeks and emails continue to go unresponded to, Mr. Speaker. We are one of the only jurisdictions -- we are the only jurisdiction in Canada without a Building Standards Act, Mr. Speaker. There are legislative changes that need to be made, but in the interim there a lot of little things we did do to make sure that we are housing our Elders. And when we build a facility, it actually provides some housing to people, not just sits there empty, Mr. Speaker.

I'll have questions for the Minister of MACA about what we are doing to get the service standards at the Office of the Fire Marshal up to date and to make sure that we don't have GNWT's engineers, architects, and fire inspectors all fighting each other anymore, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oh sorry, Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR (CAZON) ALLEN

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bertha Allen was born to Alphonsine and Baptiste Cazon on October 27, 1962. She was

one of the seventeen children. Two brothers, two sisters and her parents predeceased her.

Bertha spent her childhood in Fort Simpson and often spent the summer months on the land with her family. Bertha loved to talk, especially when she was younger, and her siblings used to tease her about it. She attended school in Fort Simpson and made a lot of friends. This was one of her many attributes. She made friends with everyone. Even if the person was unkind in the beginning, she was nice to that person and the next thing you know she was friends with them, sharing stories and enjoying each other's company.

Bertha was known for her meticulous housekeeping, her cooking skills, and her passion for family. She especially loved talking about her children and grandchildren. They were her pride and joy. She loved entertaining family and friends in her home. And that was her place of -- that's the place love of her life (Joey Allen) and their children were raised. Bertha loved it when people come to visit and entertain her, especially when the guys played guitar and jammed in her living room.

Bertha knew her time was coming after she was told that she had lung cancer and that it was so bad and was not treatable. Some of the family was able to be with her in the last weeks of her life, holding her hands and sharing memories and making a more time during this difficult period. As well, the doctors in Edmonton helped her to set up where she was able to Facetime other family members and friends to say their goodbyes.

On August 25, Bertha passed on to be with her family and friends that have gone before her. On September 1, they laid her to rest with the sweet, kind, and smart stubborn Bertha Allen.

The family would like to take the time to thank the staff in Edmonton, Stanton Hospital, and the health staff in Fort Simpson. As well, to all the people who provided support during this difficult time. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community at this time. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Committee on the Review of Bills

COMMITTEE REPORT 20-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON BILL 30: AN ACT
TO AMEND THE AURORA COLLEGE ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its report on Bill 30, an Act to Amend the *Aurora College Act* and commends it to the House.

Introduction

Bill 30, an Act to Amend the Aurora College Act was first introduced by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on June 2nd, 2021, and then referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

Bill 30 proposes changes to the Aurora College Act (the Act) to:

- Create a new public governance system for Aurora College;
- Move the college to an arm's length relationship with the Government of the Northwest Territories;
- Meet the requirements of a quality assurance review; and,
- Support the gradual transition to a changed way of working between Aurora College, the government, and other partners and stakeholders.

The proposed amendments are part of the broader GNWT initiative to transform Aurora College into a polytechnic university. The process for changing the college into a university began in the 18th Assembly and is scheduled to continue through three governments into the 20th Assembly.

The 19th Legislative Assembly prioritizes the creation of a polytechnic university. In the mandate, the GNWT commits to change Aurora College into an accredited and independent polytechnic university within six years. The GNWT's lead department maintains a website publicly tracking the progress of 106 activities related to the transformation.

Main changes

The main changes made in committee include:

1. Increasing the size of the Board of Governors to ten members;

2. Requiring that at least half of the board members are Indigenous NWT residents;
3. Allowing Cabinet to designate the chairperson of the board of governors, and requiring the board of governors to designate the vice-chair;
4. Requiring the board of governors to seek input from Indigenous governments on the makeup of the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council; and,
5. Adding the term "diverse" to sections that refer to the uniqueness of the NWT.

Committee wishes to thank all those who participated. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to pass the reading of this report on to the Member for Great Slave.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

What we Heard

Committee held a public engagement period from July 20 to August 20, 2021, and a virtual public hearing on September 9, 2021.

Committee received written submissions and public presentations from Aurora College, the City of Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories Metis Nation, and the Tlicho government.

The themes brought forward reflect the composition and appointment of the Board of Governors and the two councils, regional representation, implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), academic independence, and requests for direct co-drafting of legislation with Indigenous governments.

Board of Governors

Committee heard disappointment about Bill 30 proposing to reinstate the previously abolished Board of Governors without regional representation and two advisory councils instead. Witnesses requested to change the governance model to allow for regional representation in the composition of the Board of Governors by working together with the NWT's Indigenous governments. The Tlicho government stated that not guaranteeing continued regional representation in the governance of the college would be a mindset of colonialism and not align with UNDRIP Article 19.

Committee heard concerns that the proposed composition of the Board of Governors could result in an underrepresentation of Indigenous people.

The NWT Metis Nation asked to be directly represented on the Board of Governors, to be involved in all decisions, and requested that each recognized Indigenous government have a seat on the board; otherwise, the model would not be consistent with UNDRIP Article 14.

The City of Yellowknife encouraged the development of criteria that would ensure the Board of Governors is representative of the ethnicities, genders, geographic regions and perspectives in the NWT. Aurora College welcomed the move away from a regional representation model to a competency-based board and the established minimum requirement for three Indigenous board members.

Residency Requirement For Board Members

The concern was raised that the college may miss out on contributions from the broader Canadian and international academic world if a strict residency requirement exists. The potential negative impact on a future university could include reducing the marketability of the university and creating a possible barrier to appointing suited candidates.

Academic Council

Committee heard the concern that the academic council may hold no weight in the decision-making because no qualification requirements are determined in Bill 30. Any community member may fill roles on the council. The City of Yellowknife made the recommendation to require that council members have post-secondary organizational experience in addition to academic expertise.

Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council

Several witnesses indicated that the selection process of Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council members should have support from the Indigenous community. Committee heard concerns that a mechanism for representative Indigenous institutions to be involved in selecting members to the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council is lacking. The Tlicho government notes that such mechanism is necessary to make the Act consistent with UNDRIP Article 19, and states further that "it is critical to Tlicho government that any persons designated as holding Indigenous knowledge be recognized as such by their communities, and who have support and recognition behind them from their communities as they take up such an important responsibility."

Chair And Vice-Chair

Witnesses voiced concerns that changing the power from the board to the Minister to designate a chair and a vice-chair would not reflect the intention

to make the college more arm's length but possibly reverses it.

Mandate

Committee heard the concern that the Minister's power to approve the board's mandate might diminish the proposed rule that forbids the Minister to interfere with the Aurora College policies. It was recommended that the legal framework reinforce academic independence.

I would like to now turn this over to my colleague from Monfwi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:

Timelines For Consultation And Comments

Committee heard the concern that timelines for consultation and comments may not always be respectful and sufficient for stakeholders to support meaningful consultation. As has been previously raised to GNWT departments, Minister and standing committees, the witness notes that the timelines for consultation and comments must be respectful and sufficient to support meaningful consultation. As a stakeholder, the witness identified that a longer timeline to prepare comments is appreciated on an important and complex such as Bill 30.

Process Used to Develop Bill 30

The Tlicho government brought forward the concern that the department's process missed the opportunity to involve Indigenous partners in bringing Bill 30. Referring to the experience of past collaborations in lands and resources-related legislative drafting processes, the Tlicho government stresses the need for such cooperation as the GNWT creates legislations that reflect the needs of all residents of the NWT and the Indigenous perspectives, world view, and with respect to the authorities of Indigenous government.

Committee Considerations

Committee considered that the following motions would improve Bill 30.

The Board of Governors

Committee discussed the issue of representation on the Board of Governors and the request for reinstating regional representation. Committee finds that the purpose of Bill 30 is to restore public governance to Aurora College and, at the same time, ensure the college fulfills the requirements of the quality assurance process for Canadian

post-secondary institutions. Regional representation of the Board may need to be considered for the polytechnic university and, in the future, replacement of the Aurora College Act with the Polytechnic University Act.

Committee was concerned that the governance model may not reflect that most students are Indigenous students from the NWT. Keeping the minimum number of Indigenous board members at three out of eight would not provide equal Indigenous representation. Accordingly, committee proposes a motion requiring a minimum of fifty percent Indigenous representation on the board-recommended membership to the Board of Governors.

When considering how to amend the act best, committee sought information from the Minister. The response included a proposal from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to increase the number of board-recommended members from eight to ten, and require a minimum of five Indigenous members.

The increase would bring Aurora College board membership to 14; in comparison, the Yukon University Board of Governors has 17 members. Committee agrees with this approach. Motion 1 requires the Minister to appoint 10, members recommended by the Board, of which at least five must be Indigenous residents of the Northwest Territories.

Academic Council

Committee recognizes that membership of academic councils in Canada is almost entirely constituted by academic faculty and senior administrators employed by the institutions, with some student representation. The quality assurance review process requires institutions that offer degree programs to have their academic staff, students, and administrators participate in academic decision-making. By convention in nearly all Canadian institutions, this is done by establishing an academic council in colleges and a senate in universities.

Now, I now turn to MLA from Inuvik Twin Lake.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you.

Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council

Committee welcomes the approach of balancing the Indigenous knowledge and the western academic knowledge system in the college and future university governance. Committee feels that to give equal weight to the Indigenous knowledge

system, it needs to be identified who holds the power of determining a knowledge holder.

The current model does not speak to the composition of the council and leaves it to the decision by the Board of Governors. Committee holds the view that it does not make sense for a Board of Governors, without a mandate from Indigenous organizations, to be responsible for making rules on who would qualify as a knowledge holder. Committee shares the concern that the power to decide who is an Indigenous knowledge holder should lie with Indigenous organizations. The legislation should allow for Indigenous involvement in selecting Indigenous knowledge holders.

Committee agrees with the concern of risking non-compliance with UNDRIP and takes note of the recommendation to add a mechanism or criteria for Indigenous knowledge holders to be identified by their Indigenous organization or an Indigenous community.

Committee proposes two motions requiring Aurora College to follow a three-step process to establish membership to the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council:

The amendments require the college to begin the process by seeking input from the Indigenous governments to develop criteria for identifying Indigenous knowledge holders.

The nomination process requires consideration of those criteria in selecting members to the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council.

Both requirements are part of Motion 5.

Motion 7 requires the board to seek input from Indigenous governments on the potential members to the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council before selecting members to the council and consider any input provided.

Further, the motion requires the board to ensure that the composition of the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council reflects the unique and diverse values, histories and people of the Northwest Territories.

Residency Requirements For Board Members

Committee shares concerns that residency requirements for board members might limit the college in attracting highly educated individuals, particularly Indigenous individuals with ties to the NWT but residing in other jurisdictions. Committee sees this concern addressed with the proposed amendments that set criteria for identifying Indigenous knowledge holders.

Committee sees the suggestion to consider options for ex-officio members to enrich the board by allowing non-residents to inform the work of the board included in the current legislation, which allows the Minister to appoint additional members to the Board.

Board Of Governors, Chair And Vice-Chair

Committee agrees with the concern that moving the powers from the board to the Minister to select the Board of Governors, chair and vice-chair, does not contribute to making the institution more arms' length. Committee sought additional information from the Minister on why this change was made as it seems inconsistent with the principle of Bill 30.

The exchange recognized the significant importance of the role of both chairpersons under the arm's length and the renewed collaborative relationship. The department proposes to use the approach taken in Alberta where polytechnics, once created, are board-governed institutions where the Board of Governors acts as an intermediary between the institution and the public. With the evolving role of the chair, the department describes the relationship between the Minister and chair as the critical link to create stability during the transformation years and the vital relationship between government and the polytechnic university.

Committee takes the view that accountability during transition is just as important as independence. The need for public accountability can be achieved by having the Board of Governors select the chair. Committee took a strong position that the Board needs to select the chair, and the chair not be designated by the Minister. After further consideration, the committee accepted the Yukon university model as an acceptable compromise.

Accordingly, committee proposes the model used in the Yukon where the default is for Cabinet (rather than the Minister) to appoint a chair, and where the Board selects the vice-chair.

Adding 'Diverse'

Committee recommends adding the word 'diverse' to reflect the regional diversity in the NWT. According to Motions 2 and 7 add the term 'diverse' to language that speaks to the unique values of the NWT so that the sections in the Act refer to the unique and diverse values of the people of the NWT.

Role of the President

Currently, the administrator appointed by the Minister in the 18th Assembly replaces the Board and thereby holds the president of the college accountable. Bill 30 proposes that the Board of

Governors select and direct the president thereby making the institution more independent and moving it into a more arm's length relationship from government.

Concerns were raised that the president is a public service employee and that this potentially conflicts with the intent to increase the academic independence of the institution. The City of Yellowknife suggested contracting the president as an independent individual instead.

When considering a possible amendment, the committee sought and received additional information from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Committee recognizes that the president is a non-voting member on the Board of Governors and reports only to the board. The board hires the president and determines the type and duration of the contract. Being exclusively accountable to the board solidifies a CEO-type position that allows the President to provide operational oversight independent of the GNWT. To enable the hiring and supervision of all Aurora College employees, the president must be granted the powers of a Deputy Head under the Public Service Act and Financial Administration Act.

Committee accepts the rationale of the president being a Member of the public service.

I would like to now pass it on to the Member for Hay River South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:

Mandate

In its deliberations, committee gave weight to the fact that the system of the board's mandate is modelled after other jurisdictions. The board determines the mandate and submits it to the Minister for approval. The Minister is not allowed to change the content or do anything else concerning the mandate, which is part of the arms-length nature of the relationship between the government and the institution. The mandate will be described in regulations which require Cabinet approval.

In developing the Aurora College Mandate, committee notes that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Aurora College considered elements from several jurisdictions. As a starting point, both are looking at the 'strategic mandate agreement' used in Ontario, where each university and college has its own strategic mandate agreement.

Committee recognizes that the requirement for the board's mandate comes from the Post-Secondary

Education Act, and that Bill 30 aims to ensure that the mandate is appropriate for Aurora College, both with a focus on preparing the necessary elements for the institution to pass a quality assurance review.

Editorial Changes

Committee proposes two motions to correct spelling. Motions 4 and 6 propose editorial and non-substantive changes.

Recommendations

Committee heard from witnesses concerns about the development of legislation and the engagement process in review of Bill 30. While these issues do not fall within the scope of the review of Bill 30, committee feels strongly that they deserve recommending action.

Process Used To Develop Bill 30

Committee took note of the comment that not involving Indigenous partners in bringing forward Bill 30 is a missed opportunity and may be inconsistent with UNDRIP article 19. Committee recognizes the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management which focuses on collaborative legislative development in lands and resources.

Recommendations

Accordingly, the Committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories speak to questions on co-drafting legislation and co-management beyond resource-based legislation, and discuss this concept with the NWT Council of Leaders.

I will now turn it over to the Member for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Timeline for Consultation and Comments

Committee takes note of the request to allow for sufficient time for meaningful consultation and engagement. Committee will review its public engagement processes to ensure timelines are respectful and sufficient for stakeholders to support meaningful consultation.

Further, committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Aurora College take note of this request that engagement timelines are respectful and sufficient for stakeholders to support meaningful consultation, and ensure that the timeframes for engagement and consultation concerning the polytechnic university are adequate.

Terminology

During committee's careful considerations to improve Bill 30, definitions and use of the term Indigenous were discussed.

Committee felt strongly about not excluding Indigenous academic experts or knowledge holders with ties to the NWT but residing outside of the jurisdiction from eligibility for board or council membership. Committee noted that the wording used establishes a requirement for NWT residency rather than recognizing a connection to the NWT, such as birth in the NWT, beneficiary under a land rights or self-government agreement, an Indigenous person who has resided a significant portion of their life in the NWT, or an Indigenous person who has notable achievements in the NWT but may no longer be an NWT resident.

Committee recognizes that the discussion of definition is not meant to be understood as standardization which would have a limiting effect. From a statutory interpretation perspective, one would not wish to straightjacket the definition of Indigenous. Rather, committee perceives that the GNWT needs to provide a definition of the term of Indigenous as used in the Affirmative Action Policy to avoid confusion with the different uses of the term internationally, nationally, and in respect to the approach of realizing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and implementation of UNDRIP articles.

Recommendation 3

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

Clause by clause review

The clause-by-clause review of Bill 30 was held on September 27, 2021. At this review, committee moved seven motions. The Minister concurred with all seven motions.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Development's review of Bill 30 results from a collaborative process. Committee wishes to thank the Minister for his concurrence with the motions made by the committee to amend Bill 30. The committee thanks the public for their participation in the review process, and everyone involved in the review of this bill for their assistance and input.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act, as amended and reprinted, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. This concludes the standing committee's review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 20-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act, be received by the Assembly and moved into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. The report will be moved into the Committee of the Whole.

---Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE REPORT 21-19(2): REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES APPROACH TO THE MINING REGIME FISCAL REVIEW

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is pleased to provide its Report on the Government of the Northwest Territories Approach to the Mining Regime Fiscal Review and commends it to the House.

Introduction

As part of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) work to bring the Mineral Resources Act into force, as well as to further

implement the devolution of the land resources management, the GNWT has commenced a review of the mining fiscal regime, including royalties paid.

The GNWT's first step of the review was to produce a study that assessed the tax and royalty competitiveness of the mineral sector in the NWT. The Tax and Royalty Benchmarking Report released October 2020 was the GNWT's first step of the process.

In the public release of this document the Minister notes, the re-imagining of our government's fiscal framework around royalties is one that deserves a comprehensive, collaborative, and multi-phased approach." The committee was concerned about the scope of work for this benchmarking research and given the technical nature of this study, an independent review was undertaken for committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Member from Frame Lake to conclude. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President.

Process

Committee decided to seek proposals from resource economic consultants to provide an independent opinion on the following questions:

- Is the GNWT maximizing benefits from resource extraction?
- Does the GNWT fiscal and regulatory structure maximize value for Northwest Territories residents and future generations?
- Is the proposed approach by the GNWT to review this fiscal and regulatory regime comprehensive?
- Will the proposed approach accurately assess whether the benefits of resource wealth are being maximized for the GNWT, NWT residents, and future generations?

The majority of committee agreed to hire resources for development consulting for this independent review. One Member was not supportive of the direction committee was taking regarding an independent analysis on the GNWT's benchmarking study. This Member's position in opposition to the independent research commissioned by committee is provided in the dissenting opinion which is included as Appendix A.

Resources for development consulting was founded in 2011 with a mandate to assist governments and communities in securing a fair share of mineral and petroleum wealth. The company assists in the

design of fiscal regimes; the negotiation and renegotiation of contracts; the forecasting of future government revenues; and the monitoring and auditing of production, sales, and project costs to secure government revenues in practice.

As part of the team undertaking this work for committee, additional expertise was secured, including an executive with over 30 years experience in the mining industry and another expert with almost 25 years of experience in the energy and natural resources sectors assisting over 20 countries.

On June 29, 2021, the consultant provided a public briefing for committee on the research findings. The meeting was recorded and posted on the Legislative Assembly Facebook and Youtube channels. The final research report, An Economic Analysis of the GNWT's Approach to the Mining Regime Fiscal Review, as prepared by Resources for Development Consulting is attached as Appendix B.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn it over now to the MLA for Yellowknife North. Merci.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Findings and Recommendations

While committee supports a review of the mining fiscal regime, there was not consensus how to approach this review to stimulate investment, maximize benefits and maintain competitiveness. Not all Members accepted the recommendations as presented in the report. Regardless committee submits the following recommendations to the GNWT for a response as suggested by Resources for Development Consulting.

The report's findings suggest that in determining how to improve the NWT's mining fiscal regime, an analysis should be made publicly available that demonstrates how well the current fiscal regime has served the NWT since devolution.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories analyze the performance of the NWT mining fiscal regime since devolution and publish these results.

Committee agreed that fiscal transparency was a key aspect of any fiscal regime and should be included in the current fiscal regime review.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement government-led revenue transparency.

Committee was concerned about the GNWT's share of revenue from the mineral resources sector. Committee recommends the review of the Mining fiscal regime focus on maximizing government revenue while not impeding competitiveness in the industry.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a fiscal regime review focused on maximizing government revenue.

Committee recognizes revenue analysis for the GNWT from the mineral sector is complex in addition to accounting for the Territorial formula financing arrangement.

To ensure the GNWT and Indigenous governments are maximizing revenue, committee recommends the mining fiscal regime focus on assessing net revenue benefits to the NWT. This focus should include an analysis on the overall mining sector in the NWT, including revenue payments from all mining operations.

I'll now turn it over to the Member for Frame Lake.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories analyse the net revenue benefits for the NWT.

The purpose of the Heritage Fund is to ensure that future generations of people of the Northwest Territories benefit from on-going economic development, including the development of non-renewable resources. Committee was concerned with the value of wealth that has been created through the Heritage Fund and recommends the Mining Fiscal Regime Review include an assessment of how to generate more wealth for future generations.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that

the Government of the Northwest Territories generate greater mining revenues to benefit future generations.

As the GNWT can pursue wider government revenues from mining projects, those economic benefits will extend to Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments also have independent mechanisms to secure economic benefits directly from mining companies.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories expands Indigenous governments' economic benefit sharing.

Committee is not aware of any publicly available information on the steps, timelines, and opportunities for public engagement for the remainder of the review of the mining fiscal regime.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories make public, as soon as possible, information on the steps, timeline, and opportunities for public engagement for the review of the mining fiscal regime.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn it over now to the MLA for Nunakput to conclude the committee report. Merci.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recommendation 8:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the Government provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

Conclusion

Committee is committed to providing timely and constructive feedback during the review of the mining fiscal regime. Committee looks forward to a comprehensive, collaborative, and multi-phased approach with meaningful opportunities for the public and Indigenous government engagement.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hand it over to the Member from Great Slave. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dissenting opinion of Katrina Nokleby, MLA for Great Slave.

Dissenting Opinion of Katrina Nokleby, MLA Great Slave

Introduction

The GNWT has committed to undertaking a review of its approach to the NWT's mining fiscal regime. As a first step, the GNWT commissioned a study by international firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to provide an analysis of tax and royalty benchmark mining in the Northwest Territories. Some Members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (SCEDE) had concerns regarding the scope of work of this research and proceeded to hire an independent economic consultant to provide an opinion on the GNWT's mineral benchmarking research.

This decision by SCEDE to question the GNWT's approach does not reflect my concerns or opinions in this area.

SCEDE established the following terms of reference for Committee's independent research:

- Is the GNWT maximizing benefits from resource extraction?
- Does the GNWT fiscal and regulatory structure maximize value for NWT residents and future generations?
- Is the proposed approach by the GNWT to review this fiscal and regulatory regime comprehensive?
- And will the proposed approach accurately assess whether the benefits of resource wealth are being maximized for the GNWT, NWT residents and future generations?

I disagree that these are the most important questions to be asking, particularly in a time when exploration is at an all-time low in the NWT. It is my opinion that this contravenes the mandate of the 19th Assembly which is to support our mineral resource industry. PwC's research is relevant, sound, and is indeed a credible report in which to inform the Mining Fiscal Regime Review, comparing the climate in the NWT of relevant and reliable jurisdictions like Australia and South Africa. Contextually, based on my extensive professional experience, PwC has captured the situation in the NWT quite well and provides data to back up its conclusions.

I believe that the most relevant questions to be considering right now as the GNWT undertakes the Mining Fiscal Regime Review is:

- How will the GNWT create a climate that attracts high quality investors?
- How can the GNWT aid and incentivize the existing diamond mines to extend the life of their operations and develop new projects?
- How can the GNWT promote the exploration sector to ensure successive mines are coming online to help the territory avoid economic recession?
- How can the GNWT incentivize mining corporations to establish and keep head offices in the NWT?
- How can the GNWT support residents and businesses to increase participation in the mineral sector?
- What are the spinoff industries that could be developed?
- How can the GNWT support the development of energy and transportation infrastructure to attract investment in the territory?

Economic Conditions of the NWT

The NWT has always been a resource-based economy. Mining jobs keep families housed and people fed. Mining is the largest private sector employer in the NWT with diamond mining at the foundation of our current economy. This was only driven home further as the pandemic has progressed. Without the support of the mining industry and its dollars, the NWT would have been in economic ruin by now. The mines sent vulnerable people home with pay and set up some of the safest work sites in the entire territory, meeting weekly with our officials to ensure a coordinated effort was made to keep people healthy.

Diamond mining represented 26.7 percent of the territorial GDP in 2019, and is currently forecasted to contribute 20.7 percent of the territorial GDP in 2020 even though the industry declined 30.3 percent over that time period. There is no other sector that can replace the value that the mineral sector has brought to the NWT, unfortunately the NWT's economic outlook is not encouraging and taking jobs at this sector now is only going to be the nail in its coffin.

The value of our mineral productions is decreasing. The territorial GDP declined 10.4 percent from 2019 to 2020, the largest drop in the country, and for the first time ever is being surpassed by Nunavut's

value of mineral production as predicted by the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines on July 29, 2021. The NWT and Nunavut are on opposing trends. Nunavut is surging up with the development of a new gold mine, and strong prices for iron and gold. While the NWT's mining industry is suffering from the effects of COVID-19; weak global diamond sales; and the short-term closure of Dominion's mine; and the slow rate of new mines coming online.

The value of exploration expenditures is also decreasing.

The NWT Mineral Development Strategy shows a similar trend exists for the NWT with respect to exploration expenditures. The total value of exploration expenditure in the NWT over the last five years has also declined to less than 3 percent of the Canadian total. In the meantime, Nunavut has attracted four times as much exploration investment as the NWT and about twice as much as the Yukon. Current NWT expenditures are mainly for advanced exploration projects and deposits with very few grassroots projects underway, something that is extremely worrisome for the long term prospects of a sector that employs a large portion of Northerners as well as accounts for so much of our GDP.

As Minister, I heard that the NWT is not viewed as a jurisdiction that is attractive to investment. The Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies 2020 Investment Attractiveness Index ranked the NWT 46 out of 77 other jurisdictions. The NWT was among the very lowest ranked when compared to other Canadian jurisdictions, with Nova Scotia ranking the worst at 66 out of 77. Conversely Saskatchewan was at the top of attractive jurisdictions coming in at 3rd place, followed by Quebec in 6th, and Newfoundland and Labrador at 8.

While prospects don't look great, there has been some extension to the life of the diamond mines as detailed in the 2019 Socio-Economic Agreement Report. Diavik Diamond Mine's production life has been extended to 2025 due to the A-21 pit; Ekati's production life has been extended to 2034; and Gahcho Kue production life is estimated to run until 2030 with the discovery of new kimberlite pipes in 2019. However, this is not enough to sustain our economy and the lack of upcoming projects to replace the diamond mines is worrisome. Coupled with little oil and gas development, the sunseting of the diamond mines will likely cause the NWT to be in an extremely weak and limited economic environment in as short of a time as 13 years. Even if ongoing exploration work proves fruitful, metal mines have nowhere near the economic impact as a diamond mine and production values will be extremely limited comparatively.

Diversification is key to developing our economy, but diversification needs to happen quicker and on a much greater scale than it is currently happening to be relevant. In the meantime, we cannot afford to have a territory with no economy. Without successful exploration and subsequent mining projects coming online, we are destined to become a government or public service economy, with little population, little territorial budget, and little private services. With a lack of jobs there will be little incentive for our youth to remain in their home communities or even in the NWT, and our talent drain to the south will continue.

Conclusion

For all the reasons above, I believe the scope of work for the Tax and Royalty Benchmark Report, Mining in the Northwest Territories is an effective benchmark report to understand the NWT's competitiveness in the mineral sector. I am disappointed that committee time and resources were spent on work that I see as largely irrelevant given the reputation of the authors of the original report as well as the current economic situation of the NWT. I encourage my colleagues to put our time and efforts towards improving the economic outlook of our territory instead. I support the work of the GNWT and ITI to advance the Mining Fiscal Regime Review expeditiously to enable the development of regulations and incentives that will ensure a prosperous future for the NWT and all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. To the report, Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Frame Lake, that Committee Report 21-19(2): Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report of the Government of the Northwest Territories Approach to the Mining Regime Fiscal Review, be received in the Assembly, moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole.

--Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE REPORT 22-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT, REPORT
ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is pleased to provide the Report on Telecommunications and commends into the House.

The Executive Summary

Your Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is concerned about the growing digital divide in the NWT and the overall accessibility to connectivity and quality of internet services across the NWT.

The pandemic continues to highlight a growing gap between those with affordable, high-speed, reliable connectivity and those without. The communities in the NWT, especially more than remote communities, are suffering the most. And as the residents cannot afford it, the NWT falls below the rates of connectivity across Canada and yet also pay the highest price for service in - and the sporadic... [audio] The NWT witnessed over the course of the pandemic sporadic service in their community, limits accessibility for essential services.

The committee invited presentations from the Government of the Northwest Territories, (the GNWT), and the industry engagement informed committee submission. The Canadian Radio Telecommunications Commission 2020-367 (Appendix A) has also informed committee's recommendations to the GNWT.

In the committee's view, the GNWT has not completed a comprehensive business plan including financial costs required to provide internet access in the NWT at a comparable level of service in southern Canada. Without a complete picture of the total costs delivering the service, the GNWT continues to fall short of federal partners in industry to achieve this at the end.

The following report provides summary of what the committee heard from stakeholders and submits recommendations to the GNWT to improve accessibility, reliability, affordability of the telecommunications services in the NWT.

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment has provided nine recommendations for the GNWT.

1. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT to continue to invest in publicly owned backbone internet infrastructure in the

NWT. Specifically, the GNWT to prioritize the opportunity to create fibre redundancy to the NWT.

2. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT ensure fibre optic into home made available -- make fibre optic make -- made available to the residents of Tuktoyaktuk completion Inuvik-Tuk fibre line installation.
3. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT all backbone internet infrastructure in communities accommodates open wholesale access to NWT business to co-locate internet services a fair price in the NWT businesses.
4. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT advocate to the Canadian Radio Telecommunications Commission to set aside funding under the broadband fund for smaller service providers in Indigenous-owned businesses to help promote competition.
5. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT ensure all public funded internet backbone infrastructure in the NWT provide wholesale high-speed third-party internet access.
6. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT address digital divide within the NWT by providing free access to basic internet packages through income assistance funding and NWT Housing Corporation for public housing units.
7. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends to GNWT to address the digital divide building partnerships that can make free Wi-Fi services to all regional centres.
8. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT encourage competition in the market by procuring internet services by smaller pieces and that local internet providers can effectively bid on these opportunities.
9. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends a response and recommendations listed within 120 business days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Frame

Lake, that Committee Report 22-19(2): Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, Report on Telecommunications, be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

--Carried

Editors Note: Committee Report 22-19(2) can be read here:

https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/cr_22-192_scede_report_on_telecommunications_0.pdf

MR. SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 832-19(2): COVID-19 SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these questions will be for the Minister of Finance/Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, some of the GNWT departments will require employees to confirm they have been vaccinated prior to showing up for -- for work starting today. And others not vaccinated may be accommodated or turned away.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister explain to this -- to this Assembly the timing and process employees will be -- will be required to follow to confirm their vaccination status and is privacy, as it relates to private health information, a consideration when sharing that information and is it consistent throughout all departments, including NTPC and NWT Housing Corporation? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just be clear first at the outset that it is, indeed -- everyone that has to be, at this point, providing a proof of vaccination or else they will be asked to comply with enhanced

personal protective equipment and ultimately a testing regime.

In doing so, in asking our employees to comply with that policy, privacy absolutely was a top consideration, Mr. Speaker. The information that we are requesting, the records we are requesting, they are, indeed, going to be held on a need-to-know only basis at the Department of Human -- Department of Finance and Human Resources within the human resources information system. These folks are very accustomed to dealing with very sensitive information. It is secure, and it is private. I certainly would not let that to be a barrier to anyone complying with the policy to keep themselves and their families and their coworkers safe.

As for its application, Mr. Speaker, as I believe has been discussed this week, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation does have their own policy also in place. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation does, however, fall within this one.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, this is -- it's time -- this is time, it's now upon us, but, again, the information is going to be kept secure and confidential. So this -- if there's anyone out there who still hasn't provided their proof of vaccination, please, please get on the system and get that done today. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, knowing that departments or divisions have different vaccine policy requirements for employees to attend work, will the Minister confirm for those that are not vaccinated what process is in place to accommodate them when they show up for work tomorrow, and will they be required to provide any documentation as do those that are vaccinated; and if they do not have documentation, then what? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the vaccination requirements are not different-- are, again, asked- please, first of all, please go get your vaccine. It's your best way to protect yourself and to then provide that.

What does change department or division by division is in fact the specific guidelines around personal protective equipment. That's to accommodate the fact that certain different workplaces will have different levels of need or different levels of potential exposure to members of the public or to one another, you know, an office environment versus a frontline environment. But all of the departmental guidelines are available on the MyHR website. So if someone wants to go through, read them individually, they certainly can do that now. They are available on the website, and

individual employees also, if they still have questions, should speak to their direct supervisors. Between the information on the HR website, between the information of their supervisors, employees should now be, I believe, quite clear on the level of personal protective equipment required for their workplace and testing will be coming shortly and that, again, same efforts, Mr. Speaker, to the MyHR website or to a supervisor. I've not had too many inquiries so I am hoping that, indeed, that information has rolled out successfully and there's no other paperwork that's required. Just to, you know, again, Number 1 is to go get your vaccine. If you are choosing not to do that, then to make sure you're clear with your supervisor what you need to do to keep yourself safe tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned that some of the vaccinated employees may find that working with staff that are not vaccinated will deem the workplace to be an unsafe environment as set out in WSCC legislation.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm what is the process that must be followed by those employees who feel unsafe when working alongside employees who are unvaccinated? What options or accommodations are open to them if they refuse to go to work? Has this been made clear to them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, the first point of contact for all employees is their direct supervisor. We've certainly have employees working with their supervisors throughout the pandemic to ensure that folks who may be immune compromised, for instance, can have access to -- to that -- to additional information so that their workplace remains a safe place for them. We've worked -- the Department of Finance has worked with the WSCC and Occupational Health and Safety. Again, throughout the pandemic, including on the current policy. Always, of course, is mindful not only of the provisions that -- I know the Member mentioned earlier, but other provisions in the work -- Workers Safety and Compensation Act. For instance, the ensuring of having an exposure control plan. So vaccines certainly as I think -- has been mentioned not only by this government, not only by our Chief public health officer, but across the country and the world, vaccines are your best form of protection, but they are not the only form of protection.

We really want to of course ensure that our workplaces are using every possible means of protection. So you have enhanced masking for those folks who are not providing proof of vaccine, still other masking orders still in place, other various exposure controls are in place. So we are trying to

adapt the workplaces to a pandemic in the context of, of course, changing knowledge and information about that pandemic and as risks may continue to evolve and to vary, we are going to continue to do so. But if someone does have concerns, again, please have them speak to their supervisor so that their individual circumstances can be accommodated. 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, I had the opportunity to review the document titled Confirmation of Compliance with the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccine Policy for Contractors, and discussed it with a number of contractors.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister confirm how this information is being relayed to contractors and how or will it be monitored to ensure compliance? It appears to be a document based more on the honour system. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our approach in terms of dealing with contractors is quite similar to the federal model and they too are applying their own policies more expansively and to include contractors. The goal, again, is to ensure that all of the public that's being served on behalf of the GNWT has the benefits of this policy and the benefits that we believe it brings as far as providing all the different tools to prevent transmission and exposure to COVID-19.

I suppose it's an honor system in the sense that we are requiring at this point contractors who have existing contracts to sign to say they are adhering to the policy. I suppose that's an honor system or, really, it's a system that says "you now need to adhere and you need to tell us you're going to do so."

Going forward, contract templates are being modified so that it will actually then be built into the contract itself, that they will comply with the policy. And certainly where there's concern that contractors not adhering to the policies, they are saying that they are or that they will be contracted to do, there certainly are tools that the GNWT can have to deal with that.

I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we don't get to that. I'm hoping again that contractors are just as keen to ensure that they're using all the tools available to keep their employees safe as we are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 833-19(2):
AIRPORT SERVICE REDUCTIONS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the other day the Infrastructure Minister was unable to answer a couple of my questions. So I'm going to try asking them again today.

Can the Minister tell us which other NWT airports, by name, were affected by similar actions experienced at the Fort Smith airport runway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the recent lighting projects involving James Gruben airport in Tuktoyaktuk and YZF in Yellowknife, the Aerodrome Standards and Guidelines were considered. The Tuktoyaktuk project saw changes to the physical characteristics and the lighting infrastructure. And the Yellowknife project saw changes to the lighting infrastructure to meet the current standards as well as aircraft currently serving the airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, in the Infrastructure budget that we looked at the other day, Fort Simpson is replacing the lighting on their airport runway just like what happened to Fort Smith's runway changes. Can the Minister tell us if the width or length of the Fort Simpson airport's runway was altered in any way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Fort Simpson airport will see changes to the lighting infrastructure as a result of the new lighting project so it can meet the Aerodrome Standards and Guidelines, but there will be no changes to the physical characteristics because the aircraft-- because of the aircraft serving this airport.

The aircraft serving Fort Simpson, to meet the current and future needs, is the ATR turbo prop. This aircraft is part of a larger aircraft group number, than the aircraft serving Fort Smith. As with the Fort Smith airport, the level of service will not change at this airport and will still continue to meet federal regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if there are any plans to reduce the width of any other NWT airport runways? If so, can the Minister specify which airports those are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was two questions, and I'll answer them both. No, there are no plans at this time as there are no projects in the planning and design stage. During

the plan and design process for all airport projects, the Aerodrome Standards and Guidelines are taken into consideration, along with the aircraft serving the community and the physical characteristics of that airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the government to continue to defend a poor decision to shorten the width of a major regional airport is not okay. I don't want Fort Smith's decision to set a bad precedent for other communities to lose or lessen vital infrastructure. Would the Minister seriously reconsider correcting this direction by the Government of the Northwest Territories and reinstate the wishes of 550 people along with the entire Fort Smith leadership who signed the runway petition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, narrowing the width of the runway has not changed the level of service of the airport. The runway meets current federal regulations and future needs.

When the Fort Smith airport was built in 1957, 60 meters was a common width for a paved runway across Canada. At the time, it was predicted that future aircraft would be bigger and would require larger runways. The evolution of aircraft technology disproved this prediction. Newer and more modern aircraft have improved performance when compared to aircraft from the 1950s and 1960s and wider runways are not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I would also note that the federal regulations have recently changed and a 60-meter wide runway is no longer required, even for the largest aircraft in the world.

Finally, I want to make it clear that Department of Infrastructure did consult with the airport users and the town prior to commencing the work on the new runway lighting and reduce the runway width in 2018, and no objections were noted or brought forward at that time. Ongoing engagement with aircraft operators during construction led to the addition of turn pads at both ends of the runway to be able to allow for safe operations of 737s and A320 aircrafts.

The expenditure of over 11 million in public funds to revisit the work completed in 2019 and return the runway to its former width is unnecessary, and the Department of Infrastructure doesn't have the necessary funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 834-19(2):
CANADA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
CHILDCARE AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My statement dealt with the often-promised federal territorial agreement to bring affordable child care to all parents in the NWT. The ECE Minister is quoted in the media as saying-- in some media saying "we'll have this agreement by the end of the calendar year."

But I'd like the Minister to tell us the number of child care spaces the agreement will support and at what cost per day. Merci, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member stated, I've already said publicly we should have this agreement finalized by the end of the year, in the coming weeks, in the coming week. It's very close. That being said, it's not finalized and so I can't say how many spaces, what costs, etcetera.

If you look at every other deal that's been made, though, there is some indications that there's a reduction in fees at the end of 2022 by a certain amount, and after five years there's a desire to get to around \$10 a day average. So there are some things that have appeared in every other agreement. But I can't say what we are going to see in this agreement until we sign something. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that sneak preview. The Minister has also been quoted as saying that the lack of physical spaces will challenge universal affordable child care in the NWT. How is the Minister going to ensure that there are safe and appropriate places to put the new child care spaces in all NWT communities? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So ECE currently has funding for startup, new child care space startup to help programs get off the ground. Of course, we have the \$1 million child care infrastructure fund that we're a few years into now. As well, we have been prioritizing the communities who have no child care services for that fund. While negotiating the terms of the new agreement, the Canada-wide agreement that we hope to sign here in the very near future, we've been considering how we can utilize that agreement as well as some of the existing funding that we already have to construct new spaces. I noted earlier that we have reviewed the current funding programs and given that we're on the cusp

of a new agreement, perhaps some of those funding programs can be adjusted to help get new infrastructure spaces off the ground as well as has been discussed in this House, ECE's capital standards for schools now allows for child care space to be built in new school facilities as well. So there's a number of ways that we are working on the infrastructure issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. The August renewal of the Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Agreement provided a onetime earmarked \$2.5 million to support development of our early child care work force, childhood care work force. I want to ask the Minister whether he can tell us if that money's actually rolling out now and how many child care workers have been trained or have their skills upgraded? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the money is rolling out. It is supporting a number of initiatives. Of course, we have the early learning child care diploma program at Aurora College that this money's helping fund. For the first time now that-- there is a distance-based early learning child care certificate, that people don't have to come to the campus to take. They can take it in their home communities. There's work on dual credit courses for interested secondary-- senior secondary school students. As well, we are supporting college Nordique to deliver post-secondary programming in French for early learning child care providers. We have 30 scholarships of \$5,000 for students pursuing further education in early learning and child care. So we have a number of different initiatives.

There are approximately 300 childhood educators who are benefitting from some of the additional training that is being offered as well beyond those college courses. So there's a number of different initiatives that are available to prospective early learning and child care educators as well as current ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. It would be great to get further updates on that money being spent.

So planning for universal child care in the NWT, it's not new ground. There was the 2015 feasibility study of universal affordable daycare in the Northwest Territories, and the department has some of its own action plans. But how is the Minister building upon this work to finally develop a comprehensive plan for universal child care across the NWT, and how will a new agreement with the

federal government make this happen? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member mentioned, this is not new ground. Over the years, there's been a number of -- much work done on the types of programs and research into the needs of young children and how we can better support them and how we can better support parents with their child care needs. And so this work has been done by the Department of Health, by E, C and E, and the officials at the department have looked at all of this work spanning many years, and as well, they have gone out to have discussions with child care providers, Indigenous governments, and so on. And all of that is informing both the negotiations that we are currently in with the federal government as well as the 2030 Early Learning and Childhood Strategy. That strategy will be a very high-level document without specific actions. That's generally what strategies are; they're guiding documents. But as with many federal funding agreements, there's already a requirement for an action plan. So the -- I expect there will be a detailed action plan under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement that will spell out exactly how we are going to spend this money and make these improvements to the child care sector. So I can assure the Member we will have a plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 835-19(2):
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO
NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my Member's statement was on shipping and timing in regards to my riding. It's really essential because three communities that I represent are on the ocean. And this year, we're worried in regards to having our shipment so late into the season, in September, due to ice conditions and in the rough seas because our boats are only limited to do so much.

Mr. Speaker, is there any way-- like, we have six and a half months of planning, is the Minister able to direct her staff with MTS in regards to servicing the community first before servicing contracts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the marine delivery needs of the ISR communities, of any Northwest Territories communities, do not take a backseat to North

Warning System contract or any other commercial contracts. MTS serves the ISR communities with dedicated tugboats and barges. I think the Member's going to be happy to hear that, that we dedicate our tugs and barges to the-- to the smaller communities. So a different tugboat and barge is used to serve the-- for example, the North Warning System. These marine operations run concurrently, but they don't interfere with each other. In the past summer, though operations were temporarily delayed by ice, the ISR communities did receive their freight. And a different tugboat than Nunakput did North Warning System deliveries and was completed on time this season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. I'm really happy to hear that we have Nunakput serving Nunakput, and look forward to that this year. But we have six and a half months of planning to do to make that happen.

For the timeline, June 15th was when the ocean opened up on our side and boats are already coming in from June to September. Why did it take so long? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the tugs leave from Hay River. So I mean, there are a number of factors that we need to consider, including the ice to melt in the lake and getting it up the river. So those are some of the reasons why. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in regards to the shipping, you know, we came in in September. We can't have that, what happened in 2018 with that service and costing former government millions of dollars to service our communities. So, Mr. Speaker, how does it work and where do they buy the fuel in regards to servicing the communities if they're coming up and they're doing tows out to the community, where are they buying the fuel and can we get it cheaper so we could pass on those cheap rates to the people of Nunakput? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that's okay, I'm going to get back to the Member in terms of where exactly we purchase, and I think that was the Member's question last week as well. So, you know, we can look into, you know, where we get our fuel and if there's cost savings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to again thank MTS for the service that they do. It's just a matter of getting a schedule that is doable because this year, like I said in my

Member's statement, that people had boats, four-wheelers on there, that were wanting to hunt and go whaling in the community of Paulatuk firstly and they weren't able to get them until September, and they got to use it once. Mr. Speaker, more of a comment, but thank MTS for their service this year but we'll work on the scheduling. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Taken as comment, but I'll let the Minister respond, short.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make this really short. Over the past two -- and I think this is really important because, you know, there are some of the delays and, you know, climate change has a big impact on it as well, but I do want to just quickly say that over the past few years, in Canada's Arctic waters, water and ice condition have been less predictable than in previous years. It is unfortunate, but ice and bad weather can sometimes interfere with our marine deliveries. Ice and weather can be dangerous. MTS operations must be safe operations. Our captains will not put their crews, vessels at risk. MTS had an excellent safety record over the past five seasons, and we're very proud of that record and I do want to note to the MTS staff that, you know, this is much appreciated. So the tugboats for the ISR communities was delayed by ice this year. All of our deliveries to the communities were done. Boats and crews made it home safely. And I think that's very important. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 836-19(2):
OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHALL SERVICE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quick Google search will tell you that the Fort Good Hope seniors home officially opened in February of this year. And then it didn't open. And then the GNWT said it would open at the end of summer. And then it didn't open.

So my question for the Minister responsible of Municipal and Community Affairs is when is the Fort Good Hope seniors home going to open?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I know he probably read in the paper at some point in time I was the Minister of but I'm not the Minister responsible for Housing. That's Minister Chinna.

What I know right now, the Fort Good Hope Housing 9-plex is not opened right now. We did open it during the COVID Secretariat. We had 24-hour supervision, temporary occupation lined up

through the -- again, with the COVID breakout, to assist the community and isolate the people there.

As for a date, I think the Member will -- should ask the Minister of Housing for that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll put the Minister on Housing that I -- on notice that I will ask her when she expects the GNWT to let the GNWT open their building.

My question here is that I regularly see -- receive complaints that our Office of the Fire Marshal is not operating with the same service that both of our neighboring territories are, that emails go unresponded to, that plan review function takes months, that getting occupancy permits can take months and months with different dates provided. Is the Minister willing to create some sort of a standards for the Office of the Fire Marshal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the process, we're reviewing the projects to make sure they're looked at and then they're prioritized based on when they were received. So the fire marshal's office has developed a process to advise clients as we're doing that. But most importantly -- and, man, I can't believe I'm doing this to the Member from Yellowknife North, I'm giving him kind of another 'yes'.

The creation of the service standards for the Office of the Fire Marshall will be considered in review of the fire marshal, and we will be doing that -- that will be part of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, that's three yeses for the Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I never thought I'd be so excited for the Fire Prevention Act, but I'm really looking forward to that piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that Nunavut, after creating a Building Standards Act essentially hired a contracting firm to review the plan review function. My understanding is here we have one person who reviews the plans, and if they go on vacation, simply just no plans get reviewed.

I believe a good way to solve that problem would give the fire marshal a budget to have a contractor on hire as a backup for plan review. Is that something the Minister is willing to look into? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Just so everybody here realizes it in the House and out there, my understanding of the fire office -- of the Office of the Fire Marshall has not had any delays or backup -- backlog in projects under review.

However, giving him the fourth 'yes' today, I'm getting -- I can't believe this is four yeses -- I think Christmas is done for the Yellowknife North Member. Contracting services, when warranted, is an option for Municipal and Community Affairs to prioritize priorities and workload. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I believe me and the Minister, we're going to get through this. We've had a number of conversations, and I previously asked whether the department was willing to change the guidelines that the Office of the Fire Marshal operates under to review draft documents first. And I want to clarify what I'm asking for here.

I'm not asking for a final occupancy permit or a final signoff on draft documents. That would be very inappropriate. But during building a building, the architects, the engineers, and the contractors all get together, they move around the plans, and there's lots of conversations. Other jurisdictions, the Office of the Fire Marshal has consulting meetings. They also we review the plans. This is something our Office of the Fire Marshal refuses to do, and they will only look at finalized drawings. Then when one of our engineers gets in a fight with the fire marshal, we end up in court.

So what I'm asking is will the Minister change the guidelines to allow the Office of the Fire Marshall to be involved a little earlier and have a consultation session with the draft documents and not just look at finalized documents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, planning review guidelines are available on the MACA website and provides a number of options to resolve potential issues before final drawings are submitted, including pre-submission meetings and partial review for specific circumstances. The Office of the Fire Marshal is willing to work with any client with concerns related to specific projects to find a solution with the regulatory framework.

I really hate to do this, but this is his third 'yes' today; the fifth one in two days.

We will look at this idea during the review of the Fire Prevention Act. So I'm looking forward to it. We will look at these things. We're trying to improve things moving forward. And I have to say the fire marshall is doing a good job despite what the Member has said in his speech today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 837-19(2):
NEW HOUSING INITIATIVES IN TLĪCHŪ REGION

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this is a question for the NWT Housing Corporation. I want to ask her why none of the ten units being built in Behchoko -- not in Behchoko but I meant to say Tlicho region is designated for homeownership program. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are on -- doing a -- distributing a federal delivery this year of 90 public housing units. Presently, right now, we are able to concentrate on homeownership. So the public housing units that are single and detached, they are up for sale. To date, we have had 104 applications that have been received, and we are working with those clients to educate them and to support them through the homeownership process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Well, that was the question for yesterday. So -- so would the Minister commit some of those ten units to be designated for homeownership.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not as generous as the Minister of MACA. Unfortunately, no, they won't be as -- they won't be up for sale. This is to replenish our public housing stock. We do have a deteriorated housing stock. We are almost reaching our 50 years.

But for the Tlicho region, it's a very unique Indigenous government and Indigenous group where we do hold partnerships with them. We are in the process right now working with the Tlicho housing working group in transferring ten of our market housing units and also supporting them through that process as well too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi. Would the Minister commit to selling units at a price that reflects their commercial value and take into consideration the amount of rent already paid and future maintenance costs? Masi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can provide the Member with further information on how our homeownership program is working and the eligibility and the criteria for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi. There are many barriers to the subsidy programs for homeownership assistance with the NWT Housing Corporation. What types of debt forgiveness does the NWT Housing Corporation have?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the debts that have been accumulated with our tenants within the Housing Corporation, we do have to work within the Financial Management Act as well too, on how we are going to work with those clients in trying to eliminate the debts that they do carry over. But this is a lengthy process, and we have been successful in working with clients throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 838-19(2):
OFFICE OF DRIVERS' LICENCING AND
REGISTRATION OFFICE IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. Every time the office of the DMV changes their hours, it makes news. First they allowed walk-ins. Then they only went by appointment. And just recently they added two more hours to allow walk-ins. I'm pretty excited that maybe the DMV will one day get back to regular appointments.

My question, though, is looking forward at the operations of the Yellowknife DMV, is the Minister of Infrastructure willing to have the office be open evenings or weekends, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And here we go again. So, you know, we did look at our operations and did extend it. I'm kind of hoping the Member would be a little bit more happier, but wanting more, that's okay.

We are not currently considering the adjustment of hours or days in operation at the Yellowknife motor vehicle issuing office due to the significant financial costs it would require. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

ORAL QUESTION 839-19(2):
EDUCATION LEAVE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for

the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for Human Resources.

Further to my statement today, I'm wondering if the Department of Finance has a clear policy of who can apply and cannot apply for education leave and supports from the GNWT? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WOWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, employees need to have three years of service in order to be eligible for education leave and then beyond that, the more specific conditions are within the collective agreement. So it is done at a departmental level, and anyone who is considering applying should be speaking directly to their supervisor just to confirm that they're eligible and to go through that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if there is an appeals process for those that are denied education leave by their direct supervisors. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's not an appeals process specific to this benefit for employees. Certainly, given that it is certainly part of the collective agreement, if an employee is concerned that it's not being abided by they are encouraged to go and speak to their union representative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, sometimes going to the union can cause a little bit more friction than people are looking for right off the bat. And so I'm hoping that together we can find an alternate solution for staff who want questions and further clarifications. But often the current process means that frontline staff receive far less opportunity for professional development from their colleagues that work in headquarters departments. This is required for nurses who want to gain the experience and the certifications required to work in small remote nursing stations and potentially return to their home communities.

So how does the Department of Finance ensure that outlying factors like nursing shortages in other units or nursing levels in remote health centres are considered within an all-of-government approach to education supports? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly was listening when the Member spoke earlier and gave her Member's statement. I have had my own constituents come to me wanting to do more, wanting to improve their education level, and

continue to contribute as public servants. So while it is -- departments that have to be the ones defining their own needs and defining where they expect to see growth within their own departments and divisions, certainly the Department of Finance can take a role in terms of coordinating what is needed across the government.

So I'll certainly commit to going back to the department and seeing what more we can do to make sure that we are actually doing that to the best of our possible ability.

It comes at a good time, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to give an extremely brief plug.

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework is an opportunity for us to ensure that we are succession planning and succession planning in a way that is made for the North and in the North to ensure that we are having a representative work force. So I actually see some of these questions as dovetailing back into the work that's happening on that front. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. I think there are multiple opportunities here for the government to look at this as a whole rather than silos of divisions within departments within the government so that, really, we can look at how we can work together to accomplish the priorities of not only the 19th Assembly but every Assembly afterwards as a unit. And so I'm wondering if part of that work will be not solely on the Indigenous recruitment framework but also just on GNWT policies as a whole looking at more of a department-wide or even GNWT-wide education leave and funding policy to support all hard-to-fill positions across the entire GNWT. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly am sympathetic to what the Member is saying. I do run up against the fact that anything that's an entitlement specific or in this nature, a benefit, does come within the collective agreement. So always mindful of the role of the Department of Finance and myself as Minister to abide by the collective agreement, not -- never to be seen to be bargaining outside of the collective agreement process, but then wanting to ensure that we are applying access to those benefits equitably and consistently and with that whole-of-government approach. So I do see room for us to improve here, and I see room for this to be a tool within the toolbox of Human Resources that will help all employees. So where that's going to get to, Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will

continue to get questions from the Member to see that I am achieving those goals. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 840-19(2):
COMPANIES UNDER BUSINESS INCENTIVE
POLICY

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question -- actually, I'm just going to have one question for the Minister of ITI, who is also responsible for the procurement review.

One of the recommendations was to review the schedule of grandfathered businesses in the BIP registered businesses. So my question for the Minister is will the Minister remove Walmart as a BIP business? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it was the Member from Yellowknife North who at one time told me we should be looking at the number of employees that a business has before we move too quickly on who to remove or who not to remove. But, Mr. Speaker, I am not in the habit, Mr. Speaker, of making commitments that singles out one particular business or one particular contract or one particular individual. This very much has been part of the review, very much will be part of where this goes next, is to define what is a northern business, who should be a northern business. That's a huge part of making sure that we are keeping the most benefits in all ways possible in the Northwest Territories. And I'll certainly commit to doing that as I have been throughout this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to commission's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 506-19(2):
CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITIES SPECIES AT RISK ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 507-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SPECIES AT RISK
COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 508-19(2):
NWT CUMULATIVE IMPACT MONITORING
PROGRAM 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Conference of Management Authorities Species at Risk Annual Report 2020-2021; Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee Annual Report 2020-2021; and, NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program 2020/21 Annual Report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 509-19(2):
AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE GNWT'S
APPROACH TO THE MINING REGIME FISCAL
REVIEW

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment document entitled, An Economic Analysis of the GNWT's Approach to Mining Regime Fiscal Review.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 510-19(2):
TERRITORIAL BY-ELECTION 2021 MONFWI
OFFICIAL RESULTS REPORTS

In accordance with section 265(1) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, I wish to table the Territorial By-Election 2021 Monfwi Official Results Reports.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

**Notices of Motion for the First Reading of
Bills**

BILL 41, JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, December 2nd, 2021, I will move that Bill 41, Justice Administration Statutes Amendment 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. Bill 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, Committee Report 17-19(2), Committee Report 18-19(2), Committee

Report 19-19(2), Tabled Document 437-19(2), Tabled Document 438-19(2), Tabled Document 439-19(2), and Tabled Document 466-19(2).

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider 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 466-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021; Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act; Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefit Services Pension Plan Act; Bill 33, National Indigenous People's Day Act; Committee Report 17-19(2) Report on the Review of Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act.

Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will have a recess and start with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 438-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. These Supplementary Estimates propose a total decrease of \$109.8 million comprised of the following items:

- Firstly, a decrease of \$113.5 million to adjust infrastructure project cash flows to realign the appropriations with the anticipated project

schedules. This amount is fully offset by appropriations in future cash flows;

- Secondly, \$2.8 million is required for surfaces overlay costs at the Fort Smith airport and \$761,000 is required for airfield electrical replacement costs at the Fort Simpson airport. Both these projects are fully offset by revenues from the federal government; and,
- Finally, \$203,000 is required for the acquisition of three portables to support the renovation of the Colville Lake school.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Members may have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler) Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. On the right, Madam Chair, is Bill MacKay, deputy minister of Finance. And on the left, I have Terence Courtoreille, deputy secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Welcome. I will now open the floor for general comments. Seeing no further general comments, we'll review the supplementary estimates by department.

The committee has agreed to forego general comment on each department. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee has agreed to begin with the review of the Department of Infrastructure. Committee, we will begin on page 6. Questions?

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$17,115,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm furiously trying to flip between various documents here.

In the Minister's opening remarks, she talked about a \$113.5 million negative appropriation, and I guess I've been here six years; I'm not sure I've ever seen a negative appropriation. Maybe once or twice before, but not of \$113 million. So can I just get some more explanation from the Minister on what this is.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in past years, certainly last year, there was concerns raised about the fact that there were carryovers and that the carryovers of course don't come until fairly late in the cycle. So this was an effort to better reflect the work that is in fact ongoing, and so the department asked the Department of Finance asked all departments to make an effort to determine what their actual ongoing projects schedules would be so that projects that are not going to be advanced on this cycle could have their budgets adjusted now rather than having to be a carryover. So instead of seeing it later, what we are seeing is that, indeed, the appropriation is being removed at this stage with a view to lining up in future years when in fact it's expected that the projects will be moving forward and the actual costs are being incurred. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So this money that's being taken out of the current financial year, so this appears before us now as the capital estimates of this \$113 million that's been transferred into the capital estimates for 2022-2023; is that what I hear the Minister saying? Thanks.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, it's not transferred in. It is cash flowed differently, and perhaps, Madam Chair, I'm going to see if in fact Mr. Courtoreille may want to take a stab at explaining that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and good evening. Yes, the Minister's correct that it is a reduction of \$113 million in the 2021-2022, but that amount does not all get reallocated to 2022-2023. It gets reallocated to other future years as well, depending on when departments expect to

incur those capital expenditures. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I always thought you couldn't kind of, like, carry over money from one year to the next. A big chunk of this is probably federal funding. So, like, how many years into the future can you carry this stuff forward before authorization runs out and you got to give the money back to the feds. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I anticipate that that will depend project by project. I'm not sure if we could perhaps give some examples or if the Department of Finance might be able to give some examples. So I -- and certainly, we'd have to come in with some discussions with our -- the federal funders where that is the case. So I'll see if, again, if there's an example perhaps deputy minister might be able to provide.

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

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So all of these transfers are compliant with the federal agreements that they're under. So -- but as for a specific example, I might turn to Mr. Courtoreille to give that, if he can. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And the Member's right, we are only appropriated for one year at a time. So for those amounts that are beyond the 2022-2023 year, those projects would remain kind of in the priority list for future capital estimates and reviewed by the Legislative Assembly. For example, for the projects that are funded by ICEP, we have a three-year rolling forecast for that program, and that's updated every year. And our intentions would be to come forward with recash flowing proposals depending on that three-year forecast for those ICIP programs -- or projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks for that. So beyond that re-cash flowing, are there other, like, carryovers that are taking place? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, you can't say with a hundred percent certainty that there won't still be carryovers from the 2021-2022 infrastructure budget. What we're trying to do is minimize the number of carryovers that do take place on this. So certainly is our -- right now with -- and knowing that the construction season is -- for this year, at least, is drawing to a close or has drawn to a close. So hopefully we're in a position having reviewed this and bringing the negative appropriation, that there won't in fact be carryovers. So it's a different way of looking at the accounting of it that this one is again, our intention and our hope was to be more transparent at this stage rather than simply waiting until later in the cycle to say by the way we didn't spend the money. This is an actual effort to say look, to stay on top of it -- look just to stay on top of it, actually, yeah. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So I guess just so I understand what's happening here now, we're going through each of the departments and parts of departments to show where this money is going to be re-cashflowed out of the current financial year into future years; is that what we're doing going through this supplementary appropriation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

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

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. Well, that's -- I'm a little bit better informed. I'm still concerned with the amount of carryovers or recash flowing, as it's called. What -- what's driving this? Perhaps COVID might be. But is it also our ability to get the money out the door. Do we need more people in the Department of Infrastructure to do contracting? Have we maxed out the contract capacity in the Northwest Territories? What's driving this \$113 million re-cash flow into future years? Thanks, Madam.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thanks, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think the Member's listed certainly some of those factors. It's all the same factors as what drives -- when we bring a carryover forward in the spring. It can be a case where a

project may not have had its approvals in place, a project might not have been able to find contracting, there may have been delays perhaps in design. There's certainly, in the last couple years, have been projects that have been delayed and, you know, due to COVID. You know, for example, the Tulita Health Care Centre was delayed when people weren't able to literally get into the community safely and compliant with concerns around ensuring protection against COVID-19 in a small community. So, you know, and again I think folks will recall we did have a significant number of carryovers as a result of COVID. I think those have started to wane as far as a singular reason. But all of the items that the Member's mentioned are still live and present. But, again, you know, the hope is that by instituting this now and intending to go through with this forward is that departments are all under an obligation to be paying attention as they go forward, budgets are kept more up to date, variances are kept more up to date. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I've been asking probably now for five years if there's a way to categorize carryovers, and now I guess we're calling them re-cashflowing by reasons so that we could then sort of pinpoint what some of the major reasons might be and actually address them and find better ways to actually get the money spent in the year in which it's actually appropriated. So is there any of that kind of tracking done now, because I've been asking for it for five years. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, every department certainly does have to justify if the actuals that they're incurring are significantly different from what's been budgeted. They certainly have to provide an explanation for that. But, again, it's going to be project by project and department by department because there's different reasons. And in fact, some projects have more than one reason why they may be experiencing a delay. So, you know, that matter of going through each one, I'm certainly happy to provide that further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions, comments for this department? Seeing none. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, energy and strategic

initiatives, not previously authorized, \$17,115,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditure, total department, not previously authorized, \$17,158,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee we will now consider the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, negative \$3,087,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So this is an interesting one where we're spending money for portables in Colville Lake, and I'll be the first to admit I've never been Colville Lake but I've heard stories about how unacceptable the school is there. So we're spending money on portables but there's also a negative appropriation of \$740,000 in here for I'm not sure exactly what for the Colville Lake school. So can I get some explanation as what's happening with this money in and money out for Colville Lake school? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Colville Lake school renovation has been delayed somewhat and so as an interim solution, because the school right now is in quite a dire state, I understand that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment are looking to bring three portables in. Some of that work is getting done now, and that's the money that's reflected here. But unfortunately, the procurement process for these portables was somewhat delayed and so a large portion of those efforts is going to be moved into a future year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So the \$740,000 that's been taken out, what was that originally going to be used for, then? Thanks.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, for the detail, perhaps I'll turn it to the deputy minister first and see if we have that detail available. Thank you.

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

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to turn it over to Mr. Courtoreille for the detail on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$740,000 was related to the initial construction of the new school. That construction schedule has been pushed back, and we're re-cashflowing that portion of the budget to a future year when the department expects to incur those expenditures. The \$203,000 highlighted by the Member is for the purchase of portables. Although related to the capital build of the new school, it is not related to the base construction of that new building. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So can we really get three portables for \$203,000 up to Colville Lake? That seems to be a very small number to get three portables to Colville Lake; what's going on here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the majority of the cost is in the current year, in the current draft capital plan that we have actually just been going through in the last couple of weeks. I don't have those total numbers in front of me, but it is significantly more than \$203,000 to get portables up to Colville Lake. So, again, I don't have that in front of me. We've just gone through it here in the last couple of weeks, though. That's where the bulk of it is. If I do recall correctly, I think it's the site design work that needs -- there we are. So, yeah, the beginning of site design and some of the preparation so that when the portables do arrive, they can be put in. The total cost, I believe, Madam Chair, is approximately \$1.7 million. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So when do we actually expect to have some kind of an agreement with the community to actually build a new school? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that's a level of detail I'd have to turn to the Department of ECE for, I think. I'm not sure if Minister Simpson's in a position to speak to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Minister Simpson -- Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I can't give a definitive date. We are approaching this project in a very unique way, and we're working with the community and we are on the community's timeline in many ways. We understand that there needs to be a new school just as they understand there needs to be a school. No one's trying to hold things up. But it's an unpredictable process because we've never been down this path before. So everyone is committed to ensuring we get the work done and get it done in a timely manner, but I don't have a date for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions on this? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And Madam Chair, I'm not sure if the Minister can answer that, but this line of questioning has made me ask what will happen to the portables when the school is built, and is there a commitment to have them returned to the community? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sorry. Can you -- Member --

MS. NOKLEBY: I just corrected myself and said "kept with the community." Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, these portables will continue to be under the ownership of Education, Culture and Employment and no doubt will continue to see much use in the territory. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions. Member for Great Slave? Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditure, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, negative \$3,087,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$3,087,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance on page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, information systems shared services, not previously authorized, negative \$6,200,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So can I get an explanation as to why the mineral administration registry system is being moved out of this department, Finance, into ITI. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the MARS system has to be coordinated with what's happening on the front of the Mineral Resources Act Regulations. That work, of course, is happening over in ITI. The two are really dependant on one another. It is one of those occasions where the technical specifications required for MARS to be successful has to happen in conjunction with what's happening with the MRA regulations so that the one will reflect the other reasonably and that the timing of the two are complementary to one another. So it made, in that sense, the most sense to have the two under the one department and in the department that is leading the work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I did ask some questions earlier in this sitting about as I -- well, okay. I'll just back up. We set up this ISS -- I'm not even going to get the name right, information shared services something or other, within Department of Finance to bring together all the computer IT folks so that there -- in all of those functions and staff were taken out of departments. There was 70 people moved as I remember into Department of Finance to do this work. And I just find this quite remarkable now that we're actually starting to dismantle that and take off this piece back to the Department of ITI. But that's just my observation.

But as I understood, this is where this government sees going towards map staking, and I'd asked the

Minister before about when the public debate, the public engagement was going to happen around map staking. She'd indicated that it had already started and I said, well, I pay pretty close attention to this stuff and I've seen nothing about this. So I'm hoping that the Minister got a bit of an update from her department as to when the policy debate and discussion around map staking is going to start and, yeah, I'll leave to the Minister. Thanks.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, Madam Chair, I do have a lot of information about the Mineral Resources Act and MARS. Of course I didn't bring necessarily my ITI materials. I can say, Madam Chair, there's a lot that's expected to take place in early 2022 on a high level. I was hoping to give a little more detail here, although, as I say, I wasn't necessarily anticipating to be answering the ITI level at that -- at that detail. But right now where we're at is that the Indigenous -- the IGCS, the Indigenous Governance Council, is working at an officials level with officials from ITI on the Mineral Resources Act. That process is in accordance with the protocol that was developed earlier this year with IGC, IGCS, and so if there's been some delay from the Member's perspective, it's not blame, but it's just as a way of explanation that that process took a little longer to get solidified and clarified.

With that underway, the public engagement element of the Mineral Resources Act will be coming forward in 2022. I don't what month. I would say early in 2022, probably not January, but hopefully by February. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, I appreciate that. I'm trying to avoid going into a lot of discussion about map staking, but I think I have to go there a bit.

Look, there's going to be winners and there's going to be losers when we go to map staking. The losers are going to be the small prospectors, people that make claim stakes, expeditors, air charter operations, the claim stakers themselves. Those are going to be the kinds of people that are going to lose by going to map staking. And the ones that are going to win are the environment, quite frankly, because we still require that claimed posts, the trees have to be mowed down in between them. There will probably be a lighter amount of disturbance on the environment. But it gives an advantage to the large companies who can just go out and decide we're going to stake up a huge area

of not even going on the ground. All they have to do is pay some fees.

So that's the kinds of questions you're going to have to deal with. As I say, I think there's going to be winners, there's going to be losers. And then, you know, how do we set the fee structure in a way that doesn't allow big companies just to go out there and tie up everything and never do any work, like under significant discovery licence where they don't have to do any work forever.

So there's a lot of issues in there about who's going to win, who's going to lose. And setting the fees at the right level so that you avoid people tying up land unnecessarily and all of the money that went into the claim staking, should that actually go to government as a way to prevent companies from tying up too much land, or is there a way to try to get that money to flow through into actual exploration work? And how do you adjust the fees in a way to make that happen?

So there's a big amount of policy discussion and debate that has to take place around this. It's not something like you'd just flip a switch and one day you go from claim staking to everybody doing it on a computer through map staking. So any ways, that's my claim, map staking 101.

MR. O'REILLY: Is the Minister aware of all of these issues, and is that the sort of thing that's going to be encompassed in the discussion to help set up this Mineral Administration Registry System? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. And I just want to remind Members that we are doing capital expenditures, not program operations and policies. So if you want to keep focused on the capital expenditures, thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think the Member has well-articulated really the underlying reasons why this particular project moved from being something under ISSS over to the folks who are doing the Mineral Resources Act regulations. It is a complex area. It is an area where there are a number of things to be balanced and sensitivities to ensure that we are achieving the goals of the Mineral Resources Act to provide certainty and stability and clarity and to be a modern act that balances the kinds of -- potentially contentious issues that the Member has quite rightfully pointed out.

I'm mindful of time and don't want to necessarily utilize this as the opportunity to say it, but it's certainly remains my hope, Madam Chair, that the Mineral Resources Act regulations and the MARS

system that goes with it are going to indeed be a modern system and an efficient system and one that will be looked at positively both -- well, by all the different parties who may be looking to the work that we're doing.

So happy to run another briefing on the Mineral Resources Act regulations and/or MARS and/or all of the things, Madam Chair, and perhaps get into more detail at that time. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I know that we're supposed to be talking about the budget here but this is moving something that was in Department of Finance to ITI, and I just want to make sure that the policy debate and discussion that needs to take place around the use of this system is going to get due consideration from the department. So I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I just want to make a short observation on page 8 with number 4.

For the record, I think that the transfer of the records from the Mineral Administration and Registry System to Industry, Tourism and Investment is a good decision. I say that because going through the maze at shared services is sometimes overwhelming, and I think that the NWT should be open for business. We have to be open for business. If we're going to have economic recovery after this pandemic, we have to have an open business policy for business, because anything that trickles down from any of these affects everybody in the Northwest Territories, and I appreciate that it's going to Industry, Tourism and Investment which is less cumbersome. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. And I'll take that as a comment. Any further questions or comments?

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, information system shared services, not previously authorized, negative \$6,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, total department, not

previously authorized, negative \$6,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Health and Social Services on page 9. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$21,361,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$21,361,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 10. Supplementary Estimates, No. 2, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 11.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, negative \$44,513,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can anybody tell me was any work done or is any work going to be done in 2021-2022 with regard to the Frank Channel bridge? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't have the project detail here. Let me see perhaps if Mr. Courtoreille has that available to him.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. After the recommended re-cashflow, there would be \$945,000 left in 2021-2022 for that project. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So less than about a million dollars. What's that actually being spent on, may I ask. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's at a stage of design and the initial permitting, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure and Expenditures), No. 2, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, negative \$44,513,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$45,274,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I'll ask the same question here for the Slave Geological Province Corridor. Was any money expended -- or will any money be expended in the current year, and what is it generally doing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, that project has always been at a stage of planning and with a view towards getting permitting. So just looking at the number here, I do believe some of that has gotten done and some will continue into the -- into the next fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So is any money being spent on this in the current year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: [Audio] Madam Chair. Yes, \$2.8 million was spent in the current. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. And then for the Inuvik Wind Project, it seems to be a really round figure of \$19 million. Is any money being spent in the current year on that project. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me again just turn to -- \$21.4 million, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, I guess I'm getting lost. Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm getting lost in the numbers. So I didn't quite catch the number, and if the Minister could also indicate what it's being spent on. Thanks.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the -- I have the background here. Let me turn this to Mr. Courtoreille. He may have the most recent detail on what -- what's done other the current year, or in the last construction season. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand there's actually components of the wind turbine on site, and the construction of that project is happening this year and being finished in 2022-2023. The majority of the budget is allocated to 2021-2022, and as the Minister mentioned, that's at about \$21.5 million. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was hoping I could just get a little bit more detail on the

money being spent on the Slave Geological Province Corridor. I understand we spent \$2.8 million this year, and we're moving \$6.5 million forward. I get this is -- do we have an estimate of the total cost to get this planning work done? And I believe some of this is also for the potential environmental review. Can I just get a little bit more detail on what we expect the planning and environmental costs to be. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at this point the studies -- there are studies that are being done, geotechnical, the traditional knowledge studies, there's rooting studies. There's certainly also a fairly significant amount of outreach that needs to occur with Indigenous governments and certainly some visioning in terms of how we'll be structuring relationships going forward on the project. So all of that work is underway. It's just that not all necessarily happening within the current fiscal year and so that's where some of the money that's being allocated is being moved into coming years.

The infrastructure acquisition plan that we've just been reviewing would have also included the Slave Geologic project and would have included the chart showing the upcoming year. So I can pull that out, or I can certainly commit to just pointing out where in that document those details are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I understand we got about \$40 to spend on this perhaps from the federal government. I can't remember the portion of that money that was ours. I guess I -- I'm still slightly confused as to the timing of all this and the steps and, you know, I note it's quite easy to just spend a few million dollars on geotechnical for a road that, you know, we need another \$750 million to eventually build, at least. And I know we have some lessons to learn from the Mackenzie Valley Highway of being in environmental assessment for a decade or so.

I'm just hoping the Minister could speak to a little when we would expect to actually be putting in permits and I'll start with that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Department of Infrastructure is lead on this. So for that level of detail, I'll turn it over to Minister Archie, please.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are looking at some wildlife studies, engagement planning. In our next capital, we are asking \$18.8 million and that's for fiscal year 2022-2023, and this is partially federal funding, 75-cent dollars. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'll just ask one more question. Is all this work being done, is it just for phase 1 of the road, is it just the Lockhart Lake, or are we doing environmental assessment and wildlife studies for the potential of the whole project? I'm just trying to get a little more information on how we're approaching the permitting. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Right now the project is as far as Lockhart Lake. Again, I was about to start getting my binder out from the capital estimates. I didn't, I probably should have, but I'll just see if Minister Archie could confirm if my recollection is correct on that, please.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the focus is on phase 1; however, we are collecting information broader where possible. Like, wildlife, I mean, there's a lot of work that needs to come into a major project such as this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One more, which is probably pushing it. I've recognized there's phase 1 and assuming we get over a billion dollars, we'll eventually build a road to Nunavut, and then assuming we get over a billion dollars they'll meet our road, and then if they get another billion, they'll build a port. Do we have any information on whether there's any progress on the Gray's Bay port side of this project? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. That's really pushing it. And I'm not sure if the Member's -- Minister of Finance, did you want to entertain the question?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I mean I'm -- I'm not going to speak on behalf of the

Government of Nunavut. It does so happen that the deputy minister might know something about what was going over there. So in the interest of collaboration, why don't I see if the deputy minister has any information on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister MacKay.

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for the question. The Grays Bay port is I guess not -- I guess at least before the election, it wasn't a major priority for the territorial government in Nunavut. There's been an election since then so maybe that will change. But as the Member suggested, it is fairly fair off in terms of moving ahead. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I quickly Googled, because I remembered there was an announcement recently and there was a loan agreement given to the Kitikmeot Inuit Association for \$7.25 million to work towards the Grays Bay port. So just some information there.

The Minister -- or sorry, the Member for Yellowknife North did take my question, was was it just on the Lockhart portion versus the overall. So not to repeat and to move on as per our conversation, Madam Chair.

My question is even if the business plan for this part of the road doesn't go forward or doesn't indicate that this is sound necessarily, can the Minister speak to the scientific portion of the work that's being done. So I guess, for example -- I mean, this is pushing it a little bit, but considering we're going into a knowledge economy and there is going to be need for a lot of these -- this type of scientific information that is being collected from this road as part of the work to advancing it, is there work being done on sort of that aspect of it? What does the Minister think around the scientific aspects of the investigations regardless of whether they end up in a road or not. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm certainly not speaking as a scientist any more than I am on behalf of the Government of Nunavut. But in terms of the assessments that are taking place, those assessments are environmental assessments and geotechnical assessments and assessments of the terrain, and it is information that does include scientific understanding and scientific study of what is in the area. From the perspective of wanting to determine an appropriate route, but it's one that

certainly adds to our knowledge of the region, certainly adds to our knowledge of the region in a variety of ways, including traditional knowledge of the region being recorded and made available. So there is certainly a positive investment that's taking place in terms of understanding, you know, more about the territory and particularly more about an area where there's very strong indications of potential for, whether it's mineral resources, but also in terms of understanding the other natural resources that are there. So, you know, that is all good news.

Now, obviously, right now, it's coming at a high cost because it's a level of technical assessment that's with the perspective of potentially building a road, but there are, as with other projects and other infrastructure projects, there's other benefits of having more knowledge and more scientific information and data. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate the Minister answering off the cuff there on not quite a financial question.

And it is my understanding that most of that data, and all the data collected in the North, does play into a wider database that can be accessed and used by the government, so always a big fan of spending money on any sort of scientific study.

My question has to do with industry partnerships around the Slave Geologic Province road. While very important we get Indigenous engagement and involvement and even ownership in that road and its operations, has the Minister been approached by anybody to discuss potential cost sharing with industry or any of the mineral players that might be interested in the region? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so, again, the lead on delivering the project and project detail is the Department of Infrastructure. I'm not sure, again, if Minister Archie necessarily has all of her materials with her. I've not been directly approached, but I don't know that I would be necessarily. Again, I think it probably would be Minister Archie who would be the first point of contact.

I can say more from the Department of ITI, there is a lot of interest in general in the region and in being ready and available to be part of what is being envisioned out there.

So for -- and out there the Slave Geologic region. But let me, if I could, I'll check in and see if Minister

Archie has anything she can share at this point. Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, obviously, there is interest -- industry. We have not discussed potential cost sharing to date yet; however, we are sharing some of our information with industry and others. And, you know, being this is the mandate of this Assembly, I do want to make note that Indigenous involvement and support are crucial to the success of this project. There may be many economic opportunities as it move forward. So, you know, we have engaged with some of the Indigenous groups as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. This will just be probably a little bit of a comment. I'm glad to hear, that the Indigenous organizations are being -- and consulted and at the Minister's forefront. I guess I just wanted to point that out or bring up that line of discussion because this is the southern portion of the diamond -- the diamond mines ice road and therefore once -- or the sooner we can get this portion of the road constructed, the potential for the diamond mines to have more longevity and more money to put towards exploration. So just a comment on why I also strongly still support construction of this road. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Any further questions on the Capital Investment Expenditures? Seeing none, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditure), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, negative \$45,274,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure (Capital Investment Expenditures), programs and services not previously authorized, negative \$7,634,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure (Capital Investment Expenditures),

total department not previously authorized, negative \$97,421,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 438-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 155-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – Tabled
DOCUMENT 438-19(2), SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), NO.2, 2021-2022),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. It's kind of hard for me to say this, but I move that consideration of Tabled Document 438-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 438-19(2) be supported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 438-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses. Moving on to the next.

All right, so thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. And Members, we'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 439-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022. These Supplementary Estimates propose a total increase of \$17.2 million, \$16 million of which will be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada. Notable items which are federally funded include:

- \$4.9 million in support of First Nations and Inuit home and community care;
- \$3.2 million to reduce risk in long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- \$2.8 million in support of early learning and childcare programs;
- \$979,000 in support of the Regional Air Transportation Initiative; and,
- \$800,000 to deliver the Tourism Restart Investment Program.

In addition, these supplementary estimates include:

- \$1.2 million to address a budget shortfall in the fire operations suppression division related to the 2021 forest fire season.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair, and I'd be happy to answer questions.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Back again, I have the deputy minister of finance Bill MacKay, and the deputy secretary to the Financial Management Board Terence Courtoreille.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome. I will now open the floor for general comments. Seeing no general comments, we'll review the supplementary estimates by department.

The committee has agreed to forego general comments on each department. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Committee, we will begin on page 4 with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Supplementary Estimate (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early learning and child care, not previously authorized, \$2,769,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see we're spending \$2.7 million on early learning and child care. That's great, and then it's fully offset from the Government of Canada. That's even better.

Can I just get a bit of an explanation of what this fund is and especially in relation to, I see it runs to 2025, in relation to the upcoming childcare fund and agreement we could sign. I just want to understand how, if at all, they work together. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, the Minister of ECE is eager to provide that detail.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we have had an existing deal with the Government of Canada for a number of years. They have been providing us funding for early learning and child care in and around the tune of \$2.5 million a year. We have re-signed that deal recently. And so that is this funding here. And this will be in addition to any funding we receive through the Canada-wide Early Learning Child Care Agreement. And so instead of being rolled up into one single agreement, we have a couple of agreements going at the same time. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, I guess I must have missed the Minister's announcement so glad we've re-signed this deal. I see the deal runs to the 2025. What is the total cost of the deal? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me see if Mr. Courtoreille has that, as I am trying to -- just going to make sure I have the correct numbers. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under this funding agreement, the department would receive \$5.2 million in 2021-2022, and then \$2.7 million approximately every year annually after that for the next four years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay. I would like to know how many of these funds are going to the outlying communities and how much is staying in Yellowknife with that department headquarter.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, again, I don't know if I have that level of detail here. But perhaps the Minister responsible for ECE might have some of that detail available to him. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I don't have that exact level of detail. The way this funding is often distributed is based on the attendance at a childcare centre. So childcare facilities are funded per child and different rates for different ages, and there's also funding for starting up childcare centres. There's funding for enhancing safety aspects of childcare centres. There's all sorts of different funding that can be accessed, and it's not distributed necessarily by region. It's distributed according to where it is needed. But we could probably get some sort of a breakdown for the Member. I don't have that level of detail on hand. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yeah, the budget says 356. And I just wanted to know the total, like how much of that money is going to the outlying communities and how much is staying in -- in the capital? And yes, I would like to see the breakdown of it. And how much is being spent to the administration costs.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we'll certainly endeavor to get that. I mean, again, as the Minister of ECE had said, this isn't funding that gets divided based on region or community. It gets divided dependent upon the nature of the services provided to children. And indeed, you know, if there's more

unlicensed child care, I imagine that would certainly impact what appears to be the amount of funding that might flow. It might not necessarily be reflective entirely of the services because, again, there may be choices being made around why someone might choose to be unlicensed. But we can certainly, I think, work with the Department of ECE to provide some breakdown of where the funds have gone.

Again, noting also that there's likely some changes that happen over the course of years, depending again on what different programs or services are being offered in any one community at any one time.

But anyhow, Madam Chair, again, anticipating that we can provide some of that breakdown here, and we'll commit to doing so.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, for that commitment. Member for Monfwi.

Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early learning and child care, not previously authorized, \$2,769,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, negative \$175,000. Does committee agree? Thank you. Oh, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the first time seeing this. I take it that this means we well, first off, that school boards in Yellowknife used to get their insurance in through Alberta and there was an increase so there was a request that we insure them. I take it that this is what that money is doing. Can I just clarify that we are now paying insurance for the school boards' assets? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, most school facilities in the Northwest Territories are in fact part of the GNWT's general insurance program, and this had been an exception for YK1 and YCS here in Yellowknife because they own their assets. But that is now changing, and those assets are going to be brought in to the GNWT's portfolio. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, sorry. I did not understand that the assets would actually be transferred along with us just covering their insurance.

Can the Minister speak to any changes in how we anticipate funding to go with the assets? I know there's some long-standing contention about what -- when the school board owns an asset, they're responsible to maintenance costs up to a certain amount and then the GNWT is responsible after that amount. Do we expect the Yellowknife school boards to now be not responsible for any of that funding and be treated like all other school boards in regards to their ownership of their assets? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, work was done to confirm with our insurance that the assets don't need to transfer. So the assets are still going to belong to YK1 and YCS. They will not get transferred. It is -- they are being brought into our program. There had been adjustments prior occasions for insurance, and of course that hopefully now in fact, they will be seeing that we'll be able to get a better insurance rate by being under the GNWT's program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No, okay, sorry. I'm glad to hear that the assets are not transferring; we're just covering the insurance. I think this is a win all around, and thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, my questions were similar to the MLA Johnson's. But I guess, then, my question would be why is this being represented as a negative number if it's a cost that we're now incurring? Were we providing funding to them before that we're now not providing, and it's being moved into future years. I guess if the Minister could just explain a bit why it comes in as a negative number. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so the funding that was flowing through the Department of ECE to

cover -- well, to hopefully cover the insurance costs, which it was coming close, if not not covering already, is now going to show up in Finance because Finance is responsible for administering the costs of insurance. So you may well see this number -- well, you will see this number again when we get to the Department of Finance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that, Madam Chair. I guess then I just wonder does insure -- or the legalities of insuring as a third party around an asset that we don't own, does that not then raise other issues that we should be concerned about, or does that cost more; what are the implications of that? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I asked very similar questions when this first came to me. I don't have all the details here. I do know due diligence was conducted. Perhaps I might turn to the deputy minister. He can speak just briefly to the work that was done by the department and by those responsible for our insurance portfolio. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. MACKAY: Madam Chair, so with respect to the Member's question, thank you for that question. So we consulted with risk management unit within Finance in terms of whether this could be done and the government insure a property it doesn't own, and there was also consultations with the insurance companies as well, and they concluded that it wasn't necessary to transfer the assets to the GNWT in order to insure them under the GNWT program.

So assets will remain with the school board, but the insurance will be covered by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate that the GNWT is covering this for the school boards. We, as Yellowknife MLAs, did hear a lot about this being a big concern for them. And I do recognize that \$175,000 is not very much money in the grand scheme of things, but more asking the questions for my own knowledge. So I'm glad to hear that the due diligence was performed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, negative \$175,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,594,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

Committee, we will now consider the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on page 5. Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Does committee agree? Oh, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I recall there's kind of a saying that says we always got to keep some money in the bank because a bad forest fire season can cost us \$50 million, and then we got the sup for \$40 million for fire suppression, and now we're seeing another \$1.2 million in what I don't think was a particularly bad year.

I have a question of how much are we budgeting to kind of keep in reserve for forest fire seasons going forward? And I know this is kind of one of those hard questions where we don't know. But do we have a general average of what we now expect to see every year for fire suppression? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't bring the mains with me either, Madam Chair. But it looks like Minister Thompson might have some information he can offer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So basically we do a 25-year average fires and compare cost. Basically our budget was \$22.5 million. That's where we figured we'd be. Unfortunately, we saw additional fire in BC,

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, which had an impact on our helicopters which means -- so now other costs were driven up. So we did budget for it, but we don't budget for national -- or other provincial ones, and sometimes that has an impact on what we do moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I know there's kind of a long-term average here but I suspect that for the Department of Finance's for future projecting that \$22 million we'll continually be short, and I know there are some other cost drivers in this area. We've been re-negotiating some of our water bomber contracts and helicopter contracts, as the Minister noted.

I guess, is there a plan to revisit that figure, and can the Minister speak to what are some of the other areas driving costs in fire suppression? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one thing is that the last year, in fact, I guess the last two summers won't necessarily be indicative of the future costs, and I say that because there's been some efforts -- there's been an effort to fight more fires in order to ensure that there's -- you know, basically a lower risk is being taken, and that's as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to, you know, prevent the chances if there happen to be an evacuation of a community, the need to minimize the number of firefighters that would have to come in, the need to minimize the number of firefighters that are in small in closely knit quarters in camps. So the strategy was to be much more aggressive in the last two years than what normally would be.

So these won't necessarily again, as I say, be the examples to rely on. That said, I'm certainly taking the point, and I think I would share this with my colleagues, that, you know, climate change is bringing more extreme weather events. That seems to be a fact experienced worldwide. So there was no doubt going to have to be more work done on these estimates. I'm just not sure that the last two years will be the years to use as the examples. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions, comments under this section? Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resource, forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, total department not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance on page 6. Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$175,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Finance, total department, not previously authorized, \$175,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Health and Social Services on page 7. Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$2,064,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary estimate, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, long-term care and continuing care, not previously authorized, \$8,588,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm happy to seeing the half million dollars of completely federal money to support long-term care. I remember when this was announced, there was some this was kind of going on across the country. There were outbreaks in long-term care and so a number of deals were signed. Can I just get a bit of an explanation of what this money has been spent on to mitigate risk in long-term care settings during the pandemic? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm not sure if the

Minister of Health wants to address this in further detail, but I certainly can give a bit of an overview.

There's been increased infection prevention and control measures in long-term settings. And what that means, Madam Chair, is support for some additional positions in the form of licensed practical nurse and a residential care aide. Also increases in the availability and the replacement where needed for medical equipment in long-term care settings. And also work being done on a national scale to ensure there's some standardization of infection prevention and control policies.

So, again, if there's more detail that needed, Madam Chair, then on the next round, I could perhaps turn it to the Minister of Health, but we'll see if that's adequate for now. Thanks.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I mean, perhaps I would like a little more information from the Minister of Health. I get there was also this one-time funding to minimize risk in long-term care, but I'm also curious to the extent this money was spent on making sure that risk is minimized going forward. I know we're not really in the same position as southern jurisdictions with very large private centres, but I'm just kind of curious what the plans are for this \$8.5 million. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, again, Madam Chair, I mean, there's a level of detail that I'm not necessarily going to have operationally. And it may be that we just want to commit to that. But let me see if the Minister of Health is in a position to fill in a bit more of that, please.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any more specific information than the Minister of Finance has. So I can commit to getting that information and bringing it back to the Member.

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

Are there any further questions under this section? All right. So Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, long-term care, continuing care services not previously authorized, \$8,588,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, total department not previously authorized, \$10,652,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 9.

Supplementary Estimate (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$500,000. Does committee agree? Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$800,000. Does committee agree? Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,300,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 10. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$979,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Appropriation Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$979,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice on page 11. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No 2, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, \$316,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, Department of Justice, total department, not previously authorized, \$316,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 439-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 156-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 438-19(2) SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2021-2022,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 439-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2021-2022, be now concluded; and, that Tabled Document 439-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 439-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Members, we will move on to the next supplementary estimate. And we'll just have the witnesses remain. Thank you.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 466-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am here to present Tabled Document 466-19(2), Supplementary

Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021.

These Supplementary Estimates propose an adjustment of \$10.31 million to the authorized long-term borrowing limit established under the Appropriations Act, Operations Expenditures, 2020-2021.

These Supplementary Estimates will ensure the Government of the Northwest Territories is in compliance with the Financial Administration Act by reflecting the borrowing limit for a debt greater than 365 days for the 2020-2021 fiscal year at \$628 million. The change is due to variations in the long-term borrowing requirements that were identified as part of the 2020-2021 year end audit. This variance is largely due to the accounting recognition of project costs for the Tlicho All-Season Road, which differed from amounts originally forecasted.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. I'm happy to take any questions the Members may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor for general comments. Seeing no general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department.

The committee has agreed to forego general comments on each department. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

Committee, we will begin on page 3 with the Department of Finance. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, total government borrowing authorization, proposed adjustment, \$10,031,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I can just get the Minister of -- I guess I don't have a lot of issue with adding \$10 million more to our massive debt, but I see here that the total government borrowing is \$1.19 - I'm going to call it just \$1.2 billion. I actually thought we were higher than that because I know we were approaching the \$1.3 billion cap, and now we got extended to \$1.8 billion.

But I can just clarify that by the end of this fiscal, this is what that borrowing limit actually is; there's not some other number that it's different from the imposed cap. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, the federally

imposed borrowing limit does not change. This is a change to the actual long-term debt that was taken on in the 2020-2021 year but did not actually have a -- an impact on the total debt that -- that was there. It was just that this -- this amount went over on the long-term debt. I'm sure there's more questions coming, Madam Chair. I'll stop there.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, can the Minister give me an update on how much room is left then in our cap; how much more money could we borrow. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think Mr. Courtoreille's going to be faster at doing the math than me in terms of taking our \$1.8 billion and then reducing from what the actuals are here. So I'll turn it to him, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Courtoreille, can tell us how much money we have.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the Member's questions, this doesn't impact the approved borrowing plan for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. And that borrowing plan is estimated at just under \$1.5 billion relative to the \$1.8 billion limit that is imposed by the federal government. Thank you, ma'am.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the fact that I needed to click here. We are adjusting what was done in 2021, we have already approved the main estimates which get us to \$1.5 billion. That's adding another \$300 million, leaving us about \$300 million in our debt cap. I believe I just stated that correctly.

Can I just get an update from the Minister of Finance? I believe during her budget address, there was talk about unsustainability and that current projections project us hitting our debt cap of \$1.8 billion just at the end of this Assembly. Is that still the case? Does this change any of the projections, or has any changes to the projections occurred? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the adjustments and

forecasting is continually being updated. So if, in fact, there's an increase in revenues again, then that certainly can start to impact our overall situation in terms of what would be required to undertake debt, particularly debt -- particularly, again, if our revenues continue to be lower and expenses continue to be higher. So, you know, the overall situation that the territory is facing hasn't drastically changed since, I think, the fall update that would have been provided, and certainly since the time of budget dialogs, it would have been done this summer.

Right now if there isn't a significant alteration in the overall fiscal situation, I believe we are still, you know, looking at being at or near the borrowing limit by the end of this Assembly or certainly into that first year of the next Assembly.

So, again, that's not changed, but things do change fairly quickly, particularly with COVID, and depending on the extent and the speed of an economic recovery. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So this \$10 million we're being asked to approve for the previous fiscal year, is there any additional borrowing or debt costs associated with this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'll perhaps check in with the deputy minister in a moment. But just -- just briefly, this isn't -- it wasn't an unanticipated amount. What was unanticipated was the timing of it. So -- and largely this is owing to the pace at which the Tlicho All-Season Road was deemed to completion and the timing of when the associated debt to that project would have to come on the books.

So I do want to be clear that it wasn't something unexpected or unanticipated or unplanned for; it was only the timing of it. Seeing on when the timing came through, that is what has brought us back to the Assembly here because of course we approve the borrowing plan in every set of mains. And we approve, you know, not only the total borrowing which also hasn't as I think we've established now have been impacted, but we actually do approve specifically the short term amount and the long term- amount. The long-term amount is what we went over on.

Madam Chair, if I could turn to Mr. MacKay to the deputy minister and just to confirm if in fact there's

some other or additional interest costs that I've not aptly explained. Thank you.

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

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So just to clarify, the short term and long term debt limits were approved by the legislature, and the long term debt limit was approved at \$617 million as it said in there. And as the Minister said, the \$10 million we need to increase that limit was because of the way the TAsR project rolled out. So there was an actual liability that we needed to be made at the end of the year.

Now that \$10 million will go into our long-term debts. So -- and I'll ask Mr. Courtoreille to give a little more detail on that, but it will add to our long-term debt and be rolled in with our other debt carrying costs. So I'll just turn it over to Mr. Courtoreille to explain that a little further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. I think I'm going to pass it back to Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: My time is being gobbled up. I don't want to go to a third person to ask what I thought was a relatively simple question. So I'm going to move on.

So it sounds like the completion of the Ticho All-Season Road was sped up, that we had to start to incur the debt sooner than we had planned for. Is that the case, and what was the original completion date then? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the debt in question was expected to have come in under this current fiscal year and not last fiscal year, and that's what resulted in this. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. What are the annual service payments then going to be for the Ticho All-Season Road, and is part of this over expenditure where we're starting to get into these annual service payments? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have the number on the service payments in front of me, but let me see, Mr. Courtoreille may have that. And Madam Chair, in

my haste, I realize I didn't actually fully explain the last answer.

The change, indeed, was that the costs incurred here that we're dealing with had been forecasted, of course, to be over in this year. So I hope that part is clear. And as for service payments, let me go to Mr. Courtoreille, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have the exact service payment with me, but I can tell you that it's comprised of two components. One is to repay the P3 debt associated with this project, and then the other component of that payment is for the operation and maintenance of the road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I was looking for this information, actually, last night. I think it's probably in the neighbourhood of 8 or \$10 million a year. Does that ballpark figure sound correct? And just a yes or no would be very helpful. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I mean ballpark figure, I'll have to confirm. I don't want to say yes and then have to be on the floor answering for why the numbers are wrong. I'd prefer to be exact. So I'll commit to getting those costs to the Member in terms of what those payments and fees are. What's happened here is that the project was at a stage where the costs needed to be put -- to be booked, and so they were booked, and so now it's just ahead of schedule. It was in one fiscal year when it was expected and planned to be in the next. So not an unexpected cost, nothing new, and nothing adding in a way that we didn't plan for. Just didn't plan on the timing. And, fact, I mean, really, in some ways it's the good news that it's ahead of schedule, not behind.

We will get the exact breakdown of costs to the Member, though. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, whether it was a good thing it was finished ahead of schedule, I guess that's -- perhaps others to weigh in on but certainly yesterday, I discussed how GNWT, in my view, has not completed a number of environmental management and wildlife-related plans in connection with the road opening that's

happening today because it sounds like now the project was sped up. So that extra time that could have been spent on building this, stretching it out a bit a longer, would have allowed for maybe some of that work to get approved. So maybe I can get an answer as to why the project was sped up. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think was already the subject of a fair bit of discussion between Minister Thompson and the Member already with regards to the project with regards to the work that's underway and/or already completed. I'm not going to restate all the answers that were given by my colleague. I can certainly turn it over to Minister Thompson and have him just speak to what work is outstanding.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Back to the Member. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to rehash that. I asked what I thought was a simple question, Madam Chair. Why was the project sped up? Can I have someone please answer that question. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, again, I'm not sure that I have detail as to the exact month by month or week by week timeline of the project. I can perhaps send this to Mr. Courtoreille who may at least have some breakdown of the variants and would have some understanding of the timing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Tlicho All-Season Road was originally scheduled to be substantially complete today, on November 30th. That date hasn't changed.

To the timing comment that my Minister mentioned earlier, it's really about an accounting recognition of the amount of debt related to that P3 project and adjusting the long-term borrowing limit for the prior fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I guess I'm still trying to understand, then, why was the debt then moved forward into the old here? Is that just

somebody -- an accountant noticed that you had to book it all in the one year rather than another year; I'm just trying to understand this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So because of the fact that the road was able to -- well, again, the end date hasn't changed, but in terms of the timing of when some of the portions of it were complete, my understanding is that as a result of that, payments had to be made, and it was underestimated how quickly some stages of that project would go. When some of them go more quickly, the expenses incurred, the debt is then booked to the books, and that's what -- in doing that final reconciling at the time of doing year end, it was noticed that, in fact, they had exceeded the debt limit as appropriated under the 2021 dates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'm just trying to understand why this was not anticipated at the beginning of this project, why we're now trying to approve extra money for a financial year that's, like, six, eight months over now, ten months over, eight months, whatever. I just don't get why this wasn't planned from the beginning. Thanks, Madam Chair. And if anybody can help me, go for it.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, again, Madam Chair, it's not new money, it's not unanticipated money. It's not unexpected money. There's no new money. There's no new debt. It's the costs of the road and it's the cost of incurring the expenses on the road. What was different was in terms of the timing of when the expenses are showing as having been incurred based on the periodic completion leading up to today, which was always the expected date. And it takes -- there is a lag, you know, there is a lag in terms of when invoice's received. I've come to discover that it's at least a month by the time an invoice is received to the time when it is necessarily reconciled at the Department of Finance. And so it does take some time, and on a major project like this, it takes even longer.

When the final year end was done, that is the point at which they were able to determine that, in fact, as those expenses were being incurred, they had gone over in this fiscal year.

We have to come back -- Madam Chair, this has gone through the auditor general's office. This is an accounting matter. It's one that we've been told is not abnormal; we're not going to be, you know, subject to any sorts of notes. But I do need to bring it back to the Assembly to explain to the Assembly why there needs to be this adjustment. That's what we're trying to do here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, total government borrowing authorization, proposed adjustment, \$10,031,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 466-19(2) Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 157-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION - TABLED
DOCUMENT 466-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES
AND BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 4,
2020-2021,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 466-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 4, 2020-2021, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 466-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 466-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ministers, and thank you to the witnesses appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Members, we will take a short recess, and we'll come back with our bills.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act. I will ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to introduce the bill.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to be here today to discuss Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act.

The development of this bill is the result of swift effort by the Department of Health and Social Services and would not have been possible without the full support of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Madam Chair, the purpose of this bill is two-fold:

First is to ensure that residents continue to have access to life-saving naloxone kits in their communities and from organizations that work directly with residents at risk.

The proposed change will assist in the broader distribution of naloxone kits to non-health care providers and organizations outside of the NWT health system who can then redistribute the kits to residents who are at risk of opioid overdose.

The second purpose of the bill is to ensure that the health and social services system is supported to function efficiently and effectively, which is of particular importance during the current pandemic and our existing state of a public health emergency.

The authorization of electronic prescribing will support clear and secure communications between prescriber and pharmacist and improve patient safety and overall quality of care, increase convenience for dispensing new and refill prescriptions, and decrease risk of errors and liability when compared to handwritten prescriptions at the point of care.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank committee Members for the time they have taken in reviewing and responding to this bill.

I would be pleased to answer any questions Members have. And I have two witnesses to assist me. Thank you.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, can you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, on the left is Kelly Mahoney, director of policy, legislation and communications, and on the right is Christina Duffy from the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 31. Is the committee agreed that there are no comments -- oh, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't anticipate having any questions during the detail, but I would just like to echo the Minister's statements that I'm happy to see this bill coming forward. I think it was great work to get this done so quickly, and to date, the territory has not seen, you know, nearly the level of opiate deaths that many other jurisdictions have had, especially our neighbors in the Yukon are going through a tragedy over there, but I think the more we can make naloxone accessible and make sure is on hand as a harm reduction measure, the better, and we'll eventually save lives. So thank you, the Minister for this.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Any further comments? Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments? We can proceed to the clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1, does committee agree?

---Clauses 1 through 8 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does the committee agree that Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, is now ready for third reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

---Carried

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

Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefit Service Pension Plan Act. I'll ask the Minister of Finance to introduce the bill.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act .

The Northern Employee Benefits Pension Services Pension Plan Act, or NEBS, is a defined benefit pension plan that operates in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. NEBS provides pension services for municipal, local housing authority, and non-profit sectors in both jurisdictions. In 2015, each jurisdiction adopted mirror legislation to formally establish the pension plan.

The NEBS pension plan has been in existence, in one form or another, for over 40 years. Broadly speaking, NEBS pension plan is self-regulating, meaning government provides minimal oversight of the day-to-day operations of the pension plan, and the pension plan is administered by the NEBS Pension Committee for the benefit of plan Members.

This bill is intended to address administrative and regulatory issues that have arisen since the act was proclaimed and to ensure that the legislative framework will support continued growth and management of the NEBS pension plan.

The proposed amendments to the act were developed through an extensive collaborative process involving both the NEBS Board of Directors and the Government of Nunavut.

The proposed amendments under Bill 32 involve four distinct changes:

- First, redefine and name the pension committee as the legal authority responsible for operation and management of the NEBS pension plan;
- Second, changes to the composition of the pension committee to provide more flexibility with respect to the number of Members representing, first, the interest of employers and, second, the interests of individual plan members;
- Third, an expansion of the power that the pension committee has with respect to implementing policies and procedures required for proper administration of the pension plan. The Minister responsible for the Act will also

receive a new power to regulate the scope and reach of the proposed new policies and procedures; and,

- Fourth, a new regulatory power will be provided to the Minister responsible for the Act to approve temporary measures necessary to permit a timely response to a crisis or emergency that could imperil the financial standing of the pension plan and negatively affect the benefit security of its members.

This proposed new power is based on similar provisions contained in the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act.

Finally, these proposed amendments to the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act will not require any consequential amendments to any other GNWT statutes. That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber? Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on the left Deputy Minister, Department of Finance, Bill MacKay. And on the right are legislative drafter, I believe, Sherry Giroque although I guess -- yes, she's nodding at me.. I didn't have her title with me, I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sorry. Could you repeat the last name.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Giroque.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 32. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess, as I understand it, NEBS also operates in Nunavut, and I think the Minister talked about how there was some consultation with Nunavut in preparing the bill. I don't think Nunavut has passed similar legislation and, of course, they had their election not that long ago, but is there any indications from the new government as to what they're doing with their legislation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't have any new updates since the election. Let me see if perhaps there's been some discussions with the officials

level. I'll ask the deputy minister to speak to that, please.

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

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There has not been any discussions, well, as the Member noted, this fell off the order paper and wasn't passed in the last Nunavut government. But NEBS, the NEBS board and officials from NEBS are in contact with officials from Nunavut so I'm sure they'll nudge them to get it back introduced into the legislature there. I'd also add that the plan is to have this legislation come into force at the same time the Nunavut legislation comes into force, and there's provision in the bill which allows for the Commissioner and Executive Council to declare it in force. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions? Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments? We'll proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please return to page 1 of the bill.

Clause one, does committee agree?

---Clauses 1 through 7 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefit Service Pension Plan Act is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 32, an Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefit Service Pension Plan Act. Thank you, Ministers, and thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we've agreed to consider Bill 33, National Indigenous People's Day Act. I will ask the Minister of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs to introduce the bill. [Audio] oh, wait.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I'm here to present Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act.

The National Indigenous Peoples Day Act, which is intended to repeal and replace the existing National Aboriginal Day Act which came into force in 2002.

In this bill, the term "Aboriginal" is being replaced with the term "Indigenous Peoples", which is more inclusive and is also consistent with federal and internal naming conventions.

This proposed bill is intended to honor and celebrate the culture and achievements of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people of Canada as well as the Dene, Metis, and Inuvialuit people of the Northwest Territories and recognizes June 21st each year as National Indigenous Peoples Day which is celebrated in the Northwest Territories as a statutory holiday.

June 21st was chosen as the date of this national celebration due to significance of the summer solstice when many Indigenous people have historically celebrated their culture and heritage.

As part of the legislative amendment process, notice of the proposed changes were made to Indigenous governments with an opportunity to provide feedback.

Should the proposed amendments be approved, coincidental amendments would also be made to the legislation, including the Employment Standards Act, the Public Service Act, and the Interpretation Act.

That concludes my opening remarks, and I'm prepared to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber? Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, Madam Premier, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. Madam Chair, I have Christina Duffy -- raise your hand -- director of legislation division, and Ms. Lauren Alexandra is the director of shared corporate services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 33. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just want to say that I'm very supportive of this bill. The first time I ever thought about what the meaning of the word "aboriginal" could mean was at a Pathfinder meeting, which is a division of Girl Guides, when one of the Girl Guides or the Pathfinders turned to me and asked why the

holiday was called Aboriginal Day when AB means not and therefore it meant not aboriginal. So in her mind, already at that age, she knew that the -- that the wording was wrong and she couldn't understand it. So I'm happy to sit here today and see during my term that this is changing, and I can go back to her now at 18 and tell her we've changed it legally. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I support this bill as well. I think as an Indigenous person, and you know, I've got to speak up to this, you know, to this change. It's important that, you know, Indigenous people have a day that, you know, we can celebrate, and we do have a lot to celebrate. And I know that in the last day everybody -- or the last time everybody thought we were supposed to have a holiday, and we were wondering why we didn't. But we had one anyway. So no, it's important, and, you know, there we've got culture. The other day I talked about, you know, moose hide. Like, you know, it just goes on and on, and it's the little things and it brings people together, and, yeah, lots of interaction, lots of storytelling, and, you know, if we don't do anything, we don't do that celebration, and we need -- we need to keep in the forefront as well because, you know, as claims gets settled throughout Canada and the Northwest Territories, we Indigenous people need to know that, you know, that we're taken seriously and that a good change is coming and, you know, we look forward to the time when, you know, that we are 51 percent hires in the Northwest Territories government, and when our children are educated and meet the standards that are met in the territories, so we've got lots to look for; we've got lots to celebrate, and we got a very resilient and strong past. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Any further general comments to Bill 33? Is committee agreed that there are no further general comments? Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1, does committee agree?

---Clauses 1 through 5 inclusive approved

Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 33, National Indigenous Peoples Day Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Carried

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

Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 17-19(2), report on the review of Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our report was previously read into the record so I don't have any substantive comments to add to the report; however, individual Members may have comments on the report and its recommendations. I'd just like to thank the committee for their commitment and hard work on this report.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Committee Report 17-19(2), Report on the Review of Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. Questions, comments? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Madam Chair. And as the Member for Yellowknife North said, we did already read an extensive report into the House but I just wanted to start off by saying thank you to the Member who did bring this bill forward, and while committee did not reach consensus on a path forward, I do agree that the Member did bring forward a bill for the purpose of fixing a substantial issue in the Northwest Territories, and that relates back to everyone having the right to safe and secure housing and being able to have a warm house at that. And so I think that the issues that are brought up by the Member for Nunakput are very important ones that need to be addressed, and so I look forward to the response from the government. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I sat in on the committee hearing and some of the deliberations that they had on the private Member's bill. I think it's probably fair to -- well, let me start by saying up until two or three years ago, I didn't even know what a limiter was. So a little bit of privilege I guess there. But I was very surprised to learn that we -- these things were here in the Northwest Territories and that people sort of had to live with

this reality of if they go into arrears, utility can install a limiter that turns their power on for 15 minutes and then turns it off for 15 minutes. And I don't know how people live with that. So I guess I have some sympathy with getting rid of limiters, but limiters are really the symptom of a deeper problem, and it really relates to housing, but also I think poor communications from the utilities themselves. I guess I think that the Public Utilities Board, can't really tell them what to do, but might provide some clearer direction in that area as well. And just did a complete disconnect between income assistance and public housing as well.

In the last Assembly, we went through a -- well, not that I supported it -- a fairly extensive cost cutting exercise. And one of the things that I recall, and I may not get all of the details right, but the Housing Corporation was providing subsidized power rates in public housing units, and what happened was that they wanted to try to I think get rid of some of those expenses, so to speak, but they also wanted tenants to become more energy-conservation friendly, I guess is a nice way to put it, in terms of energy consumption in their units.

So we made a move to get rid of the subsidized power in public housing and shift the burden to the residents, the public housing tenants themselves, which I think has probably resulted in some increase in arrears in utility and the use of limiters now. So sometimes cutting costs has some pretty unintended consequences or things that we may not foresee.

So in any event, I don't think that the bill resolves the underlying problems, and think committee was struggling with a way to try to do that and came up with, I think, some good recommendations to try to deal with this issue that does, really, come down to poverty and housing. And I want to commend the committee for the work on it.

Also did some looking at other jurisdictions, and I came up with some ideas, and I think you'll see those reflected in the recommendations that came forward in the committee's report. So I want to commend the committee for doing a lot of hard work and trying to think this through, and I think they've come up with some good recommendations. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too wanted to thank the committee for this work. My heart says to support the removal of limiters, but then when the fiscal realities come in and you know, the counterpoints are made, it's hard to make the decision one way or the other. So I do really

appreciate the committee focusing on the state of the homes.

As I've lived longer and longer in the North and become more aware as an engineer and in the course work I've taken, I realize how poorly our homes are equipped in the North and our buildings are equipped in the North to deal with our extreme climate. So I did think that was a really key point, that we are, you know, punishing people where they need to have their oven on because they don't have the heating in their unit's not working properly. So I'm assuming that it costs a lot more to run that oven than maybe to do the power. So, yeah, I just wanted to say again I thank you, the committee, for their hard work, and I do agree with the recommendations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Any further comments? Seeing no comments. Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 158-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-29(3): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT – REVIEW OF
ELECTRICITY COSTS FOR INCOME
ASSISTANCE CLIENTS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to address potential barriers that can cause higher electricity bills for people on income assistance in housing units.

Madam Chair, this should include reviewing the 2018 policy change that transferred more responsibility for electricity consumption from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to tenants; and, whether this change resulted in increased income assistance from Education, Culture and Employment or an increased number of customers in arrears on their power bills and the value of those arrears. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just reminded me that there was one other factor that I think led to the 2018 policy change that's highlighted in this recommendation, and that's the fact that the Housing Corporation was paying corporate rates for electricity as opposed to residential rates and the corporate rates, I think, are, like, two -- I might not even get the right number, but it's two or three times higher than what residential rates were. So, again, this was about

trying to cut the Housing Corporation costs in some measure. So that was the other thing that was driving this, was the different rates that have been set, which probably need another look. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 159-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT – CONDITION OF
HOUSING UNITS AND HEATING METHODS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation ensure that all its housing units have fit for habitation such that tenants are not forced to reserve -- resort to improvised methods to regulate the temperature of their homes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 160-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT – FEDERAL ENERGY
EFFICIENCY STANDARDS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Northwest Territories 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. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 161-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23: AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT - CUSTOMER CRISIS
FUND,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee 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 modelled after BC's Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund to provide grant payments to residential customers experiencing a temporary financial crisis and who have fallen into arrears. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: To the mover.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I think committee received a lot of concerns that in order to get rid of power limiters, that was a tool that the utilities did not have to collect, and then further arrears would then be passed on to ratepayers. And in many ways, this recommendation that everybody preemptively get an extra charge on their bill for a customer crisis fund just to create some transparency to if you have arrears, ratepayers are going to pay for them anyway so why don't we provide some guidance and a clear way, path forward, that if someone lost their job or is in a very -- a crisis state they could apply to get a grant. And I think this is the cleanest way to do it, to make sure we know exactly who is falling into arrears and when we can help them as opposed to the current state which is some people have massive arrears and deficits on their power bill which ultimately are being passed on to ratepayers.

So I do support this recommendation. I expect it also may get some pushback when people see a

little crisis fund on all of their bills, but I think preemptively, this is the best way to solve the problem. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I support this recommendation as well. And I just want to highlight the recommendation calls for the Public Utilities Board to work with the two utilities here. You know, I don't know exactly what the Public Utilities Board does, but as I understand it, the Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board or Cabinet could issuing binding policy direction to set up this crisis fund. And I think that's something that I'd want my colleagues across the way to think about. And of course, you're going to respond to this if it passes, and -- but you have the ability to issue that binding policy direction.

The concept of this is really not that much different than 911, you know, in that people do pay an extra bit on your phone bills to support 911. And this would help people that need help.

So the other example I would use is, at least in Yellowknife, we pay a little surcharge on our water bills so that if there's a break between the foundation of your home and the main line in the middle of the street, it gets covered. There's a deductible amount but it's a similar kind of concept.

So this is not breaking new ground by any measure, even here in the Northwest Territories. And also, again, I want to urge my Cabinet colleagues to consider issuing binding policy direction on this when it passes. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 162-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT IMPROVED CUSTOMER
COMMUNICATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland Utilities with oversight, 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:

- eligibility for the income assistance program and how policy changes or new benefit programs like the Canada Recovery Benefit may impact customer eligibility;
- The terms and conditions of service documents regarding details on the types and minimum timeframes of notices that NTPC may send to customers;
- The type and operation of power limiters, and, customer payment options.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 163-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON BILL 23, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT - GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 17-

19(2) Report on the Review of Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 17-19(2), Report on the Review of Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. Member for Frame Lake.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sorry. My brain. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favor? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

---Carried.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Documents 438, 439, and 466; Bills 31, 32, and 33; Committee Reports 17-19(2), and would like to report progress with nine motions adopted, and Committee Report 17-19(2) is concluded, and that Bills 31, 32, and 33 are ready for third reading, and that consideration of Tabled Documents 438, 439, 466 are concluded and that the House concur on those estimates and and that appropriation bills to be based thereon to be introduced without delay.

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 Inuvik Boot Lake. All those in favor? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

----Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 36:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE TERRITORIAL COURT
ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 36, an Act to Amend to the Territorial Court Act be read for the third time, and Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Member for Hay River North. The Member for Thebacha. 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 Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favor, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

--- Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, December 1st, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Return to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address

11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committee
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23 An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 24 An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Bill 29 Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Bill 30 An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act
 - Committee Report 18-19(2) Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 24: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Committee Report 19-19(2) Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 29: Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Tabled Document 437-19(2) Capital Estimates 2022-2023

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 31 An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act
- Bill 32 An Act to Amend the Northern Employees Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
- Bill 33 National Indigenous Peoples Day Act

23. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:21 p.m.