



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 110

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Pages 4163 - 4204

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Diane Archie

(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Infrastructure
Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge

(Deh Cho)

Ms. Caitlin Cleveland

(Kam Lake)

Hon. Paulie Chinna

(Sahtu)
Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for Homelessness
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat

Mr. Richard Edjericon

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Hon. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Mr. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Mr. Rylund Johnson

(Yellowknife North)

Ms. Frieda Martselos

(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby

(Great Slave)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson

(Hay River South)

Hon. R.J. Simpson

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

Hon. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for Youth

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Finance
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong

(Monfwi)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerks

Mr. Glen Rutland
Ms. Kim Wickens

Committee Clerks

Mr. Michael Ball
Ms. Jennifer Franki-Smith
Ms. Cynthia James

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Mr. Toby Kruger

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER.....	4163
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS.....	4163
Seasonal Time Change Engagement (R.J. Simpson)	4163
Preparing for Flooding and Emergencies (Thompson)	4163
New Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Name and Identity (Chinna)	4164
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	4165
Mobile Core Bathurst Caribou Management Zome (Weyallon-Armstrong)	4165
Salt River First Nation Treaty Land and Entitlement (Martselos).....	4165
Changes to Canada Infrastructure Bank (O'Reilly).....	4167
Recruitment and Retention of Health Care Professionals (Rocky Simpson).....	4167
Cheetah Resources' Nachalacho Project (Nokleby).....	4168
Increasing Immigration to the Northwest Territories (Cleveland).....	4169
Universal Child Care Implementation (Johson)	4169
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	4170
ORAL QUESTIONS	4170
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS.....	4182
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	4183
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	4191
SECOND READING OF BILLS	4192
Bill 48 – Arbitration Act	4192
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	4193
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	4202
ORDERS OF THE DAY	4202

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 30, 2022****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 237-19(2):
SEASONAL TIME CHANGE ENGAGEMENT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, twice a year we all adjust our clocks by one hour. First, we move them forward, and then we move them back. People have always questioned the wisdom of this annual tradition but in recent years a number of jurisdictions have taken concrete steps towards eliminating seasonal time change.

On Monday, April 4th, the Government of the Northwest Territories will begin a six-week public engagement to help us determine when and how we will eliminate seasonal time changes. The public engagement will invite residents to share their views on seasonal time change through an online survey. The survey, which is anonymous and only takes about five minutes to complete, will ask residents whether they want to continue changing their clocks twice a year, or if they would prefer to permanently stick with daylight saving time or standard time. We will also reach out directly to key stakeholders and partners including Indigenous governments, community governments, relevant businesses, and non-governmental organizations.

The results of the survey and the feedback we receive will be compiled in a "What We Heard" report that we anticipate releasing publicly later this year. This information, along with developments in other jurisdictions, will help us determine the best path forward for the NWT.

I encourage all Members of this House and residents to complete the survey to ensure their views are taken into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 238-19(2):
PREPARING FOR FLOODING AND
EMERGENCIES

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the flood of 2021 was extraordinary, and they caused life-altering hardships for so many residents, families, and communities. I am very pleased to advise that the majority of these who were impacted are now in their homes.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and effort of the local leadership in the flooded-affected communities. It has been nearly a year since the flooding took place, and during that time leaders have been carrying out the day-to-day business of running the community government while also being shouldered with the aftermath of the flood.

This government thanks you for your efforts and your resilience. As the ice broke on the Mackenzie River and Little Buffalo River last spring, residents in several small communities witnessed the devastation as the water and ice conditions to rise and destroy or damage homes, businesses, and community infrastructure throughout the South Slave and Deh Cho regions.

As communities in the South Slave and Deh Cho region were flooding, communities to the north were able to learn in real time from their neighbors and implement response measures that helped to reduce the damage caused by these floods.

In total, the GNWT has addressed approximately 140 structures owned by private residents, small businesses, non-government organizations, and community

governments - either damaged or destroyed. We have processed disaster assistance claims from impacted residents and organizations which has helped repair and replace some of those that have been lost.

The challenges caused by these floods are beyond what the Northwest Territories has experienced in the past and our government met these challenges with extraordinary and unprecedented recovery measures. We took a centralized approach to support the recovery efforts, which allowed the GNWT to cover the repairs or replacement costs of homes. To manage those massive repair and rebuilding efforts, the GNWT coordinated contractors to complete 28 repairs, 18 home replacements in Jean Marie River, Fort Simpson, Little Buffalo, and Fort Good Hope. The total cost to the GNWT was approximately \$39 million.

Work is underway to change how the GNWT undertakes disaster recovery work and how we provide disaster assistance in the future. We are conducting an after-action assessment of the 2021 flood response.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned many valuable lessons over the last year, and those lessons are helping us prepare as we must turn our attention to this year's flood season. With spring breakup coming soon, so too is the risk of more flooding in many NWT communities. No matter the water level, ice jams can cause flooding at any time. All of us, from individuals, to families, to businesses, to government, need to be ready for the possibility of flood every single year.

Throughout the winter, all emergency management partners have been doing their part to prepare for this spring. Last summer, community governments have worked hard to prepare for the upcoming flood season. Our government has been supporting this work, and communities are ready and equipped to handle the next emergency no matter when it comes.

Our emergency management staff are working closely with local governments to ensure their emergency plans are up to date. They have offered training to local governments on emergency management and are prepared to jump in and assist should local governments need it.

Mr. Speaker, being ready for emergencies is not just about government. It is about every resident's responsibility to be prepared before an emergency strikes. Our role as government is to ensure that residents understand that risk, are informed about what is happening, and are equipped with the tools that they need to stay

safe and help if they can in the event of an emergency.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is rolling out a social marketing campaign called Be Ready NWT. It will appeal to the community's values and responsibilities we have to each other. It provides us with the information and the tools we need to be ready for any disaster.

We are making significant investment to make sure those messages reach all residents, using a variety of platforms - radio, social media, and newsprint.

Let us all work together to help our constituents be ready as we prepare for the upcoming flood and wildfire season this spring and summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 239-19(2):
NEW NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HOUSING CORPORATION NAME AND
IDENTITY

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise again today to announce the completion of another step in the strategic renewal of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in a few short days, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has been operating in the Northwest Territories for 50 years. In 1972, when the territorial law creating the corporation was passed, a different Prime Minister Trudeau was in Ottawa, and his first child Justin had just been born only a few months earlier. Canadian musician Neil Young was topping the charts with the song Heart of Gold.

Mr. Speaker, although 1972 may have been a good year for music, as I have stated in this House before as a government, we need to change to keep up with the times.

The strategic renewal of the Housing Corporation calls for a review and a refresh of the identity of the Housing Corporation. I am thrilled to stand before you to announce the changes resulting from that work.

First, beginning April 1st, 2022, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be known to the public as Housing NWT. This new name better reflects the new mandate and the commitment to our clients, our partners, and our staff what we are about.

We are not a business in the usual sense. We are part of an integrated social support network.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the visual identity of the corporation will change. The northern lights are an image that all residents are familiar with, and fond of, creating the feeling of connection between this land and the people who occupy it. An image of northern lights will replace the very traditional NWT shield logo surrounded by elements of a house that has represented the corporation since its earliest days.

The new visual identity and name will be implemented on a phased basis beginning April 1st in order to economize on costs.

Mr. Speaker, while we turn a page with this anniversary and the renewal of the Housing Corporation, we should also acknowledge and celebrate its past successes. This is an opportunity to reflect on where the corporation came from, and where it is going in the future.

The list of former board members of the Housing Corporation reads like a short course in the modern history of the Northwest Territories board members that include Nellie Cournoyea, Stephen Kakfwi, and Jim Antoine - all of whom went on to become Cabinet Ministers and Premiers for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in reflecting upon these stories past, Housing NWT will be organizing a series of activities to connect with our employees, past and present, throughout the NWT. I hope that my colleagues in this House will have the opportunity to join in some of these activities and to offer their thoughts and encouragement as we continue with the strategic renewal. I ask the public to stay tuned to print and social media for further details.

Mr. Speaker, these changes to the identity of the corporation and reflections on the past are a small but important symbolic step as we renew the corporation to meet the next 50 years. I look forward to updating the House on further actions in the renewal in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a story of how I first landed or relocated here to the Northwest Territories. I have lived here all my life. I can reflect on the evolving of housing in the North, I can see the effects, and the need for adequate affordable housing.

These terms are political terms but not being, as a Dene woman from Fort Good Hope and in a settled land claim area, I have had the benefit of hearing from elders and previous and current leaders. The message is clear: Listen to the

people and do with respect. Don't let the politics misguide you and remember to look after your people of the North.

Mahsi to the people of the North for the information collected. Mahsi to my colleagues for identifying housing as a Number 1 priority. Mahsi to the staff of the Housing Corporation for their commitment to continue this historical work. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1060-19(2): MOBILE CORE BATHURST CARIBOU MANAGEMENT ZONE

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to do it in my language, Tlicho language, for some and then I am going to do some in English as well. Mr. Speaker [Translation unavailable]

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Monfwi, the audio's not working.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: [Translation unavailable].

I'm going to do this in English now. Mr. Speaker, I have heard many times from elders that every animal has a spirit and it is not good to talk about them all the time. So what I want to share with you today about the caribou is done with great respect.

We have an important relationship with caribou. We have been living with the caribou forever, and they have sustained us. Mr. Speaker, many elders and hunters have said -- have shared with me that it is difficult too maintain this important relationship with the caribou because of the mobile core Bathurst caribou management zone. I've heard from Tlicho people who said they drove by thousands and thousands of caribou before they got outside of the boundary.

ENR is making the boundary so big that there is no caribou outside the boundary.

Mr. Speaker, people are driving long distance and come back home without caribou to provide for their families. This is a hardship for many with the rising price of fuel, cost to maintain a skidoo, and all of the supplies needed to hunt. In the communities, the prices of groceries are so high that many people cannot purchase meat like steak or chicken that is common in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before I appreciate and respect the work of Indigenous governments, elders, and the respected boards on their endless work to protect and conserve the remaining Bathurst and Bluenose caribou in partnership the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

With that said, ENR budget reduction to research on Bathurst and Bluenose caribou does not line up. It doesn't make sense when caribou is considered species at risk and you reduce the research fund. Instead, more money is being put into enforcement to monitor and chase harvester in the tundra.

Mr. Speaker, as previously mentioned by director of lands and culture from Tlicho government, as a society "we need to do our part to preserve the caribou herds. With this in mind, we all have a to work together to take care of caribou." Mr. Speaker, I will have question for Minister of ENR at appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. We were having trouble with the beginning of your statement so maybe what we could do is let you go at the end. I think we did -- we will have the staff contact you to see what was missed. But everything in Tlicho was missed because we're having challenges with our audio with translation so we'll get the staff to contact you and possibly come back to you at the end of Members' statements.

Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1061-19(2):
SALT RIVER FIRST NATION TREATY LAND
AND ENTITLEMENT AGREEMENT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on June 22nd, 2022, in just under three months, it will mark 20 years since the Salt River First Nation Treaty Land Entitlement agreement was signed at a signing ceremony in Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, Salt River First Nation has been very patient in their negotiations with the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories throughout the whole process of their treaty land and entitlement agreement. First of all, it took over a hundred years before the outstanding land provisions in Treaty 8 were finally fulfilled for Salt River. Treaty 8 was signed in June 1899, and the outstanding land provisions of the Salt River were addressed in the 2002 agreement.

Secondly, it has now been 20 years since the Treaty Land Entitlement agreement was signed, yet the agreement has not been fully

implemented by the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, while the signing of the 2002 agreement was an historic occasion, it pains me to say that despite that agreement being signed, Slat River has almost nothing to show for itself in terms of advancing full implementation of the agreement. Despite the signing ceremony in 2002, there are still some sections of the agreement that continue to remain outstanding and have not been settled in subsequent trilateral negotiations with the federal and territorial governments.

For example, it was only just last year in May 2021 that the government -- that Salt River members lived on Indian Affairs' branch lands in Fort Smith were able to finally convert lands they resided on into free simple ownership.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, when this agreement was signed in 2002, all three parties agreed that they would continue negotiating on details around funding for core infrastructure and the development of the Salt River reserve. In fact, specific sections of the 2002 agreement, which remains outstanding, include:

- The impact on the finance and delivery of programs and services, including infrastructure and housing of the Salt River members moving onto reserve.
- The potential cost implications of such options for each party.
- An agreement on cost sharing and implementation of each mutually acceptable option.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Overall, Mr. Speaker, Salt River First Nation wants to receive the same treatment as any other reserve that is south of the 60th parallel. Salt River is one of only two reserves in the NWT. Currently the other reserve gets funding for their operations and maintenance. However, Salt River does not have that same arrangement. I do not want to see anything taken away from the other reserve; I just want to see Salt River receiving the same treatment and on the same footing as other reserves. I will have questions for the Premier later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1062-19(2):
CHANGES TO CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE
BANK

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I love Private Member's bills. I had one successful bill in the last Assembly and another before the House now. They are an important mechanism to advance policy and the public interest when Cabinet will not do so or has other priorities.

As easy as it is here to get a Private Member's bill to the floor, that's not the case in many other places.

I recently became aware of a Private Member's bill before the House of Commons in Ottawa sponsored by the Member, the Member of Parliament for Churchill-Keewatinook-Aski Ms. Niki Ashton, that has a good chance of getting to a Standing Committee.

Bill C-245 would amend the Canada Infrastructure Act to accomplish a number of things in the interest of NWT residents.

The goal of this federally established institution is to invest \$35 billion in priority sectors - public transit, clean power, green infrastructure, broadband, and trade and transportation, including a new target to invest \$1 billion in Indigenous infrastructure across these areas.

However, there are some shortcomings with the existing Canada Infrastructure Act including the following: -

- An overwhelming focus on leveraging private and institutional investment with no explicit priorities or criteria;
- A board without Indigenous or northern representation requirements; and
- Limited public reporting.
- I can say that Bill C-245 fixes most of these issues with three pages of simple amendments. These include:
 - Insertion of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the purpose of the legislation;
 - A clearer set of functional principles for the bank's operation with more a public investment focus;
 - Clear priorities for the Bank including investments in northern and Indigenous communities and projects that are not harmful to the environment;

- A requirement for First Nations, Metis and Inuit membership on the board; and.
- Special annual reports on the implementation of these new priorities.

I will have questions for the Premier on whether Cabinet supports this Private Member's bill and the improvements it will bring to the Canada Infrastructure Bank in the interest of NWT residents. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1063-19(2):
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, our northern health care system has been tested when it comes to recruitment of health care professionals.

For the community of Hay River, the last two years has been difficult when it comes to ensuring permanency of doctors and other health care professionals who provide services our residents have come to expect.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of recruitment and staffing is not unique to Hay River, or the Northwest Territories. It is a Canada-wide issue. Because of staff shortages and burnout, we have relied on current health care and support staff to step up and take on duties beyond those they signed on for. It is important that we recognize that fact and show our gratitude by financially compensating all health care workers appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority continues to actively recruit health care professionals, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, registered nurses, family physicians, and laboratory technicians.

Staffing shortages, driven by a combination of difficulties in recruitment and retention includes:

- disappearing wage gap with southern jurisdictions;
- highly competitive market;
- limited talent available;
- vacancies caused by departures or retirements; and

- changes in worker's priorities and expectations.

Mr. Speaker staffing shortages are, and will continue to be, a reality and it is important to the residents of Hay River that communication continues to be open and transparent when it comes to delays that impact appointments, diagnosis, and treatment.

As staffing levels and services change, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority continues to keep residents informed with optional supports.

Mr. Speaker, by not receiving timely diagnosis and proper treatment, we are placing the residents' health and life at risk. Residents do not want to hear excuses of why we are having difficulty providing service or why we cannot recruit health care workers. They want to know what options are available to them and what will we do to provide access to health care services they desperately require.

Mr. Speaker, the workforce is changing, workers priorities are changing, and demand for health care workers is on the rise. Therefore, it is important this government adapt to that change and find creative ways to recruit professional health care staff that will provide for consistent, timely, and quality health care services to the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1064-19(2):
CHEETAH RESOURCES' NECHALACHO
PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Friday marks the end of two years under a public health emergency in the NWT. As I reflect on this time, I'm struck by how much life and our territory has changed. COVID shifted focus away from the failing economy towards our fragile health care system and the mental health challenges of our residents. It has been a time of great change and now we must use what we have learned to create meaningful change for our territory and kickstart our economy once again.

As global stability worsens, interest increases among developed nations to source ethically mined minerals and resources. China currently monopolizes the market of many critical

minerals identified by Canada as necessary to transition to a green economy - minerals that are key in the production of electric vehicles, cell phones, computers, and fibre optics as well as medical and other scientific devices.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to capitalize on our strong ethical regulatory regime and start raising our profile in the commodities sector. We must ensure that the message is clear: The NWT welcomes mining and we are open for business.

We've heard about Cheetah Resource's Nechalacho Rare Earth Mine, and that for the first time in Canadian history an Indigenous group is mining on their traditional land. This deposit, one of the world's richest, could significantly enhance the socio-economic post-pandemic recovery of the North and sets a shining example of meaningful economic benefit and partnerships for Indigenous people.

The planned Tardiff deposit expansion will more than double Indigenous and northern employment and business opportunities [audio] Cheetah is showing others how to do business right in the North. It is helping to rejuvenate Hay River's transportation hub by utilizing southbound marine, trucking, and rail backhauls, exemplifying what a responsibly sourced, strategic, and independent supply chain can look like.

Cheetah is also leading the way in innovative mining with recent technological improvements that include a low-impact sensor-based sorter, eliminating the need for the chemicals used in traditional mining methods. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, Cheetah is also leading the way in innovative mining with recent technological improvements that include a low impact sensor-based sorter, eliminating the need for the chemicals used in traditional mining methods. It also does not require the use of water and no tailings are produced, vastly reducing the environmental impact of the mine and the need for extensive post-extraction remediation.

Mr. Speaker, Cheetah Resources is exactly the type of responsible corporate citizen that we want to attract to the NWT and foster relationships with such that we can achieve what is a priority of the 19th Assembly - to increase resource exploration and development. And, Mr. Speaker, after a bleak two years, I'm starting to feel some hope that we may actually achieve this. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1065-19(2):
INCREASING IMMIGRATION TO THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, we have arrived at the routine session day where I speak to proactively increasing our population size to achieve our labour market needs and grow the economic potential of our territory. So settle in, friends, as I plant a wish list for immigration.

First is a shift to relationship building that pulls immigration staff out of offices and into our communities through an industry-focused effort to support economic development by supporting unfulfilled NWT staffing needs. Establish an Immigration Advisory Council that serves as an expert panel to recommend improvements to current immigration policies and programs. This advisory council would be co-chaired by the Minister responsible for Immigration.

Second, with those solidified industry relationships, launch an NWT pilot program that speeds up the immigration process by facilitating entry with open work permits and exemption policies that allow newcomers to work for multiple employers without a labour market impact assessment. The Yukon has a pilot program and attributes its immigration success to this flexibility.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program brought over 10,000 new permanent residents to Canada. The Atlantic program was designed to stimulate economic growth and support Canada's Atlantic growth strategy to accelerate growth in Atlantic Canada, and nearly 90 percent of principal applicants could gain permanent residency through this pilot chose to remain in the Atlantic region.

Third, establish relationships with specific international jurisdictions to help fill specific labour needs like health care staff, Mr. Speaker. For example, the Manitoba government recently announced a new initiative to support internationally educated nurses who want to practice in the province. The plan is to add 400 new nursing education seats and financially support the licensure process for internationally educated nurses. This means establishing these relationships and ensuring our system can support the practicum spaces to grow our health care staff.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, building community programs foster relationship building between Northerners and newcomers. For example, the

Manitoba government supports the development and delivery of newcomer community support projects to help newcomers succeed while supporting Manitoba's economic recovery.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the GNWT to proactively increase our population size to achieve our labour market needs and grow the economic potential of our territory. I'm not asking the GNWT to reinvent the wheel. Success has already been designed and achieved in southern provinces and in a sister territory that understands the North is different.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Successful economic recovery for the NWT relies on immigration. This is not a zero sum equation that cancels our needs for education, increased graduation rates, skilled northern workers, housing, and northern procurement. Immigration supports our goals in the face of building up Northerners and our collective vision for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1066-19(2):
UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE
IMPLEMENTATION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is setting itself on a path to implement universal childcare in the next five years in this territory, and we all know how massive of a task that is. It involves hundreds of new spaces. It involves millions of dollars. However, Mr. Speaker, I have to -- I note there will be some growing pains but we have to ensure that in those growing pains, we don't leave anyone behind.

Mr. Speaker, the other day in this House the Minister said they have different motivations when speaking to the difference to describe day home operators as money-making businesses as comparison to the nonprofit centres in the North. And Mr. Speaker, for the last few days, my office has been talking with multiple day home operators who have concern about the implementation of the childcare subsidies in the NWT and the lack of the transparency of the funding going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the day home model is one of the most resilient and most affordable

ways to implement childcare. We know we cannot afford to not have any day homes not sign on. We need all hands on deck if we are truly to accomplish this task of implementing universal childcare.

The people who have chosen the profession of being childcare providers have opened their homes and hearts to the children of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Many of them have become part of the families and the children they care for with relationships lasting well past the day they leave the homes and go to school.

Mr. Speaker, those day home providers want clear direction on how they are supposed to be able to raise fees if they have not done so in years. They have been told that no more than 2.3 percent of an increase will be allowed. Mr. Speaker, the reality is the rate of inflation in Canada is currently 5.7 percent.

We also know that many day home operators have not raised fees in years so there is discrepancy in the market for what different homes are operating.

I am concerned that the department, in the initial stages of rolling this out, may be fiscally restrained but, Mr. Speaker, if we need to find some more money to bring all the day home operators up to a similar rate and allow some exceptions for those rate increases, it's going to help us accomplish this goal in the long run.

I would also like to say that day home providers are not suspect because they want to raise their prices. They are families who have opened their homes to raise our children. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today in the gallery is my partner Janice McKenna, and her eldest brother Peter McKenna from Calgary. I'd like to welcome them to the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my wife Betty and our eldest daughter Chelsea. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Taylor Maxwell who is in the gallery today. She is the Legislative Assembly's newest intern and a resident of Kam Lake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'd like to recognize my mother Betty Lyons and my sister, and middle child Chelsea Simpson.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River north. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, I neglected also to introduce Ms. Jeanette Demerse who is visiting us in the House today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements.

Colleagues, we'll take a short recess. We just got to figure out some things here before we get into oral questions.

---SHORT RECESS

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

[audio unavailable]

QUESTION 1058-19(2):
CHANGES TO CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE
BANK

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: ... the bank and we're looking forward to ensuring their input is considered during project planning as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. In my statement, I outlined the lack of clarity around the purpose, function, and priorities of the Canada Infrastructure Bank which are likely at the root of our inability to access its funding.

Can the Premier tell us what changes her Cabinet would like to see to the Canada Infrastructure Bank? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Realizing that we haven't yet had to take advantage of it, I always say that any kind of bill or program or federal investment that puts a stronger focus on the northern needs of the North, we're always in favour of that. So that's one area that for sure we'd like to do.

But no matter what -- what the outcome of the Bill C-245 comes, we are pleased with our relationship with the federal government so far and the accessibility that we have to the officials with the Canadian Infrastructure Bank. So we're not seeing any issues at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. Of course, I think that there are some changes required with the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and Bill C-245 proposes a compact but focused set of changes to the bank that would clearly benefit residents of the NWT in terms of future funding and a clearer focus on northern priorities.

Has the Premier had an opportunity to review Bill C-245, and is Cabinet prepared to indicate its support to federal parties and authorities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MLA actually across the hall is really good for working with us and providing questions. So yes, I did review the bill just this morning actually once he gave me the questions, in honesty. But in fairness to the Member, the departments have had the bill for a while and had reviewed it, and I'm not meeting with the Private Member that's bringing it forward but the Minister of Finance is meeting with him this week coming up. So looking forward to see those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. Great to hear that we're going to actually reach out and speak to the sponsor. And the over six years I've been a Member, I've never really understood the reluctance of Cabinet to meet and work with federal opposition parties, especially during a minority government, to advance the interests of NWT residents.

Can the Premier tell us whether she has ever met with leaders of any of the federal opposition parties, or their critics, or whether she has any

intention of doing so before the end of this Assembly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've put a really strong focus in this Assembly on building relationships with all governments, federal governments, Indigenous governments, etcetera, municipal governments. So we've really feel that we have a solid, strong, positive relationship with the federal government as it stands today. If there was a time that we needed to, things weren't getting met in NWT; you bet, I'd be the first one knocking on other doors. However, in saying that, when the election was coming up, the federal election, we did send a letter to all of the -- all of the parties to say what would you have for the North. But again, Mr. Speaker, so far we've had a very positive relationship with the federal government, and we are expecting that relationship to continue for the term of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1059-19(2):
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, access to healthcare professionals, family diagnosis and treatment is a paramount to our residents.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health confirm if her department is working on a health recruitment and retention action plan and will it identify why it is that recruitment of professional healthcare workers is proving difficult in the North? Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the Member for highlighting this area. Yes, indeed, we are keen to recruit and retain healthcare professionals. We have developed a health human resources workforce plan, which will be made public next month. It's a three-year plan that looks at a variety of measures to bring -- to bring healthcare professionals to the Northwest Territories and to have them -- to have them live here over the long term.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, I have been successful in persuading my federal colleagues at the FPT health ministers' table to create a national health human resources workforce plan. And so there's work going on in several

front to address this issue, which is not unique to Canada or even the Northwest Territories but is, in fact, a global issue. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm that while waiting on tabling the report, if her department has been considering implementing alternative recruitment methods or providing various incentives to encourage healthcare professionals to move North as it appears that we know that the current system just hasn't been working? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have conducted -- or the nurses association has conducted a couple of surveys to find out why it is that people are not coming here and not staying here. And certainly, we have heard the cost of living here is an issue; separation from family in the south is an issue; the burnout, which we've all heard about in the healthcare professions, is an issue. The labour pool is smaller than it was. And we've also heard that while we have been a generous employer in the past, the gap between what we offer and what's offered in the south has closed in the last few months.

We did, as the Member may know, create a market adjustment policy to target bonuses for hard to recruit professions. We were unsuccessful in having the union buy into that. But we realize that this -- this is an ongoing issue, and we haven't given up on looking at ways to increase compensation as well as try different recruitment methods.

One recruitment method that I'm particularly interested in is the possibility of bringing health human resource workers from Ukraine who may be part of the diaspora that is occurring now, people leaving Ukraine because of the war. We're certainly interested in having them come to the NWT with all their professions, including health human resources. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health confirm what options are available to residents outside Yellowknife who cannot access timely medical services in their home community due to physician or staff shortages? Does Stanton have sufficient staff and beds available to take on patients from other communities? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member say in his statement that our health was at risk, and I would just like to say that, in fact, we have the resources to cope with the health care demand as it exists now, both at Stanton and in the regional centres. We have protocols in place

that enable us to surge with staff and beds to meet the needs of patients and also to assist the telehealth medical professionals in the regional centres and in the health care centres to treat the residents who come their way. So at this point, while our resources are thin, we do believe that we are meeting the demand that is being presented for basic health services. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if medical travel costs would be available to residents who travel with or without a referral to Yellowknife or a southern community to seek appointments not available in their home community due to staff shortages? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had versions of this question recently, and I would like to confirm that medical travel only is paid when the patient has been referred by an NWT-based physician for additional care. And so somebody who decides to jump in their vehicle and drive to Edmonton for a diagnostic or treatment services would be doing so at their own expense. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1060-19(2):
SALT RIVER FIRST NATION TREATY LAND
ENTITLEMENT AGREEMENT

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is party to Appendix C of the Salt River Treaty Land Entitlement claim. That section of the agreement remains outstanding, and trilateral discussions remain ongoing.

Will the Premier commit to working with Salt River and the federal government to address this section of the agreement and ensure that full implementation of a 2002 agreement will be fulfilled and go into full effect? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, the GNWT has been actively working with Salt River and Canada on the implementation of Appendix C. Appendix C requires that all parties establish a trilateral working group to discuss the delivery of programs and services to ensure that the programs are available to all residents, and that includes Salt River First Nation members. So

the trilateral working group meets regularly and discusses areas of concern that the Salt River might have with the implementation, as it relates to the GNWT programs and services. In fact, the official steering committee actually is meeting today at 1:30. So they're probably either in a meeting still or just finishing up. So we'll continue to meet and make sure that the implementation -- it's important that people get fair and equitable services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us what roadblocks have prevented or delayed the Government of the Northwest Territories from fully implementing Appendix C of the Treaty Land Entitlement claim with the Salt River First Nation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping there aren't any roadblocks at this point. I do know that there was contention over it in previous governments in previous years, and maybe even a bit now, about whose responsibility services are on reserve, because reserves have a special category versus self-governments in the NWT. But I think the Member is well aware when she was the Chief, and she brought it to my attention in the last Assembly, and said we've never got a housing program in our reserve since the conception, 50 years Minister Chinna said today. So 48 years then, or something, 46 years. And I have to give credit where credit's due. And so when I heard that, I asked the department why and the Housing Corporation said, because it's a reserve, it belongs on the federal government. But I went to the Premier of the day, Premier Bob McLeod, and I said Premier McLeod, this isn't fair, and he agreed with me, and he said, Minister Cochrane, do what you think is right. So we were the first government, in the last Assembly, to give two housing units, I believe, to Salt River, thanks to the Chief of the day. And that work is still continuing. I believe at this point now we have four that are -- or two more units that are going in for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

As well, we just have a municipal service agreement that's in place to ensure that they get access to municipal services, similar to the community of Fort Smith.

And I think we're just -- if it hasn't been done, I just signed off on an MOU to look at the enforcement issues that Salt River has as well.

So like I said earlier, we believe in equitable and fair access to programs and services and I'll do whatever I can to make sure that happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if she anticipates that full implementation of Appendix C of the Salt River's Treaty Land Entitlement claim will be fulfilled in the life of the 19th Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't like to guarantee anything that I can't make sure happens, but I can guarantee that we have the full intent to make sure that the rights that Appendix C of the Salt River Treaty Land Entitlement claim is fulfilled to the best of the GNWT's ability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, currently Salt River First Nation does not have a yearly operations and maintenance budget for the upkeep of their reserve.

Will the Premier commit to working with Salt River to advocate to the federal government to address this issue and ensure Salt River will receive equal treatment and levels of funding as other reserves across Canada and the NWT do? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame to hear that the reserves in the Northwest Territories do not get treated the same as reserves in the south. It's something I do not believe is fair. I will commit that if Salt River Reserve bring forward their questions, their requests for the federal government in this regard, I will carry that forward, as I've carried forward to other Indigenous governments that I've met at the intergovernmental council table and said, let's work together. Tell us what your asks are for the federal government and if it falls within -- if it's not unethical, immoral or illegal, then we will carry that message forward. So yes, if Salt River brings forward their asks, I will make sure that I carry that ask as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1061-19(2):
DEMAND FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES'
MINERALS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

In my statement, I discussed the fact that China has generally been having a monopoly around some of the critical minerals that we're looking at to go forward in the green economy. Can the Minister speak about whether or not, given the current global situation and China's involvement perhaps with the war in Ukraine, if we're seeing an uptake around interests in our resource sector from perhaps companies that maybe were using China before and maybe now are looking for a more ethical source for their resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I haven't necessarily seen a direct uptake as of this moment although I will certainly say that I'm also keeping an eye on the situation globally and on the demand situation. I expect that we may well start to hear more about this as the coming year unfolds. There certainly have been a lot of changes with respect to -- well, for example, zinc. A lot of attention being paid in the news around critical minerals and metals, around having access to the minerals and metals that are needed for clean energies. And again, certainly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's any great surprise for those who follow the news and articles that a lot of the resources in this area right now are coming from different parts of the world and different countries which, you know, may be facing some significant supply chain issues for a variety of reasons, and that is just one more reason why we are putting ourselves out as being a place that should be the next -- that should be the next place for companies to be coming in and seeing their -- seeing investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister and I are on the same page when it comes to how Canada could capitalize and how the Northwest Territories can capitalize on this situation and improve our economy.

In her response, the Minister brought up one of the minerals, which is zinc. Currently, one of the few projects that we actually have progressing towards an actual mine is the zinc project at the Pine Point being operated by Cisco.

Can the Minister maybe give us a bit of an update on where that project is at through the regulatory process, and do we expect that we will be able to start mining there in time for the predicted peak in 2023 for zinc prices? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we've had the opportunity, in fact, to speak with Cisco, to speak with -- well, with a lot of our advanced projects just recently during -- just recently during the roundup that was occurring. I can say that they are right now doing -- they're undertaking their regulatory process. They are well underway. I understand, in fact, that it's moving along steadily and positively.

And I don't know that they'll be in production, my understanding, by 2023, Mr. Speaker, but it will be within the next two to three -- or I think the next three years, if I have the date correct which, given what's happening worldwide right now, will hopefully still be ample time for them to capitalize on rising zinc prices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, the original 2023 sort of target was definitely pre-pandemic times, and of course, I'm assuming everything has been delayed as a result.

I wanted to just move on and ask the Minister around another project that could potentially be very critical for not only Canada's strategy but also for economic development in the Northwest Territories. Given that the Tlicho All-Season Road is now opened, this does open up an area of resource development around the NICO Mine.

Could the Minister speak to whether or not there has been progress on that project and the development of that? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again more good news on this front as well, that, yes, the NICO Mine certainly will stand to benefit from the existence of the Whati or the Tlicho road. I understand that they're in discussions -- or may, in fact, even have concluded discussions with the Tlicho government with respect to an additional spur road that'll connect them.

And importantly, they've chosen a site in Alberta that will allow them to conduct their own processing. So that, to me, tells a story of multi levels of government all being involved, Tlicho government, our government, and now in Alberta as well and -- which shows, you know, really, that the resources we have here in the North can benefit and make us a place that all of Canada should be paying attention to because they can have benefits that extend beyond our territories but also at the same time, have those important benefits within the territory. So you know, I think this is really an exciting opportunity as well that's one to be paying attention to. I am hopeful that we will

continue to see some good news and that they will, you know -- well, again, I guess maybe I'll stop there. It's a news story, Mr. Speaker, and it's one that is -- it's worth being told because it's being done, you know, again in conversation with Tlicho government as well as our government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I also agree with the Minister around this conversation as well. I think there's so many great opportunities there around that these roads, and I've often spoke about how we need to have roads in order to do anything in our territory and, really, it is a basic need that we are lacking.

This may be slightly not the Minister's area, but maybe the Minister could speak a bit about -- I've talked about linear infrastructure corridors in the past, and one of those would be the transmission line to Whati and whether or not there would be the opportunity to run that along the taser versus across sort of pristine or untouched land.

Can the Minister speak to whether her department or ITI is facilitating or leading discussion around this type of multi department approach?

The reason I ask is that, you know, if we were to run power along the taser and along the highway to get to the taser to begin with, this would allow us to start developing along the highway and along the taser as well as offshoot projects.

So could the Minister speak a little bit to where she sees that going and whether or not she's working with the Department of Infrastructure to facilitate those linear infrastructure corridors? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I'm happy to say that myself and Minister Archie, as the Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Northwest Territories Power Corporation, do meet regularly and are -- the teams of the departments do meet regularly.

It's not only with respect to the taser and Whati and a connection into Whati; this is something that we're looking at on a much larger scale as well with respect to the Taltson, for example, and ensuring that as the Taltson is moving forward that potential projects around the southern half of the -- of the Northwest Territories are connected, that they are connected in with what that project might look

like, that they have MOUs signed and ready with NTPC, Northwest Territories Power Corporation, so that -- and, you know, to ensure that we're moving forward in a way that's going to provide the best possible business case to Taltson but also a good business case for those industries and for these projects. And so that definitely is a role that ITI plays as a pathfinder and that my colleague is playing as we're preparing work on the Taltson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1062-19(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY LEARNING
AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the rollout of our childcare subsidies.

My understanding is that in order for childcare providers to sign on to an agreement, they have to agree to a 2.3 percent cap on a fee increase.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that if the goal is to get to \$10 day, \$10 a day childcare, clearly, our agreements are going to have to put a cap on how much fees can be raised. But I think in a year with record inflation, starting our negotiations at 2.3 percent is putting some day homes in a very difficult position. And I don't know if we want to start year one of a multiyear roll out with such a hard bargaining position.

So my question for the Minister is would he consider increasing that cap to at least be allow -- more aligned with inflation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We -- I've stated before that the increase that is laid out in the contribution agreement is 2.3 percent, and if there are legitimate reasons why a business or a childcare centre needs to increase that, we're happy to have those discussions.

I think that a lot of the concerns that we're hearing are increases of 20 or 30 percent from programs that are already at the top end of what is being charged for childcare. So we are accommodating, but we're not accommodating increases that essentially wipe out a reduction in parent fees. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'm looking for a bit more of a commitment on -- from the Minister and when he says they're happy to have that conversation. I know the 20, 30 percent number can be complicated. In some cases, it's day homes who haven't raised fees in years, and so they're well below their competitors. And in other cases, I'm hearing from, you know, daycares who recently decided to give their staff a living wage, something that we are hoping to roll out in the coming years with the pay grid, but now they're essentially -- they're taking the step themselves, and they're ahead, and they're concerned that the 2.3 percent is putting them in a position to either roll back the living wage or not sign on to the agreement.

So I guess I'm looking to the Minister for a commitment that exceptions will be made for cases where, you know, a day home hasn't raised fees in years or where, you know, someone has taken the step to already do what we want them to do and provide their workers a living wage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I don't have much more to add than what I've just said in that we are going to sit down with providers who are saying that they need to increase their rates and have those discussions. So I guess if that's what commitment that the Member wants, but to say that I'm going to commit to doing these things that are very specific to each individual provider is just something I -- I can't make a commitment to something when I don't know what I'm committing to. But those conversations are happening, and we realize that we want everyone on board.

This is a major shift in how things are done. We are trying to roll this out. We're trying to get money in -- or into the pockets of parents, and it is a learning experience. And so based on the experiences we're having here, we realize that perhaps the plan we have going forward needs to be adjusted.

We have a table with the federal government where we can go back and we can say this has been our experience so far; perhaps we need to move some money around from different places to adjust for the realities that we're facing.

We also have money that we provide to childcare providers from the GNWT, and those programs are all up for -- they've been reviewed, and we're looking to change those so they work better as well.

So there's a lot of room to move, and we want to make sure that we get money in the pockets

of parents and we don't negate those returns that they're supposed to see. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that there is a lot of work to do, and the Minister seems more than willing to have conversations and, you know, find solutions to those exceptions.

I guess I'm hearing from multiple organizations they're getting some conflicting information; they're still not quite sure how much money they will actually get and how it relates to potential fee increases. Some were told on March 24th that if the fee increase happened before end of fiscal before April 1st, that then -- that it wouldn't -- they would not be denied and then later they were told no, no, that 2.3 percent increase still applies.

So I guess I'm looking for clarification from the Minister on is there some sort of deadline of when we're looking backwards at the fee increases and if the day homes or childcare providers are told that if they did it before April 1st, it wasn't going to affect the subsidy, can we honour that commitment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been meetings with all the childcare providers, and they have opportunities to ask those questions. You know, these discussions that we're having are great opportunities for us to find out exactly what the issues are and zero in on those.

And so as, you know, the MLAs have brought additional questions and concerns to me, I bring those to the department, and, in turn, the department then brings -- finds ways to answer those for the programs.

So the best thing to do for a program is to sit down with their early childhood consultant and go over those numbers. And it's not a simple process to determine what, you know, they will be getting. So there is some work that needs to be done, and I know that everyone -- or people often want an answer right now, but there's a bit of work to happen, especially given the magnitude of this undertaking. But I encourage everyone to have those conversations with the early childhood consultants. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1063-19(2):
INCREASING IMMIGRATION TO THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment as the Minister responsible for the nominee program.

The Yukon government set up a dedicated Ukrainian family support desk just recently. It provides information on federal programs to assist with immigration and family reunification, connects employers who would offer employment to Ukrainians arriving in the Yukon, and guides Ukrainians looking for employment opportunities in the Yukon.

Is the Minister willing to set up a similar proactive service supporting immigration efforts to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we have a service desk already. It is not specific to Ukraine, but it can handle the calls and the requests for information. So anyone who wants to contact them by email can contact immigration@gov.nt.ca or by phone at 1-855-440-5450. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the success of the Atlantic, Yukon, and Manitoba pilot programs, is the Minister willing to work with the federal government to establish an NWT pilot program for immigration that allows for labour market assessment exemptions? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And those conversations have begun. I will say that -- that the pandemic has done a couple things. It has really shifted the focus from immigration because no one was coming in for a couple years. So there was very limited thought about travel. But it also highlighted the labour shortages that we have here in the territory. And I think it's actually refocused us now on the need to improve our immigration services and increase the number of people settling in the territory, bringing their services here.

And so we are looking at making some changes. The program that the Member is referencing is -- it was years in the making. It is a substantial amount of effort and time to create such a program. And I would love to say, yeah, we're going to do that, but it's going to take years of work with the federal government to do something like that. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that

things take time, but I think we also have the benefit of the fact that we're not trying to reinvent the wheel, that the Yukon really has already established a program that works well in the North and that it is something that the NWT could potentially take and change to suit the needs of the Northwest Territories and what Northerners here in the NWT want to see. So I hope that the government will continue taking the steps to move that forward.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is given the vital role of -- that immigration has played in economic recovery of other jurisdictions, will the Minister establish an immigration advisory council co-chaired by the Minister himself so that the GNWT can work both with local businesses and those with lived experience in immigration to help improve our immigration processes and also supports for people going through that process so that we can proactively work to increase our population size? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just to be clear about my previous answer, the federal government will make it take years for us to get the program that the Member's talking about. They have processes in place that they take immigration very seriously, and they have a very robust process that does take time. So even to -- we can't just transplant a program from the Yukon. There is a lot involved.

In terms of an immigration advisory council, we're not looking to establish something like that at this time; however, I understand what the Member is getting at. And right now, ECE and ITI are going out and proactively reaching out to -- to businesses and people who are familiar with the Nominee program to find out what we can do to improve the program.

So some of that work is beginning, and we'll see what comes of that. Perhaps there is some sort of a formalized body down the road that can then help us focus our efforts, but that's not what -- something we're looking to establish right now. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the work being done with engagement on the Nominee program will one day lead to just a really long series of yeses for me for the Minister in this House.

My last question actually relates to an answer that was given by the Minister of Health and Social Services earlier today about trying to

work with people coming from the -- for example, the Ukraine in order to access additional health care workers. And similar to that, other jurisdictions have set up MOUs. And a great example is Manitoba has set up an MOU with the Philippines in regards to internationally educated nurses and facilitating that process.

And so I'm wondering if there is an intent with ECE working in conjunction with potentially Health and Social Services to set up MOUs with different countries in order for us to increase our health care workers here in the territory. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're not looking to do something like that right now; however, I will say that I have been involved in meetings with all of the ministers of education from across Canada, and we talk about these exact type of things. So I definitely see the value in it.

And I think that as a government, we have to choose what our focuses are, and we can't do everything. We don't invest as much money in immigration as places like the Yukon do. I'm not sure what their budget is, but I know that it is more, and they have more employers, and they can put more emphasis on this.

And so in the coming years, we're going to have to decide is our labour shortage worthy of having investments in areas like immigration, and if so, then we can perhaps make the program a bit more robust and do a bit more of these initiatives that the Member is speaking of. Thank you.

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

(Audio)

QUESTION 1064-19(2):
INCREASING IMMIGRATION TO THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess just further to my series of questions, I know that -- that we're -- you know, potentially the GNWT is not currently looking into different ways to access immigration, and I understand that there are a lot of different pulls within the government. But one of the things that is very clear is that increasing our population size is the biggest way to increase our revenue source here in the territory. It's -- it's one of the easiest ways to increase our revenue source.

And so having people working at increasing our -- our population size off the side of our -- of

their desk maybe is not the most effective way to go about it. And so further to looking at the Nominee program through community engagement, what other ways is the GNWT working at not just immigration but population growth here in the territory?

And I guess my question maybe -- I don't know if -- direct that at ECE or the Premier. But I think that this is a very important topic and one that requires a little bit more conversation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Member said that she wasn't quite sure who to direct it to. So I appreciate you putting that confidence in me that I could answer the question.

ECE is not a lead on any sort of a population growth strategy; however, we do lead the labour file and recognize there is a significant need for labour in the territory. It really is holding back a number of industries and holding us back from providing the level of service that we want. So there is a lot of effort going into this from the HR standpoint, and I know health is doing work in terms of HR. We are looking at how we can attract more people from outside of Canada to the territory.

And we've been doing that every year. Our numbers have been going up. We made significant gains. So I don't want to say that nothing is happening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the population growth numbers for the territory, we're not a territory that's growing. I know that the Yukon and both Nunavut have seen growth in their territorial population numbers. Here in the NWT, we have not seen the same success.

And while I understand that there are -- there is work, sorry, going on within Health for recruitment, I laid out four different suggestions today as to how we can be very proactive as far as increasing our labour pool, increasing our population here in the territory. And I -- while I understand that we have a very broad spectrum of expectation on what our government does, increasing our revenue source needs to be one of them.

And so if -- if all of the answers I got today generally was we're not really looking at that right now, then -- then where do we go from here as far as proactively growing our territory? Because we need a growth strategy. We need a higher revenue source, and we need a higher

population in order to get that. So what are the next steps? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I agree, we need to grow our population. We need to increase the number of qualified professionals we have here in the territory. And that is why myself and the Minister of ITI have spoken about the immigration file and how we can better combine our efforts. And perhaps that is looking at amalgamating our resources and using them more efficiently. But there is -- I can assure the Member that while I can't just say yes to everything that she asked, I can say that this is a -- we do have a renewed focus on this, and we are moving in the direction that the Member would like to see us move.

Unfortunately, we have 22 priorities here. Immigration was not chosen by this Assembly as a priority, or population growth. So that has resulted in our focus perhaps being on some of the other -- some of the other areas that -- you know, especially me as the Minister of ECE have had to focus on. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Yes, thank you very much for that, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that response. It's one that I'll continue to come back on because although we have 22 priorities, we also have to pay for them. So we have to look at different revenue sources, and people are definitely our greatest resource, and the North is an excellent place to come and set down some roots. So thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So maybe a warning to the next Assembly: Don't ask for 22 different things if you don't have a plan to pay for them, because I agree, we need to focus our priorities; we need to ensure that we can pay for what we want.

All of -- you know, I often hear that we want more of this, we want more of this, more of this. But on the rare occasion, we do hear some suggestions on how we can increase our funds, our revenues. But for the most part, we hear, more, more, more.

So I thank the Member for raising this issue that we do need to -- to raise our revenue, do need to put a greater focus on our economy, on our population, and on our labour force. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1065-19(2):
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT AND THE MOBILE
CORE BATHURST CARIBOU
MANAGEMENT ZONE

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, mahsi. Can you guys hear me? Okay. Mr. Speaker [Translation] speak about caribou -- about caribou. The funding for caribou has been -- it's not as much as it was. And we also know that caribou has been declined, but then we also know a lot of information about why is it the way it is, and -- and with funding -- with funding that is not as much as it used -- used to be to do a research, doing caribou declining, they say.

I'd like to know the answer, and I'd like to have that answer so the [Translation Unavailable].

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Hopefully I get the -- I got the message here. So to be clear, there has been no reduction in the survey. What happened in 2020, we had money in the budget to do the survey for the caribou, and then COVID hit. So then we've been playing catch up. The money that was here that we had in the budget for this year is going into the next years' budgets. We do the survey every two years. So we do the research. We work -- we bring in some of our Indigenous partners to go travelling with us as part of our survey group. So we do the survey.

The money was spent last year. The results are in this year. And so we have the survey done. So we haven't reduced it. It's just that the budget has been moving from year to year because of 2020. So it used to be every second year. Now we're back to '21. So the next one is 2023. So the money will be in the budget for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi, just so you know, there's going to be issues if you're going back and forth. As mentioned earlier, we're having issues with the translation. So I know the Minister -- well, a lot of us didn't hear everything that you just said, but -- just so you know that. Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. Okay, well, that was good. Thank you for the information for the -- to the Minister just provided.

Okay, so that was from last year, and then this year it's different budget. So budget increases have been made to enforcement. And he just said -- he mentioned some there already.

So can the Minister explain the reason for reducing the budget for scientific research while

increasing the budget for enforcement? This is for the enforcement. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we didn't reduce the scientific research funding. It was in 2020, we were doing the research; COVID hit; we weren't able to do the research. So we did it in 2021. So we moved that money from 2020 to 2021. In 2022, the money will be moved to 2023 because every second year, we will do the research on that.

As for the enforcement, all it is is that we've been asked by the Indigenous governments to add an additional camp, which we've done. We now have three camps there, so. And 24/7 to have staff there. So the Indigenous governments have asked us to make sure we have enforcement out there, and we are working with our Indigenous governments to meet the needs to make sure that we follow through on making sure people don't hunt the caribou in the mobile zone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on what many elders and harvester have seen with their own eyes, they feel there is a lot more than 6,200 caribou. Can the Minister explain how herds are counted? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for that detail, I would have asked the Member to give the question to me earlier, but I can try to explain it the best we can. So we do have -- and I believe there was a technical briefing provided by the Wek'eezhii Water and Resources Board with our staff. It -- committee, which was made public.

So we do have airlines -- or we charter aircrafts that we survey it. There's a longitudes and latitude checked. They check on the -- the -- the herd, the calves, and the cows and that in the Bathurst area. And that's how it's corrected -- or calculated.

So there is a map, and it's showed. If the Member wishes to see the map again or another briefing, I'm more than willing to get the staff to meet with her to provide further detail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister's staff confiscate caribou from harvester and later on -- later those charges are dropped or are unproven in court, can the Minister commit to

providing an apology and financial compensations to those harvester? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't make that commitment. There's a process. There's a legal process. Once that process is done, then we can look at each matter moving forward. But right now, we have a process. We need to follow it. We're going through the justice system. And we ensure the meat's not wasted. It's given to other Indigenous governments so that the meat is not being wasted there.

I need to really stress, though, folks, is the herd size is 6,240. That's 1 percent of 1986. So in 1986, we had a huge population. Now we're at 1 percent, 6,240 caribou as from our survey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(Audio)

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 1066-19(2):
INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION
PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make an attempt to ask the questions that I think my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes may be wanting to ask.

On Monday, the Minister of Infrastructure spoke about delays to the Inuvik airport expansion. It's my understanding that that -- those delays are partly due to a cost overrun of \$40 million.

Can the Minister speak to whether or not the GNWT will be on the hook to pay the cost overruns, or will the DND pay for that given that it is a hundred percent dollars for this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very early to tell at this time. Work -- we are working with Canada to substantiate the costs and that they have to go through their own process, which means going through a treasury board to be able to secure additional funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to tell the Minister that we really can't afford \$40 million that we did not have budgeted for this work.

Given that there is such an urge at this moment with arctic sovereignty and the key role that the -- that Inuvik plays in that, can the Minister tell me whether or not it seems favourable that the Government of Canada will accept these costs and if -- and not only that, actually provide further funding for expansion in Inuvik? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right, the -- the work packages have come in significantly over budget, more than the GNWT estimates and more than the third-party estimate that was developed using some information that was collected from regional contractors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak a little bit to the fact that this project hasn't been underway for that long and given that it really only got started in the last year, how did we get to \$40 million in cost overruns without this being flagged prior to now? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the national defence announced in September 2019 that the federal government would provide the GNWT with \$150 million over five years, you know, given some of the circumstances that's happening right now, it has exceeded the proposed budget. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that answered my question. There clearly needs to be a look at investigating how this project got so far over scope or out of budget before it ever was flagged. We should not be at a point where a project is at \$40 million over budget without it raising alarm bells long before that.

I guess my last question, though, is around will we actually save this construction season? Is there a push regardless of who's paying for it to get the trench that my colleague was mentioning on Monday or the critical work that needs to be completed this season -- is there a push and a will from that department to get it done regardless of whether the feds are paying for it or not? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there was a productive meeting held this morning with national -- DND as well as the Indigenous government. So the understanding is the next steps are a technical conversation.

You know, the GNWT is committed working with the joint venture contractors negotiating and evaluating options that will allow for this important project to meet its five-year schedule to be done within the available budget.

I know from my experience, Mr. Speaker, the successful negotiations take two willing parties to have -- to work in mutual respect and trust. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1067-19(2):
INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION
PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my day to be on oral questions, I guess.

With the Minister's comments around -- sorry, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure continuing along this line.

With the comments about there being a mutual conversation that needs to be had, that worries me, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have a lot of capacity in some of our areas to do this type of work, and I'm worried that the department is not going to be able to negotiate with this contractor in good faith in order to get this work done.

Can the Minister speak to what the contingency plan is should they not be able to come to an agreement with the contractor and proceed with them? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you -- sorry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So like I said, my understanding is that the Department of Infrastructure is working with the Indigenous governments to be able to look more at a technical scope in how we move this project forward.

The -- the narrative that this project is behind schedule and that we need to forgo proper planning, project planning, as well as funding and technical review in order to meet the five-year project window is not true. We need to get negotiations done and start the work for these projects that are happening with the -- in partnership with Canada and as well as National Defence. Thanks.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. Now I'm super confused because it is my understanding that if this technical piece of the work, the trench, isn't completed within time, that there will be a delay.

So I'm not sure where this conflicting information is coming from. But can the Minister speak to whether or not if that trench is not dug

this year, can it be dug next year with no delays? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to be clear, I'm not prepared to negotiate this contract at the floor of this House. So I'm going to take notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 37-19(2): USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Return to Written Questions asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 9th, 2022, regarding use of Indigenous languages on official documents.

1. Who sits on the Indigenous Fonts Working Group?

A Terms of Reference for an inter-departmental working group on Indigenous fonts and diacritical marks was approved in early 2020, to advance the work to support GNWT technical solutions for implementation of NWT Official Indigenous Languages on GNWT- issued identity documents. Unfortunately, due to the response to COVID-19 the working group has not met. The working group will be co-chaired the Departments of Health and Social Services and Finance, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Membership on the working group includes representatives from all GNWT departments. The co-chairs met in March 2022 to review the Terms of Reference, and the intent is for the working group to resume in April or May 2022.

2. What GNWT systems will be impacted?

Any information system that requires the individual's official name to be entered into the system, supported by a GNWT-issued foundational identity document, such as a birth certificate, will potentially be impacted. One of the deliverables of the working group is to "assess the upstream and downstream implications of changes to the collection and sharing of information using Indigenous fonts and diacritics for affected programs and services to minimize disruption and impact to clients." This will determine the scope of affected programs, services and associated GNWT systems that will be impacted.

3. What are the technical needs of the Government of the Northwest Territories to see this change?

The working group's assessment of the scope of programs and services that will be impacted to minimize disruption and impacts to clients will be used to then assess technical needs. GNWT staff will review the technical requirements and financial implications of changes to the existing information systems. This will inform the next steps and timelines needed to generate NWT vital statistics documents with Indigenous fonts and diacritics.

4. How are other jurisdictions implementing Indigenous fonts on vital statistics documents?

At this time Indigenous fonts and diacritics have not been implemented on vital statistics documents in any of the provinces or territories. We continue to canvass and connect with other jurisdictions, on an ongoing basis, to be aware of any potential discussions or developments.

5. What impact will this change have on a national level?

The focus has and will continue to be on taking proactive steps to avoid unintended consequences for holders of NWT Vital Statistics documents, which are foundational identity documents. Without a coordinated approach, clients would potentially be adversely impacted when trying to access programs and services at the provincial/territorial, federal and international levels. Potential impacts may include, but are not limited to, access to federal programs such as Canada Child Benefit, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Social Insurance Numbers and Canadian Passports, accessing programs and services in other provinces and territories, transfer and receipt of electronic data with provincial and territorial partners, and impacts to services with banking and financial institutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 27-19(2): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS INTERIM REPORT: WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs is pleased to provide its Interim Report: What we Heard about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements, and commends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, the chair of the committee, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, has asked me to read the executive summary today. But I would like to thank her, and all the members of this committee, for their work.

Executive Summary

On October 29, 2020, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Motion 21-19(2) to establish a Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs. The Assembly tasked the Special Committee to seek and encourage discussion and recommendations on opportunities and challenges in meeting the Assembly's priorities.

The Special Committee began work on December 4, 2020, and has since held 15 hearings. Throughout 2021, Committee heard from legal experts, scholars, researchers, Indigenous governments and nations, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Five public presentations by experts and scholars are available on the Legislative Assembly's YouTube channel. Committee received ten in-camera hearings, including eight from Indigenous governments and organizations, and two from the GNWT.

We are not identifying individual voices in this interim report unless explicitly advised that we can share the information publicly. We respect the confidentiality requirements of ongoing negotiations and the confidentiality commitments of the Indigenous governments and nations.

The report is organized into four chapters summarizing what we have heard so far. Chapter one arranges the information received from experts and scholars and provides an overview of discussions around the

implementation of the Declaration. Chapter two summarizes what we heard about existing key challenges in applying the Declaration in the NWT, and Chapter three encapsulates the key challenges in concluding agreements in the NWT. The final Chapter lists areas for potential future recommendations by the Special Committee.

What We Have Heard about the Declaration

Themes that emerged when Committee listened to experts, scholars and Indigenous governments and organizations reflected many discussions taking place in the Canadian context. These discussions included observing the Declaration as a minimum standard for human rights and as a tool for self-determination. The Declaration was acknowledged as designed to be a global benchmark, while some suggested that it was not intended to be a specific legal instrument to be directly implemented as law.

Discussions about the Declaration

Committee heard implementing the Declaration's Articles should not be seen as the end goal but rather the beginning of the effort.

We heard that challenges arise when aligning the Declaration, an international human rights document, with domestic law. Adopting the Declaration in domestic legislation has been criticized as too vague and noncommittal. It has been described as misleading in that it would make promises that cannot be kept, thereby taking the risk of repeating the cycle of broken promises, particularly promises broken by governments.

Committee heard fundamental disagreement on whether the Declaration is legally binding. It has been pointed out that it is an aspirational document designed to be a global benchmark for Indigenous rights but is not considered law and, therefore, not legally binding.

Others noted that viewing the Declaration as aspirational ignores its intent: to guide action. We learned that customary international law applies directly unless expressly stated otherwise. Human rights treaties must be implemented through domestic legislation either implicitly or explicitly.

We heard that in the NWT, the Declaration might serve different purposes for different nations:

- For those that pursue self-government agreements, the Declaration may serve as a replacement for the GNWT's Core Principles and Objectives.

- Treaty holders may use the Declaration to identify and fill gaps in implementation. Committee heard that modern treaty implementation and self-governance agreements are at a critical point in the NWT, and processes to secure funding will require rethinking to ensure the treaties and the Declaration are fulfilled.
- On the other hand, we heard that the Declaration may distract Modern Treaty holders from continuing treaty implementation and may impede further progress on a path that has seen considerable investment in the past.
- For those without land agreements, the Declaration would allow land rights and self-determination. Nations without land agreements expressed the desire to develop their own mechanisms and processes to move land agreements forward.
- Committee heard that openness is needed toward more progressive and contemporary co-management approaches that include renewable and non-renewable resources. The NWT's co-management institutions have developed from arrangements under modern treaties and may not be a workable model for areas without land agreements or reserve lands.
- Implementation by Law: Scholars have cautioned that confusion could arise if a divergent variety of implementation laws are developed in regions and across the country. Should all provinces, territories, and municipalities develop laws in addition to federal law that makes commitments to the rights of Indigenous people, the question would be how to ensure the process is harmonious. This would likely be more applicable to the Territories than to some of the provinces.
- Co-developing legislation: Committee heard that co-developing legislation is the realization of reconciliation. However, how to arrive at the result of co-development is not entirely clear. For some, past examples of co-development of legislation in the NWT were not sufficiently inclusive and in compliance with the Declaration principles. Others regarded the process used to develop the laws as examples of consent implementation and government collaboration.
- Legislation and Consent: We heard that the core question of the Canadian debate on consultation is whether, or possibly to what extent, consent would be needed to achieved before developing legislation to implement the Declaration which requires consent.

Challenges in Declaration Implementation

- International human rights obligations and domestic law: We heard concerns about the fundamental compatibility of the basic principles of the Declaration with the existing jurisprudence in Canada. Different views exist on the future approach to address the complexity of section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. We also heard about confusion amongst Indigenous rights holders about this section in relation to rights under other laws.
- Options for Implementation: We heard that implementation may be more manageable if the Declaration was broken down into applicable sections. This process would avoid ambiguity, better allow incremental allocation of resources and would put meaning behind each Section with specific mechanisms.
- Consent and Self-determination: Consent has been accepted as a key principle of the Declaration, intended to enable Indigenous self-determination. In discussions about consent, we heard that the principle of free, prior and informed consent, known as FPIC, can be perceived as a vehicle to advance long-term relationships and allow for the coexistence of a plurality of legal orders. Committee was told not to underestimate the role of FPIC in establishing a different and positive relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous segments of society.
- Consent and Consult: Disagreements exist on the achievability of FPIC in relation to rights under the Canadian Constitution Act. And while free prior informed consent is the tool intended to make self-determination happen, tensions exist between efforts of

defining the terms and interpretations of the broader goal of Indigenous participation and protection of rights.

- **Operationalizing Consent:** We also heard how consent could be operationalized through Declaration legislation. Examples of operationalization include creating leadership tables, secretariats, and joint cabinet-Indigenous committees. Other examples include processes outside of Declaration legislation such as modern treaties, the regulatory regime and assessment processes, Indigenous-led assertion and enforcement, or through the courts.
- **Contentious Articles:** Committee heard that several Declaration articles might be contentious in their relationship to the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982. We heard that Articles 26, 32, and 46 have been particularly contentious.
- **Monitoring of implementation:** There are no independent bodies to monitor how governments will perform in implementing and applying the Declaration. It has been said that this will lead to interpretation gaps in implementation.
- **Regional and inherited approaches:** We have heard that some fear that the Declaration may interfere with existing agreements; others pointed out that the Declaration will help realize inherent rights and reconciliation. To understand the situation of Indigenous nations in the NWT, we were told to look at the historic treaties, and the extinguishment of rights and modern land agreements.

We heard that existing representative bodies may not align with current views of authority and self-determination, and existing agreements may not fulfil the views of land rights and self-government.

Challenges in Negotiations

- The slow pace of negotiations due to increasing complexity of agreements, frequent leadership changes, the desire for legal certainty and to be comprehensive, as well as the increasing size of negotiations all raise the challenges.
- **Negotiation mandates:** Indigenous nations perceive themselves as being

stuck in a negotiation structure inherited from the past, with little room to move forward or break out of. The GNWT was described as having been inflexible in the past. All NWT witnesses agreed that governments need to get away from the fixed and predetermined principles at the negotiation table, be more flexible and not change core principles and objectives unilaterally.

- **Competing interests:** Overlap in land use combined with the absence of land agreements, we heard, created an untenable and undesirable situation.
- **Finding a way forward:** Despite, at times, the critical language describing the past and current experiences of negotiations in the NWT, we were inspired by the positive and forward-looking tone used by all witnesses.

We heard a deep sincerity in seeking and finding solutions to the challenges of the status quo. The diversity among NWT Indigenous governments and nations was noted as an opportunity to build on what has proven to already work in the NWT. Examples included existing collaborative models of governance and legislative co-development.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the presenters of the committee and all of the committee members for their work. This is simply the interim report. We look forward to many (audio) and to future recommendations to this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Member for Thebacha, that the remainder of Committee Report 27-19(2) be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 27-19(2) is deemed read and will be printed in Hansard in its entirety.

[Committee Report 27 – 19\(2\): Standing Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Interim Report: What We Heard about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Negotiating Agreements](#)

Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: One moment, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Thebacha that Committee Report 27-19(2): Special Committee on the Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Interim Report: What We Heard about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 27-19(2) has been received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees.
Member for Kam Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 28-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF BILL 39: AN ACT TO AMEND THE POST-
SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its Report on review of Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act and commend it to the House.

INTRODUCTION

Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act (Bill 39) was first introduced by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on November 24, 2021, and then referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

The Department proposed changes to the Northwest Territories' Post-Secondary Education Act that would add details on quality

assurance review, correct errors, and ensure alignment with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Bill 39 proposes changes to:

- Remove a pre-condition to being recognized as an Indigenous institution;
- Allow for the charging of fees and costs related to applications and quality assurance review processes;
- Require a quality assurance review of an application for registration as a private training institution and for a renewal of that registration;
- Clarify the role of a Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committee;
- Give the Minister additional powers concerning the establishment of a committee and standards a committee must follow;
- Allow for regulations to prescribe the quality assurance body to which a particular type of application is referred and to prescribe matters relating to that referral;
- Allow the Minister to order a refund of tuition fees on suspension or revocation of an authorization;
- Require specific Boards or other governing bodies to establish quality assurance processes for programs of study offered by an institution; and,
- Improve the use of consistent language throughout the Act.

The proposed amendments focus on addressing gaps and inconsistencies as identified by the Department when drafting the regulations required for implementing the PSE Act. The Act received assent in August 2019 and is not yet in force.

The main changes proposed by the Standing Committee include:

1. Narrowing the powers of Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees to quality assurance matters.
2. Requiring a minimum of half of the members to Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees to be Indigenous.

3. Increasing consistency within the legislation.

The Standing Committee wishes to thank all those who participated.

WHAT WE HEARD

The Standing Committee held a public engagement period from December 22, 2021, to February 4, 2022, and a public hearing in Yellowknife on March 24, 2022.

The Standing Committee received written submissions from Aurora College, the City of Yellowknife, and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would now like to pass the reading of the report to the MLA for Great Slave. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcoming Bill 39

The PSE Act creates the structure for Post-Secondary education in the NWT and rules Post-Secondary education institutions to support the growth of the territorial Post-Secondary education system. This legislation will become operative once regulations are in place. Post-Secondary education includes universities, colleges and trade and vocational schools.

Aurora College welcomed Bill 39 as the critical piece in transitioning to a polytechnic university. The College is pleased that the changes proposed in Bill 39 do not impact the relationships as they develop according to the Aurora College Transformation Implementation Plan.

The City of Yellowknife expressed support for the updates to the PSE Act because the changes are considered to result in a more clearly written and well-functioning piece of legislation.

Removing Barriers to the Establishment of Indigenous Institutions

Submissions welcomed removing the additional step for the recognition of an Indigenous institution required in the existing legislation. Amendments to the definitions section and Part 3 of the PSE Act removed the condition that an organization must be recognized as a Post-Secondary institution

before it can be recognized as an Indigenous Institution.

Aurora College welcomed the steps to expand the Post-Secondary education system in the NWT, including a new pathway for Indigenous institutions and expressed full support for the relevant changes in Bill 39.

We heard from Aurora College that the organization does not anticipate pursuing recognition as an Indigenous institution under the PSE Act.

The City of Yellowknife supported the removal of barriers to the establishment of Indigenous institutions but felt it could not provide comments because the process will be described in regulations.

Fees and Charges

Submissions welcomed the increase in clarity around fee collection. Aurora College recognized the importance of consistency and clarity around fees and welcomed changes in this area as proposed in Bill 39. The City of Yellowknife supported the amendment of the PSE Act to provide for the collection of fees and charges for quality assurance reviews.

Bill 39 proposes allowing the department to charge fees related to quality assurance processes for Indigenous institutions, universities, degree-granting institutions, colleges, and private training institutions.

The Standing Committee heard the concern that the amendments should be precise on the process for fees and charges. The City of Yellowknife requested an amendment to clarify in all applicable sections that a certain action will be undertaken upon receipt of an application and the prescribed fee.

Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees

Section 7 amends the power of the Minister to establish Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees, provides for Ministerial appointments to these Advisory Committees, and section 66(e) allows the Minister to set regulations regarding the members' qualifications and duties of the Advisory Committees.

The quality assurance process under the PSE Act divides the responsibilities for conducting quality assurance reviews between an internal body and an external body. The external quality assurance body will be external to the Government of the Northwest Territories, reviewing all degree programs, universities and

any institution that wants to deliver a degree program.

Bill 39 proposes that an internal body conducts reviews of vocational and private training institutions and colleges. This review body would be the Advisory Committee which functions as the internal quality assurance body. The Advisory Committee would include departmental staff and other subject matter experts according to regulations on private vocational training, private training institutions, and the act that establishes the college.

In Canada, educational institutions, including colleges, are generally required to review their programs to assure compliance with standards and quality requirements. Provincial legislation or policy would set these requirements. Quality assurance bodies in the Post-Secondary education sector are often review boards, panels or committees set up by departments to assess the program quality of institutions.

The department informed that it is in negotiations with the Campus Alberta Quality Council to be the external review body for NWT's degree programs and university reviews. It is planned that the Alberta Quality Council conduct the quality assurance review for the NWT polytechnic university in fall 2022.

In their submission, Aurora College has no concerns with the revised approach to assigning a quality assurance body through the Alberta Quality Council for degree-granting programs. The college notes that quality assurance requirements for all institutions are essential to maintaining students' and employers' confidence in the quality of credentials obtained in the NWT.

The City of Yellowknife, in its submission, supports clarification of the role and authority of the Post-Secondary Advisory Committee.

Access to Information and Privacy Protection

The Information and Privacy Commissioner raised questions concerning the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees and their relationship to the long-term vision of NWT's Post-Secondary educational institutions and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Commissioner asked whether Post-Secondary institutions are listed as public bodies under ATIPPA, quality assurance bodies are identified as public bodies subject to the ATIPPA, the Advisory Committees' records are subject to ATIPPA, and the scope of duties

of the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees is defined.

The Commissioner also asked that it be considered to determine in advance any limitation to rights of access to the records of the Advisory Committees.

THE STANDING COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATIONS

Removing Barriers to the Establishment of Indigenous Institutions

The department explained that removing the condition to be recognized first as a post-secondary institution before being recognized as an Indigenous institution aligns the legislation with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Articles 13 to 15. The Standing Committee supports the removal of this barrier and understands that this change improves the act, prepares for a Post-Secondary education to have two knowledge streams and supports the Government Mandate by supporting the implementation of the United Nations Declaration

Fees and Charges

The City of Yellowknife requested an amendment to clarify in all applicable sections that a certain action will be undertaken upon receipt of an application and the prescribed fee. The amendment would add the words "and the prescribed application fee" when receipts of applications are issued.

The Standing Committee discussed this technical amendment. While Members understood the intent to clarify that the Minister cannot consider an application until the prescribed application fee has been paid, it's not sure why the requirement would need to be reiterated.

The Standing Committee decided that the preceding subsection 9(1) is sufficient in requiring payment and agreed to not proceed with the proposed amendment.

I would now pass the reading off to my colleague from Hay River South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees

The Standing Committee determined that the description of the creation and functioning of the quality assurance Advisory Committees and assurance bodies in the Post-Secondary Education Act is unclear.

When the PSE Act was created as Bill 48 in the 18th Assembly, our predecessor Standing Committee on Social Development made the following observations regarding Advisory Committees in its report on the Bill:

- That Bill 48 was unclear about the role of the Advisory Committees in the quality assurance process, as was the distinction between the work of an advisory committee and that of a quality assurance body.
- That as appropriate, the Department will use "homegrown" Advisory Committees, including for applications for recognition as an Indigenous institution, and in other instances that may draw on the expertise of quality assurance bodies established elsewhere.

Section 7 allows the Minister to establish more than one advisory committee. Bill 39 ensures the Minister follows regulations when appointing committee members (subsection 7(2)). In the current PSE Act, the Post-Secondary Advisory Committee is intended to provide reviews of Post-Secondary institutions operating in the NWT. However, the Act does not explain the difference between the Post-Secondary Advisory Committee and other quality assurance bodies. For Bill 39, the intent for changes to the language around Advisory Committees was to clarify the role of the Advisory Committee as a quality assurance body for non-degree-granting institutions, with further clarification to be set out in regulations.

Committee posed several questions on the work of the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committee in correspondence with the department and learned that the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees carry out reviews and then advise the Minister after the reviews are complete, as is common practice across Canada. The Advisory Committees will review applications, develop recommendations, advise on findings, seek input from subject matter experts specific to the application under review, compile the information, and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, but have no decision-making authority.

The Department informed the Standing Committee that the Terms of Reference for the

Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees would be completed when the Quality Assurance Regulations are drafted.

The Standing Committee found subsection 7(1)(b) challenging as it was positioned under the topic of quality assurance and did not refer to quality assurance but to administration. This was seen as a disconnect between the intention and what is expressed in the bill. The resulting creation of a very broad decision-making power was a concern for the Standing Committee.

Consequently, the Standing Committee developed Motion 1 to clarify that the focus of the Advisory Committee is on matters of quality assurance. The motion, as set out in Appendix 2, replaces paragraphs 7(1)(b) and (c) and relates both to quality assurance. Motion 1 includes a new subsection 7(2.1) requiring the Minister when appointing members,

to "make a reasonable effort to include members who reflect the unique and diverse values, histories and people of the Northwest Territories".

The Standing Committee had included this exact requirement for the Board of Governors when selecting members of the Indigenous Knowledge-Holders Council. This change was made via motion changing subsection 21(3) in review of Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act. We understand this change as contributing to ensuring consistency in legislation related to the Aurora College transformation toward a polytechnic university.

Affirmative Action

Members of the Standing Committee feel strongly about affirmative action and want to be ensured that Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees have appropriate Indigenous representation. In communication, the Department had maintained that it prefers flexibility in the composition of quality assurance Advisory Committees. We learned that depending on the type of institution applying, the composition of the Advisory Committees could change.

For example, with a review of an aviation school, such Advisory Committee would likely include membership from within and the outside of the GNWT, and likely aviation experts. In addition, the quality assurance process for Indigenous institutions will require an Advisory Committee under section 7 of the PSE Act. It is anticipated that such a committee would have significant Indigenous membership.

To this effect, Standing Committee developed Motion 2 requiring a minimum of Indigenous members to the Advisory Committee. This motion is captured in Appendix 2 and adds 7(2), stating that "at least one-half of the members appointed by the Minister to an Advisory Committee under subsection (2) must be Indigenous residents of the Northwest Territories".

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now pass it over to the Member for Monfwi.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

Access to Information and Privacy Protection

The Information and Privacy Commissioner asked the Standing Committee to clarify whether Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees and their documents would be subject to the Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act (ATIPPA). The Commissioner asked to clarify

- If Post-Secondary institutions are listed as 'public bodies' under ATIPPA
- If quality assurance bodies are identified as 'public bodies' subject to the ATIPPA
- If Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees' records are subject to ATIPPA
- And determine in advance limitations to rights of access
- The scope of duties of Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees.

From the Department, the Standing Committee heard that the quality assurance bodies would not be considered a 'public body' under ATIPPA. Currently, Aurora College is listed as a public body in Column 1, Schedule A to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations, as are the various Education Authorities and Councils created under the Education Act. Private education institutions are not subject to the ATIPPA.

The Standing Committee had identified that in other jurisdictions, quality assurance bodies are subject to their provincial privacy protection legislation. For example, as a public body, the Campus Alberta Quality Council is subject to the Post-Secondary Learning Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and

the Programs of Study Regulation in the province of Alberta.

The Ontario Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board requires Board Members to adhere to the intent and requirements of Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990, which applies to all information, material, and records relating to, or obtained, created, maintained, submitted, or collected during a review.

The Standing Committee determined that since no 'public bodies' that would be subject to ATIPPA had been created yet, this question would lie outside this bill's scope.

Consistency

Bill 39 proposed to change wording in section 17, dealing with NWT Developed Degree Programs, and section 28, dealing with Private Training Institutions, to make the language around authorizations consistent. The Standing Committee suggested with Motion 3, set out in Appendix 2, to make the same change to section 21, dealing with the Letter of Authorization, to make the legislation internally consistent.

Now I pass this on to Kam Lake MLA. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Clause-by-Clause Review

The clause-by-clause review of Bill 39 was held on March 25, 2022. At this review, the Standing Committee moved three motions. The Minister concurred with two motions. The Minister did not agree with the motion on the composition of the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Board.

Motion 1 - proposes changing section 7 by focusing the Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committees and their work on quality assurance matters and adding a requirement for the Minister to ensure membership on the Advisory Committees reflects the uniqueness and diversity of the NWT.

The Minister concurred, and clause 3 has been amended.

Motion 2 – The Standing Committee moved that after subclause 7(2.1), a new subsection requires that at least one-half of the Minister's appointed members to a Post-Secondary Education Advisory Committee under subsection (2) must be Indigenous residents of the Northwest Territories.

The Minister did not concur. The amendment will not take effect.

Motion 3 – The Standing Committee moved that Clause 15 of Bill 39 be amended by making the language consistent with other sections in the act.

The Minister concurred with the motion. Clause 15 has been amended.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Development's review of Bill 39 resulted in three motions. The Standing 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 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education 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. And Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 28-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act be received and adopted by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 28-19(2) has been received and adopted by the Assembly.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 617-19(2):
2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AUTHORITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 618-19(2):
2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT NWT HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

TABLED DOCUMENT 619-19(2):
HAY RIVER HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 620-19(2):
TLICHO COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-21

TABLED DOCUMENT 621-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 902-19(2): HEALTHCARE STAFF
RECRUITMENT

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh, man, I've been waiting for this moment, and -- yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following five documents: 2020-2021 Annual Report of the NWT Health and Social Services Authority; 2020-2021 Annual Report of the NWT Health and Social Services System; Hay River Health and Social Services Authority Annual Report 2020-2021; Tlicho Community Services Agency Health and Social Services Annual Report 2020-2021; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 902-19(2): Health care Staff Recruitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 622-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 48:
ARBITRATION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Plain Language Summary for Bill 48: Arbitration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 623-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 17-19(2): REPORT ON BILL 23: AN
ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC UTILITIES
ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 17-19(2): A Report on Bill 23: An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 624-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 2022 LIVING
WAGE REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 625-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 2022 LIVING
WAGE PLAIN LANGUAGE REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 626-19(2):
2022 ALTERNATIVES NORTH LIVING WAGE
MEDIA RELEASE AND INFOGRAPHICS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following three documents: Northwest Territories 2022 Living Wage Report; Northwest Territories Living Wage 2022 Plain Language Report; and a news release -- a Media Release and Infographics from Alternatives North dated today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 48:
ARBITRATION ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 48: Arbitration Act, be read for the second time.

The bill repeals and replaces the existing Arbitration Act. The bill is based substantially on the Uniformed Arbitration Act adopted in 2016 by the Uniformed Law Conference Of Canada. The bill provides extensive and necessary updates to the law governing arbitration in the Northwest Territories, including provisions respecting:

- The commencement and consolidation of arbitral proceedings;
- The composition of arbitral tribunals and the appointment and removal of arbitrators;
- The jurisdiction of arbitral tribunals;
- The matters of evidence and procedure including the issuance of subpoenas and the giving of evidence by experts and other witnesses;
- The granting of enforcement and interim measures and preliminary orders;

- The making of arbitral awards and the awarding of costs;
- The termination of arbitral proceedings;
- The enforcement of arbitral awards including awards made in other jurisdictions in Canada;
- Recourse against arbitral awards including appeals; and
- The confidentiality of arbitral proceedings.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. The clerk shall call on each Member by riding name to cast their vote, starting with the mover; those participating remotely and those participating in the Chamber in the order of their seats. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are for, against, or abstaining from second reading.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Hay River South -- sorry, the Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife South votes in favour.

The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Monfwi is muted. There we go.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay. It's...

MR. SPEAKER: Did anybody hear? If we cannot hear Member for Monfwi during the recorded vote, at the end of vote, the Member for Monfwi, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1) has three minutes to contact the clerk at the table to identify her vote. Proceed.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you. The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Deh Cho votes in favour.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes votes in favour.

The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: For.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour; zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 48 has had second reading and is referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly for review.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 23, Bill 29, Bill 39, Bill 41; Committee Report 26-19(2); Tabled Document 561-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Member for Hay River South in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates, and Bill 39, Bill 41, and Committee Report 26-19(2). Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I'll call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to resume consideration of Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023. I understand the Minister of Finance wishes to make a statement. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I haven't been given my clearance to speak so I just want to make sure I'm being heard? Okay, good. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, Mr. Chair, I do have a few remarks.

Mr. Chair, as you know, over the past several weeks, the Legislative Assembly has been considering the 2022-2023 Main Estimates. This is my third time going through the budget review process and the associated negotiations that take place between Members and the Executive.

Negotiations are necessary because the Executive holds a minority of seats in the Legislative Assembly and therefore requires at least three votes from Members in order to pass the budget. We arrive as independents but we must move forward together within a spirit of consensus. And while we are each obligated to represent the people of our ridings, our Code, of course, requires that we accept a collective legislative responsibility to serve the people of the Northwest Territories.

Each of us answers to our constituents. That is a core principle of democracy. We each represent the diversity of views, perspectives and needs of all of our residents all at the same time. During the budget process, we must determine whether spending done for the whole-of-government and the whole of the Northwest Territories adequately advances the needs both of our individual ridings and the territory as a whole. Sometimes the right balance requires more weight towards a particular issue, or region, in order to be equitable. Other times, maintaining a balance means ensuring resources are available equally to all.

As Minister of Finance, I do not unilaterally decide the budget for all departments. Each department is responsible to achieve their core obligations to the territory and to advance their areas of responsibility under the mandate of the Assembly. They do so through the departmental budgets that we have been reviewing.

The Department of Finance oversees the overall fiscal strategy on behalf of the GNWT and supports the Financial Management Board that is made up of all members of the Executive Council. This body collectively is responsible for decisions that impact the GNWT as a whole.

The budget is not divided up per capita or into 33 community pieces. That is not how a budget that covers a territory as vast and as diverse as ours is structured. It would result in inequities and would not be representative of the different needs or costs. It also would not take advantage of economies of scale.

I believe our system is one to be proud of, especially on days like today when not only will a vote not be unanimous but we will not all agree even perhaps on some core issues. What

makes our system special is that we must continue to engage in dialogue because continuing to seek future consensus, even in the face of current disagreement, is at the core of our system.

I want to briefly describe three key pieces that this government has brought to these budget negotiations.

The first is to be fiscally responsible and remain as close as cost neutral as possible. In other words, we not only offer added items to "sweeten the pot" but acknowledge that additions should have complementary reductions or increases to revenue. That would not be possible without the diligent work of Members of the Legislative Assembly asking hard questions about where money is spent and where we might find room for savings.

The second is that the entire GNWT budget does not get passed by the vote of one Member. I know that the Premier expects Ministers to be available to speak to every Member about individual regional, community and resident issues. Doing so can help identify when a particular area might need enhanced funding to better achieve its goals across the whole of the Northwest Territories. By doing so through the year, we hopefully do not arrive at a point where the budget needs to change at this stage to accommodate a single project but rather can be changed to reflect an expansion of a program that can then benefit the Northwest Territories as a territory.

Third, the vote of every single Member matters. So while I acknowledge that not every Member will vote in favour of the allocation of public resources contained within this budget, it is my hope that our process of ongoing engagement, discussion and consideration of what resources are available to help every NWT region, community, business and resident will lead us to new consensus in the future.

Before I review our additional budget commitments, I want to express my thanks to the work done by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight in their review of the main estimates. The questions asked throughout the process help Ministers better align the functioning of programs and services for the people we all serve.

As well, I want to extend my very sincere gratitude to the chairperson and deputy chairperson of that committee who share with me the responsibility for these budget discussions. Our discussions were, in my view, frank, forthright, respectful, and always centered on a shared goal of achieving a result

that reflected the values and priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Through these conversations, we have arrived at a budget that will enhance program delivery in the true spirit of consensus government for the benefit of all residents and that is reflective of the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Resulting commitments are as follows:

Increased Funding for Housing

Members have spoken passionately about the housing situation in the Northwest Territories. The need to improve our housing situation across the spectrum of housing needs and in all regions of the Northwest Territories is reflected in our priorities and felt by all Members.

I will commit to an additional \$4 million per year in ongoing funding for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. This funding will provide financial support for home repair, fuel tank replacements, home purchase programs, mobility modifications, and to the seniors' home subsidy.

Shelter Funding

The GNWT is also committing one-time funding in 2022-2023 of \$2.2 million for homelessness shelters.

Emergency and homeless sheltering is a challenge for many northern communities. This funding does not solve the Northwest Territories' homelessness problem but enables ongoing work and frees other resources to support new initiatives.

Heritage Centre Funding

The Northwest Territories culture is unique and should be celebrated. To this end, I am committing \$500,000 in ongoing funding to Northwest Territories-based heritage centres. This funding will give heritage centres across the North much needed financial support for both operational requirements and capital improvements. This will help ensure our culture and heritage can be proudly displayed for generations to come.

Non-government Organizations

Non-government organizations are an important part of program delivery in the North. These partners are frontline advocates on behalf of the GNWT when delivering services around the North. At the same time, these organizations are often asked to do more with less and need more certainty in the funding they receive from government. With this in mind, I've

asked the Department of Finance to develop procedures for multiyear funding agreements that allow for inflationary increases for those third parties who deliver core government programs or services on behalf of the government. The financial impact of this commitment will be included in future budgets for approval by this House.

Together, these additional commitments will add more than \$6.7 million to the GNWT's budget of which \$4.5 million is permanent and ongoing for future generations.

Revenue Offsets and Expenditure Reductions

This budgeting exercise has not only been about strategically adding money to high priority areas. Members from both sides of this House have clearly raised concerns regarding the state of our economy, the rising cost of living, and the GNWT's level of spending and future borrowing requirements.

If we are all truly committed to the GNWT's financial health and to leaving the next government in a stable financial position, then we cannot only add to our budget without also seeking reductions or identifying opportunities for new revenues.

As soon as practically possible, I will be increasing the tobacco tax to make the Northwest Territories one of the highest taxed jurisdictions in Canada. The Northwest Territories continues to be one of the highest consumers of tobacco in Canada, and I am hopeful this increase in tobacco tax will change that. Increasing the tobacco tax is expected to raise as much as 3 to \$3.5 million annually which will be used to help offset these additions to the 2022-2023 budget.

Additionally, I will be implementing targeted expenditure reductions to contract services across the GNWT to raise an additional \$2.4 million annually. These reductions will be effective for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and will be permanently reflected in future departmental budgets.

Budget 2022-2023 was developed for the best interests of all regions and residents of the Northwest Territories. It will allow all communities, people, and organizations to have access to funding for projects and programs that will improve social outcomes and give all communities access to funding to improve infrastructure and services based on local needs.

The changes highlighted here will be implemented through supplementary

appropriation during the May/June 2022 sitting. Continued attention to our fiscal strategy as we enter our final year of the 19th Legislative Assembly will be important, and I look forward to those ongoing conversations.

That concludes my remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I'll now open the floor for general comments on the Minister's statement. Do any Members have general comments before we begin the departmental summaries? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the Minister of Finance and her staff, and indeed all of our Cabinet colleagues, for these compromises and hard work that went into them. It's my understanding that Regular MLAs will reserve their comments on the budget to the appropriation bill that's expected tomorrow. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Any further comments?

Seeing none, does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: No, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we have previously deferred the matter of consideration of departmental summaries. Members, we will begin with the departmental summary for the Legislative Assembly. Please turn to page 5 of the Tabled Document.

Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$25,435,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee, we will continue with the departmental summary for Education, Culture and Employment on page 29.

Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$358,313,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Environment and Natural Resources on page 69.

Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$98,723,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Executive and Indigenous Affairs on page 109. And Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$22,114,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Finance on page 137.

Finance, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$35,239,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Oh, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think you said \$35 million. I think it should have been \$335,239,000. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Can you just repeat that?

MR. O'REILLY: Sure, thanks, Mr. Chair. When I look at the page 137 in the main estimates for Finance, it's \$335,239,000. I don't think we want to short change them by \$300 million. But, you know, we're always open to further changes here, so. But no, I think we just need to get that number right. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you for pointing that out, Mr. O'Reilly. I was trying to just getting -- trying to get something for Hay River. Thank you.

Finance, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$335,239,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Health and Social Services on page 169.

Health and Social Service, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$594,777,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 203.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$59,625,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Infrastructure on page 231.

Infrastructure, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$278,853,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Justice on page 275.

Justice, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$137,054,000. Does the Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Lands on page 311.

Lands, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$22,915,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for Municipal and Community Affairs on page 331.

Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$123,104,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue with the departmental summary for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation on page 373. Please note, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is an information item only and will not be voted on.

Does the Committee agree this concludes our consideration of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Does the committee agree that this concludes consideration of Tabled Document 561-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly.

COMMITTEE MOTION 219-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – Tabled
DOCUMENT 561-19(2): MAIN ESTIMATES
2022-2023,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023 be now concluded, and that Tabled Document 561-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Tabled Document 561-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

Thank you. And thank you, Minister. Committee, we'll move on to the next item.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act. I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm here today to present Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act.

The Post-Secondary Education Act received assent on August 21st, 2019, and is not yet in force. The act creates a structure for recognizing post-secondary institutions within the Northwest Territories and will enable the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university.

The bill seeks to amend the Post-Secondary Education Act to address gaps or inconsistencies in the act that were identified during the ongoing drafting of the related regulations. As well, an opportunity was identified to amend the section on Indigenous institutions to ensure it is more closely aligned with the 19th Legislative Assembly priority to implement the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Bill 39 will first remove an extra barrier for the recognition of Indigenous institutions by removing the requirement that Indigenous institutions first become recognized as post-secondary institutions through a separate process. The recognition process for Indigenous institutions will be determined through engagement with post-secondary and Indigenous government partners and will be set out in the regulations.

Bill 39 will also establish authority for fees and charges to be collected for certain services, such as quality assurance reviews or applications to ensure consistency and clarity within the act.

I wish to thank the Standing Committee for its thoughtful review and collaboration in helping to strengthen this bill through their motions to amend.

This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have regarding Bill 39. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Thank you, Minister. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. With us today we have Andrea Giesbrecht, director of labour, development, and standards with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment; and Ian Rennie, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comment on Bill 39. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 25th, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

On March 24th, 2022, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Committee passed two motions with concurrence from the Minister. Committee has read its report into the record and did not make -- this is -- and did not make recommendations. I thank the committee for their efforts in reviewing this legislation. Individual Members may have additional comments or questions.

I'm going to go back on this one and say we had two motions, and we passed two motions. One of them was not passed but concurred with with the Minister. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 39.

Is the committee agreed that there are no general comments? Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. I will call the clauses in groups. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clauses 1 to 5, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clauses 6 to 10, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clauses 11 to 15, does the committee agree.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clauses 16 to 20, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clauses 21 to 25, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clauses 26 to 29, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does the committee agree that Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 41: Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act. I will ask the Minister of Justice to introduce the bill. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here today to present Bill 41: The Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act.

Bill 41 is an omnibus bill -- and yes, we do have omnibus bills in this Assembly -- that advances amendments to three pieces of legislation:

- The Jury Act;
- The Summary Conviction Procedures Act; and
- The Partnership and Business Names Act.

This approach was taken to streamline the process for advancing these three relatively minor amendments in a more efficient manner.

The changes being proposed for the Jury Act will ensure that territorial legislation regarding jury qualification standards match those of the Criminal Code as amended in 2019.

The changes proposed for the Summary Conviction Procedures Act will address three issues. They will ensure that forms of release referenced in the act coincide with the Criminal Code as amended in 2019; that appropriate language is included to fully authorize the prosecution and appeal of territorial offences on behalf of the Attorney General of the NWT; and

That the legislation allows for efficient payment and processing of specified penalties as set out in Summary Offence Ticket Informations.

Finally, the Partnership and Business Names Act will be amended by expanding the definition of "a person" to allow First Nations, or Indian Bands as defined in the federal Indian Act, to be limited partners in a limited partnership for the purposes of the Partnership and Business Names Act.

This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions the Members may have regarding Bill 41. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. With us, we once again have Mr. Ian Rennie, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice; and Mr. Brad Patzer, assistant deputy minister, Attorney General of the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comments on Bill 41. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Bill 41: Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on December 7th, 2021, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

On March 24th, 2022, the standing committee held a public hearing with the Minister of Justice and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill. Committee received no submissions on this bill. I thank the committee for their efforts in reviewing this legislation. Individual Members

may have comments or questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 41.

Is the committee agreed that there are no general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): 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 the committee agree?.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clause 2, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Clause 3, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does the committee agree that Bill 41: Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 41: Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we will move on.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together.

I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development for any opening comments. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee's report was read into the record yesterday, Tuesday, March 29th, 2022.

For the past year, the Standing Committee on Social Development has been conducting our statutory review of the Child and Family Services Act. This has been very difficult, personal and emotional work, Mr. Chair, but it is also very important work, vital work, and work I am proud to have been a part of.

I want to thank all Members of the Standing Committee and all other Members who contributed to our work. We are stronger when we work together, and I believe we have achieved much more than any of us could have achieved working alone.

More importantly, Mr. Chair, I want to thank the residents who took the time and made the effort to share their raw-lived experience and insight with us. By listening to their stories, experiences and expertise, we, as a committee and as individuals, were able to better understand the impacts of our child and family services system on those who are most affected by it.

NWT children and youth are talented, unique, and powerful. It was important to committee that the voices of residents with lived-experience, especially children and youth, be center in this work. Their words, alongside committee recommendations, can be found throughout the final report. If, as a government, we want to do better, we must commit to hearing from and acting on behalf of those most affected by our decisions and actions.

Finally, and most importantly, Mr. Chair, I want to thank the children and youth in the territory who shared courageously with the committee. We hear you. We respect you. We value you. From you, we learn and take your lead. We hope you see your thoughts, insights, and brilliance reflected within the report and its recommendations.

Mr. Chair, when the committee began its review of the Child and Family Services Act, we focused the scope of our review on prevention strategies. This is only a small part of the overall child and family services system. And even though many of our recommendations are rooted in programs and services, we felt prevention was the strongest route for change to keep NWT families together.

The recommendations of the report, which we will have the opportunity to discuss today, focus on prevention, early intervention and targeted supports, and are informed by feedback provided to committee through our engagement process.

Mr. Chair, all children are sacred. Over 98 percent of children and youth in care in the NWT are Indigenous, even though just 57 percent of the population of children and youth are Indigenous in the territory.

The committee dedicated a significant portion of its discussions to cultural continuity and the vital role culture plays in individual and community wellness in every one of our 33 communities.

As a committee, we recognize that true change is dependent on more than one government department. So we call on champions at all levels of governments, Indigenous governments and groups, non-governmental organizations and allies, to work together to provide a broader continuum of care, including supports and resources for all children and youth across the NWT.

Individual Members may have comments on the report, and I would like to thank the committee for their intimate and passionate work on this report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together.

Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't be able to express myself as eloquently as my colleague did and I appreciate her words, and I think they very much capture the spirit of the work and how we progressed.

I think for myself, when I moved to this side of the House and I joined the social development committee, it was one that I felt was outside of my wheelhouse and has definitely been my steepest learning curve on this side of the House.

As a person without children myself, it was a whole new area to me, and I also wanted to express my thanks to those that shared with me and shared their experiences. I recognize the place of privilege that I come from and that I really cannot even imagine the depths of the trauma that people have felt as their families

have been ripped apart. I can touch a bit on that as not having had time with my own father growing up so I do have some understanding of that parental alienation.

And so I just wish to reiterate what the chair said, that this was very moving work, it's very important work, and that I just want to say thank you to everybody that participated from the bottom of my heart. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have been critical about statutory reviews in the past but I think if there was one that was, you know, an obvious contender for this committee to choose, even though they had to do it, would be the Child and Family Services Act.

We've had two rather damning Auditor General reports in this area. And those reports speak to how the department is implementing policies. They don't necessarily speak to whether those are the correct policies and the Auditor General is not in and of itself there to focus on prevention. And I think this committee made the right choice in focusing on prevention.

I really do think this is the gold standard of committee reports, both in its end result and its process. I'm not a member of this committee but I participated in a number of the hearings. They used a wide variety of engagement tools. This committee was working harder than any other to engage with people during COVID to complete this work. They had very frank and honest conversations with a number of people involved in the system, and I think it has resulted in truly amazing work, that when you read it alongside the two Auditor General's reports it's clear we have a path forward working with Canada and working with our Indigenous governments, and all those in the system, to improve this area.

I will have further comments on the motions and going forward in this Assembly. I think there's some big questions about how we fund it. It's another one of those, you know. We should make this a priority, though, Mr. Chair, because prevention is the path forward and this report really sets out some -- some admirable recommendations and goals.

So I just want to thank the committee for this great work and everyone who presented to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Ms. Semmler.

(Audio)

Ms. Semmler, can you hear us; we cannot hear you.

Ms. Semmler, can you hear me; we cannot hear you.

Ms. Semmler? Yes, I can hear you now.

[audio unavailable]

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Semmler. Are there any further general comments?

Seeing no further comments, Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories declare the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in child and family services a crisis and develop a whole of government response in partnership with Indigenous governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): The motion is in order. To the motion?

[audio unavailable]

Committee, we'll just take a five-minute break to fix some audio problems. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. As I understand, we're having a few technical issues so I move that the chair rise and report progress.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Hay River South.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 23, 29, 39, and 41; Committee Report 26-19(2); Tabled

Document 561-19(2), and would like to report progress with one motion and that Bills 39 and 41 are ready for third reading; and that consideration of Tabled Document 561-19(20) is concluded and that the House in those estimates as amended and that an appropriation bill be based thereon and be introduced without delay.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, March 31st, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1067-19(2): Inuvik Mike Zubko Airport Expansion Project
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Motions

- Motion 51-19(2): Extended Adjournment of the House to May 26, 2022

17. Notices of Motions 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 29 - Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
- Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 31st, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

