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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):

Yesterday, the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services rose on a Point of Order in response to a statement by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Minister believes the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh was out of order. She said he made allegations against her and imputed false motives. The Minister relied on Rule 3.2(3) sub-sections (h) and (i).

When deciding whether language used in this Chamber is unparliamentary, Speaker Lafferty, on June 23rd, 2017 said that the Speaker must take "...into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber."

I note that I have no jurisdiction over comments made outside this House or in the media.

I reviewed the unedited transcripts from Hansard from May 30, 2022. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh used language that was strong, even inflammatory. Previous Speakers have decided that such language is not always a violation of the Rules of this Assembly. However, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh did more than use strong and inflammatory language.

On page 9 of unedited Hansard, the Member said "it is not appropriate to attempt to silence, validate criticism of their portfolio by threatening the integrity of the healthcare services in the community that I represent." The Member went on to say that the Minister was "even trying to gaslight patients who received unacceptable care into believing that it was their own fault for failing to advocate for their own medical conditions."

These two comments went beyond what is appropriate debate. The Minister has a valid Point of Order.

Rule 3.2(3)(h) makes it clear that it is out of order to make an allegation against another Member. In this case, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh made two allegations against the Minister. Also, the Member's language was unparliamentary.

The Member accused the Minister of gaslighting patients. Gaslighting is a practice of psychological manipulation which is meant to make a person question their own version of events.

I note that on July 7, 2020 the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island found that an allegation of "gaslighting" was unparliamentary and out of order. I agree.

I expect Members of this House to conduct themselves appropriately. The language you use in the House should reflect this. While it is appropriate to share what constituents are saying to you, you must share those concerns in a manner that is consistent with the rules.

As I have found the Member out of order, I will now ask the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh to apologize to the House and withdraw the specific remarks found out of order.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for your comments and your ruling. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I represent my community, and I've listened to a lot of people speak and the issue that's in front of us that we're talking about is near and dear to a lot of people in my constituency and at this point, Mr. Speaker -- I could talk a little bit more about the issue but at this point I am not able to apologize. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. I found your remarks out of order and will ask you again to apologize and withdraw your remarks. If you do not do this, I will be required to name you and ask you to remove yourself from the Chamber for the rest of the day. Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, again, I'm just representing my constituents, bringing their issues forward, and I will stand by my remarks. Thank you, I will not apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Edjericon, pursuant to Rule 3.4, it is my duty as Speaker to name you. Please remove yourself from today's proceedings for the remainder of this sitting day. Thank you.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 249-19(2):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION YOUTH SAFETY LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, whether a business is small or large, having a safe and healthy workplace is crucial for success. I am pleased to inform the House today that the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission is now accepting applications for a new Youth Safety Leadership Program.

This is an opportunity for young workers between ages of 14 and 24 in the Northwest Territories to develop as safe leaders within their communities and build skills that could lead towards rewarding career in the workplace health and safety.

The program includes online learning modules that focus on safety training, collaboration and leadership skills. In addition, the program includes volunteer projects within each participant's home community, and the opportunity to work with safety leaders and mentors from local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage Members to share this opportunity with their constituents. It is an excellent first step for anyone interested in exploring a career in safety or for those simply working to ensure a safer future for themselves in any industry.

Applications for the program are now open for youth in all communities ages 14 to 24 on the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission's website.

I would also like to thank the staff of Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission for developing this training opportunity for our young people and our future employment across the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 250-19(2):
2022 WILDFIRE SEASON

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, wildfires are an important part of the boreal forest, and naturally occurring fires are essential to ensuring forests remain healthy and sustainable. Allowing forest fires to burn where possible allows forests to regenerate and help to avoid larger and more dangerous fires later. All wildfires in the NWT are monitored and managed to ensure they do not pose a risk or threat to people, communities, infrastructure, or other assets.

Mr. Speaker, wildfire management starts before there is even a spark.

The Government of the Northwest Territories works with our partners throughout the year to promote FireSmart principles within our forested communities. FireSmart means working together, from individual residents to neighbours to communities and all levels of government, to keep residents safe, to be prepared, and to be more resilient when wildfires strike.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources encourages NWT residents to take steps around their homes, businesses, camps, and cabins to reduce the risk of wildfires, wildfire damage.

We have developed new resources for kids, adults, and businesses to provide information and tools. Our FireSmart presence online has been overhauled and we have invested in a targeted marketing campaign to build FireSmart awareness. We are working with communities on training, community protection plans, and preparedness, so we are ready for wildfires before they even begin.

This year, four communities took the initiative to plan wildfire community protection days. Activities took place in Fort Smith, Kakisa, Tulita, and Yellowknife, including along the Ingraham Trail at Tibbitt Lake. This is the most community engagement we have seen in the territory in any single year.

We encourage residents to take FireSmart steps at home, steps like keeping the area within a metre-and-a-half of their home or cabin free of material that can burn, as well as cleaning brush and branches from their yard.

Mr. Speaker, NWT fire crews, and a team of technical and operational staff, have supported them and have been busy preparing for this

year's fire season. Well-trained firefighters are ready to go across the NWT, including many who are members of contracted crews managed by local Indigenous governments and businesses. Air tankers and other key wildfire management equipment are also at the ready. We have 36 four-man crews to attack fires, and five air tanker groups ready to support fire operations wherever they are needed throughout the fire season.

Mr. Speaker, protecting NWT residents and communities is a top priority as we deliver these essential services. For the past two seasons, our wildfire teams were required to adhere to strict COVID-19 protocols, and this summer we will continue to make adjustments so that we have healthy crews to respond to fires when needed.

We have hired additional staff in smaller communities to reduce the need to bring in firefighters from other regions, or outside the territory, and we will have access to additional air tankers to respond to fires when they are small. While we are ready to respond to wildfires when we need to, it is important that we continue to take steps this summer to prevent them before they start.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we all take steps to prevent human-caused wildfires. Experience tells us that wildfires caused by humans tend to happen closer to towns and often threaten homes and cabins. I encourage all residents to be safe this summer when you go out on the land, enjoying the natural beauty of the NWT. Make sure to properly manage campfires and burn piles and be careful with cigarettes. Let us do our part to prevent forest fires. That includes understanding the environmental conditions and the fire danger level before you go out. It also means avoiding campfires when the fire danger is high or extreme, unless a fire is necessary for cooking or warmth.

In closing, I would like to recognize the firefighters and wildfire management teams across the NWT for all that you do to keep NWT residents and families safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 251-19(2):
MAXIMIZING THE NWT'S ENVIRONMENTAL,
SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND
GOVERNANCE – INDIGENOUS ADVANTAGE

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, Environmental, Social, and Governance, or ESG principles, have become more prevalent over the

past few years in the mineral resources industry, with investors, demographic groups, and the general public, demanding stronger ESG investments from business and industry.

A global movement towards ESG investment and social consciousness is good news for the Northwest Territories because we are leaders in ESG measures and performance. We are, in fact, already moving toward advocating for the next generation of ESG through an Indigenous lens, or ESG-I, an approach that breaks down barriers and ensures Indigenous people are at the decision-making table from the start.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories began its mineral resource industry with gold, then transitioned into the diamond capital of North America, positioning itself as an ethical stable democracy and a dedicated steward of the land enabling responsible resource development. While companies like Arctic Star and Mountain Province Diamond are currently finding kimberlites, we also have well-established critical minerals projects with NICO, Pine Point, and Prairie Creek that are nearing mine construction decisions. And with the Nechalacho Rare Earth Elements Project, the Northwest Territories has the first rare earths mine in Canada, with the potential for many years of production.

In the coming months, as we advance work on the NWT Critical Minerals Action Plan, ESG-I standards and associated initiatives, we will engage with stakeholders and partners to ensure the Northwest Territories' collaborative spirit guides our work as we renew our focus on sustaining our mineral resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, next month I will be attending the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada in Toronto, one of the world's premier mineral resource sector conferences. Before I share our message on that stage, I wanted to first remind colleagues, residents, and businesses about our leadership potential in this global movement. I want to especially highlight our ESG-I strengths in our governing relationships and our regulatory approach.

The 2014 Northwest Territories Devolution Agreement established the Intergovernmental Council to allow the public and Indigenous governments to collaborate on matters related to lands and resource management while respecting the autonomy and authority of each government. This council is an important central figure as the Northwest Territories shifts progressively to an ESG-I model.

Mr. Speaker, in early May, the Gahcho Kue mine received the prestigious Towards Sustainable Mining Excellence Award from the Mining Association of Canada.

Gahcho Kue's commitment and focus on community engagement and environmental stewardship is a reflection of the relationships and respect that exist between Northwest Territories' mining industry and Indigenous governments and organizations. This award, to an NWT-based project, highlights to investors the ESG and ESG-I practices that set the Northwest Territories apart from other jurisdictions.

Founded in a first-class regulatory regime under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act 25 years ago, our regulatory framework places environmental protection, traditional knowledge, and Indigenous rights at the centre of decision-making. It has flourished thanks to partnerships amongst the Northwest Territories' diamond industry, northern and Indigenous governments, and communities.

Mr. Speaker, our regulatory system is comprehensive and recognizes many of the issues that are important not only to our citizens, including environmental protection and Indigenous rights, but form cornerstones of ESG. That said, there is an opportunity for improvement in the timeliness, clarity, and certainty of our regulatory framework.

We are in a transition period. We are putting new, first-of-its-kind, modern mineral resource legislation and companion regulations in place, with features like formalized benefit agreements and online map staking. We continue to dialogue with partners to identify and advance operational improvements in regulatory processes for exploration projects. We have a well-established approach to sharing the social and economic benefits of mineral development with Indigenous governments. And we have begun the conversation to move our territory's land and water boards, the final piece of our regulatory process, into the hands of responsible northern governments.

Mr. Speaker, today's Northwest Territories mineral resource industry is innovative, collaborative, and focused on environmental stewardship and Northern benefits. It is guided, in part, by the pioneering and resourceful geoscientists who apply science and knowledge from the search for natural resources to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. It coordinates with the GNWT and Indigenous governments to enhance resources for capacity building and support resource revenue sharing across different levels of government.

The global industry is catching up to the Northwest Territories and our practices that we have honed over nearly three decades.

In the coming years of work on our regulatory processes, with our collaborative best practices and potential resources still untapped, we can set our jurisdiction apart as one that has great potential and investor confidence in our leading-edge environmental, social, and governance principles.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1111-19(2): SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY FLOODING IN HAY RIVER

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the flooding in Hay River, West Point, and K'atlodeeche has impacted businesses in the fishing, agricultural and tourism sectors. Mr. Speaker, these business sectors are not only important to those that participate in them, but also to those persons and businesses that purchase the products from those sectors.

The agricultural sector, which has several producers located at Paradise Valley, was significantly impacted by this year's flood and may not be prepared, or be fully prepared, for this production season.

The fishing sector businesses, which are primarily located in the West Channel, West Point, and Old Town, had much of their equipment compromised which will now require not only cleanup but purchasing new equipment to replace what was lost or damaged. This may translate into a late start.

We have two tourism operators located on the shore of the Great Slave Lake, with one suffering severe damage to buildings and equipment for the second year in a row and will require major repairs.

The Wharf Pavilion, in the Old Town, allows vendors to cater to residents, visitors, and tourists, suffered flood damage and will require cleanup and repairs. This is expected to delay its opening this season.

Mr. Speaker, the effect of this flood goes beyond damage to property. It affects the seasonal livelihood of many business owners, their employees and customers. Some of the flood damage in these sector businesses may be covered by the Disaster Assistance Policy. The question is, does the Disaster Assistance Policy compensate for loss of revenue and wages - a question asked by business owners.

Without revenue and wages, these business owners, operators and workers, may step back and look for alternate employment that will provide immediate income to put food on the table while they rebuild. That, along with waiting on funds to repair damage, or replace damaged equipment, may result in a lost season for some business owners and operators.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made major investments in each of the fishing, agricultural, and tourism sectors in Hay River. We have a \$15 million fish plant being constructed in the hope of revitalizing a commercial fishing industry, which industry has now been delivered another blow by flooding. We have seen contributions and supports provided to the agricultural sector to build infrastructure which is now compromised and damaged. Tourism operators and facilities are situated in flood-prone areas and continue to be impacted year after year with no resolve.

Before we lose these sectors, we must provide those business owners and operators with some immediate financial supports to supplement the Disaster Assistance Policy funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1112-19(2):
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
AND SUPREME COURT OF CANADA RULING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of the Sexual Violence Awareness Month in Canada, and I recognize and pay tribute to all the victims of sexual violence. We must raise awareness of the devastating impacts sexual violence has on a person, their family, and their community.

Mr. Speaker, every day in the territory someone is the victim of sexual violence. Sexual violence is verbal harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, and rape. The Northwest Territories has the second highest rate of sexual assault in Canada. This is 7.3 times higher than the national rate, Mr. Speaker. These are shocking numbers and are affecting all of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, women are three times more likely than men to be victims of sexual assault. In other words, women are being victimized at a much higher rates than men. This is gender-based violence happening here in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that extreme intoxication could be used as a defence in criminal cases of assault, including sexual assault, Mr. Speaker.

This is appalling. It erodes the rights of victims of sexual violence; in particular, women, who are victimized at a much higher rate than men.

Mr. Speaker, many victims of sexual violence are already reluctant to come forward and report what happened. Many people have mistrust of the RCMP, legal systems, and legacy of colonization and residential schools where abuse was rampant. This affects Indigenous women, children, and those who identify with the LGBTQ2S+ community especially. The recent ruling makes it even more difficult to report with confidence that they will be taken serious or get any justice.

Mr. Speaker, the justice system was set up to hold people responsible for their actions. I stand with the survivors of sexual violence. I encourage all of my colleagues and residents of the Northwest Territories to support and advocate for survivors of sexual violence and to address gender-based violence as unacceptable. The safety, health, and well-being for all women, children, and those in the LGBTQ2S+ community, and all members of our communities, depends on it.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1113-19(2):
IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE
RCMP IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout this Assembly, I have done several Member statements about the RCMP and the need for improved and more accountable policing within the constituency of Thebacha, and across the NWT. Today I want to continue highlighting some of the concerns I have seen and heard about the RCMP as of late.

Mr. Speaker, because of the effects of the pandemic on mental health and the serious incident in Fort Smith in March, I am concerned that the RCMP does not offer casual replacements to ensure the community is fully served by eight members. For safety reasons and for all the reasons regarding enforcement, drug-related problems, mental health issues, and a sense of peace in the community after such a turbulent year, from what I see the RCMP have an empire here in Yellowknife and I think it's time the commander steps up, shows leadership, and shows respect to the community of Fort Smith and ensures that the manpower is shared with the staff out of Yellowknife if needed.

There's a lot of RCMP staff here in Yellowknife but I must ensure that Fort Smith is looked after in a safe and proper way so community members can feel at peace in their community at this time. There are only four RCMP members there right now and one that is a temporary officer from another jurisdiction. They are trying very hard to serve Fort Smith, but how can only four RCMP members serve a community of 2500 day and night?

This is a very stressful time for the RCMP right now as I'm sure their workload is very high. I appreciate all the work the four RCMP members in the community are faced with, and I want to thank them wholeheartedly for their efforts to keep the community safe and hopefully we can address the staff shortage issue until the permanent staff arrives.

Mr. Speaker, I attended a leadership meeting in Fort Smith two weeks ago where the issue of RCMP staffing levels was talked about. In that meeting, I discovered that Fort Smith is experiencing a shortage of RCMP staff right now. Fort Smith is supposed to have eight RCMP officers; however, there are currently only four officers stationed there. This is very concerning from a safety and readiness standpoint in case of emergencies and for general response time by RCMP as well.

Given this information, I am questioning if the level of public safety for community members in Fort Smith is adequate in addressing all the law enforcement issues in my community. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, it is not okay and it is unsafe that my community is facing a shortage of law enforcement personnel to protect and serve the people of Fort Smith. It is not fair that the capital has all or most of their RCMP positions filled all the time when the small communities and regional centres are left with a shortage of RCMP staff. As MLA for Thebacha, I am looking to ensure my community is properly looked after and is up to par with the capital in terms of public safety.

I will have questions for the Minister of Justice later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1114-19(2):
SUPPORT FOR MEMBER FOR TU NEDHE-
WIIILIDEH

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh, not one of those days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my prepared statement today is about the recent announcement regarding the proposed development on Tin Can Hill. Since the information became public, I've had nonstop communications from my constituents who are as surprised as I was to find out the city and ECE have been discussing this option for a while now with no input from residents. However, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that instead I stand up today and speak in support of my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh as I too know what it is like to deal with the ramifications in this House of trying to speak up for what you believe is right.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of MLA Edjericon. For someone who didn't start this year as an MLA, he has quickly caught up with the rest of us and has become a strong, badly-needed voice for his constituents. His long history of being involved with his people in his communities shows that while he may be new to this building, he is far from inexperienced when it comes to leadership and politics. In fact, I'd argue he has more qualifications than many of the people in this building, including myself. And I respect him for the efforts I've seen since he first set foot in this building to elevate the concerns of his people and be heard.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when you stand up for what is right, you find yourself standing alone. And I want MLA Edjericon to know that is not the case in this instance. Thank you

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Just so -- I know there's a lot of new Members here, but you can't question rulings made in the House. But for the future, just so Members are aware. Thank you.

Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1115-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP FROM AUDITOR GENERAL'S
REPORT ON EDUCATION FROM JR.
KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the Office of the Auditor General is in the Legislative Assembly to deliver a report on how the Government of the Northwest Territories is providing mental health and addiction services to residents. Mr. Speaker, these reports are excellent opportunity to follow up on progress made by our government.

Two years ago, the auditor general found deeply concerning flaws in the NWT education system. The auditor found huge gaps in the educational results between small and larger communities. The OAG report says this is a huge issue.

Graduation rates in small communities are much lower than in Yellowknife and regional centres.

Mr. Speaker, not only are students in small communities less likely to graduate from high school, they also learn under more difficult conditions than their peers in regional centres. Students in small communities face numerous challenges that depend on the size of classes, teacher/student ratio, and overall living conditions. The situations may be different in each small community.

The auditor general recommended that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment "should identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students and take actions."

The auditor also noted that this action should include providing additional support to principals of small schools and teachers in multi-grade classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the department committed to large initiatives and investments in small communities in its response to the auditor general. Last year after reviewing the auditor's report, the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommended that ECE bring forward a plan to better support schools in small communities.

ECE's response does not do much to fix the problems that the auditor general identified. ECE "committed to working with education bodies" and is scanning the country for more evidence-based practice. This response is just a plan to make a plan. ECE does not need another work plan. It needs to take action.

Mr. Speaker, the problems with our education system cannot be fixed with legislative change alone. Many people have told ECE that already, including the Tlicho region. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

ECE should stop working on making plans to make plans and focus on what action they can take today. GNWT needs to stop trying to fix the symptoms of the problem and address the real issues in communities. The biggest problems facing small communities are social and economic ones like housing, mental health and addictions, and lower average income levels.

Mr. Speaker, this is very simple. Communities with poor housing, high rates of addictions and low average income, have lower educational achievement. GNWT needs to get serious about fixing social and economic conditions in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in ECE's response to the OAG recommendations. ECE needs to spend a lot less time planning and a lot more time taking action. Small communities need more support and resources.

Having worked in education for over 20 years, I can say frontline staff feel like ECE is taking more and more control over operations. ECE needs to listen more to the real experts in communities. ECE needs to start listening to the people who work every day educating children. ECE needs to take a different approach to problem solving. GNWT cannot continue focusing on NWT-wide standardization at the cost of creating disadvantage for small communities.

Every one of our 33 communities is special and unique. Our communities come in all different sizes, and each has its own culture and belief.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Just a reminder to Members when you seek unanimous consent to conclude your statement, it's to conclude it. That was like two statements there, but in the future keep that in mind. Be mindful of your colleagues that still need to go as well.

Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1116-19(2):
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING GOVERNMENT
SERVICES

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, in February 2020 I told this House a brief story. It was a week-long conversation about one Northerner's challenge to access support services. Today, over two years later, Avery would still find the same barriers. Mr. Speaker, too many Northerners are falling through the cracks with the government's siloed approach to service delivery at the cost of residents' mental health, ability to thrive, and the government's bottom line.

We hear over and over again that the answer is integrated service delivery. But we also hear from the GNWT that we are years away from actually implementing integrated service delivery.

Take the example of integrated service delivery for child and family services. In 2019, this Assembly made it a mandate goal to develop an integrated service delivery approach by fall of 2021, but the business plans are only aiming to establish integrated service delivery demonstration sites in at least four communities by the end of this Assembly. And presumably other communities will have to wait even longer for an integrated child and family services.

But one of the most significant integrations, Mr. Speaker, is the siloed approach to income support and public housing.

The pace to actually implement integrated service delivery is deeply frustrating, and it causes huge challenges for effective program delivery and difficulty accessing supports. The GNWT currently spends over \$700 million annually on social programs through Justice, Health, Housing, and Education, Culture and Employment. Each of these departments addresses a different aspect of a person's challenges but the siloed service delivery causes program duplication and the frequency and duration that the individual cycles through public systems of care. It means residents are not receiving person-centered care and the government is spending more down the road through cyclical and costly use of resources, and this decreases the window of opportunity an individual will permanently or successfully exit the system of crisis services.

I want to urge the government to prioritize and accelerate work to implement integrated service delivery. We need to at least connect Housing and ECE supports in the life of this Assembly to create more stability for Northerners struggling with access to basic human rights. Integrated service delivery meets northerners where they're at and brings together the social program departments and their frontline staff to coordinate plans of care and support residents with their actual needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1117-19(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DECLARATION ON RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When this House first made it a priority to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, I think there was varied understandings of what that meant. And how could there not be, Mr. Speaker? It is a very aspirational document with many sections and many different areas to cover.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think all of us meant it would be doing something in this House. And to date, we have not seen any work to actively implement the UN declaration. Some of us thought perhaps we would just pass legislation similar to BC or the federal government which requires an action plan. Perhaps some of us thought we would see an action plan and it would tweak some programs and services and some

internal functions of the GNWT. Perhaps some of us thought it would transform the nature of consultation to truly be pre, prior, and informed consent so that the NWT can be the first jurisdiction to take a step beyond endless, sometimes hollow, consultation and require true consent from Indigenous governments.

I think many of us thought it meant we would settle numerous self-government agreements and truly devolve powers like was the promise of devolution. However, Mr. Speaker, more specifically back in the spring, I was informed in this House during Committee of the Whole that there was an internal inventory being created to assess where all GNWT programs aligned or misaligned with the principles of UNDRIP. This inventory was then going to be used to help discussion with the Council of Leaders and eventually lead to an action plan.

Mr. Speaker, I have asked for this action plan or inventory on multiple occasions now, and still have not seen nothing.

Mr. Speaker, when I raise this, it is said that the work is currently being done at the Council of Leaders. The Premier speaks proudly of the work being done at the Council of Leaders yet, Mr. Speaker, if we don't see any of that work and it doesn't result in any meaningful change, it is not something to be proud of.

We presently have 14 negotiating tables, Mr. Speaker, with no real progress. I'm not sure that adding one more to this Assembly is what we meant when we said implementing UNDRIP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that we have to work with the Council of Leaders and we have work with Indigenous governments to get something -- to implement UNDRIP. It would defeat the purpose to do it unilaterally; I recognize that. But if we don't get anything done in the life of this Assembly, what is the point of making it a priority for this assembly.

I will have questions for the Premier about realistically what is actually going to be done to implement UNDRIP in the lifetime of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1118-19(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF CANADA-NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. It's been almost six months since the signing of the federal territorial agreement promising \$10 a day child care for parents across the Northwest

Territories. In reviewing the issues of implementation and delivery of benefits, I regret to say that a lot of progress still needs to be made.

The biggest issues remain putting money in the hands of parents who continue to pay for child care after the deal was signed and creating enough spaces to meet demand. The rebate money has to flow through the child care providers to the parents, and that can only happen when providers opt in to the conditions of the program. The deadline for that opting in was April 15, and according to media reports and communication from parents and providers, there are still a lot of questions and uncertainties.

I will be asking the Minister for the status of service providers opting in and how he plans to deal with providers who have not.

A big decision point in whether or not providers opt in is the cap on increasing fees in the future to deal with increased costs. The Minister has confirmed there is a 2.3 percent ceiling or cap on cost increases providers can charge if they opt in, unless special approval is given for a higher increase. Even at the time of signing, we knew Canada was in for a period of inflation, and it's now running at 6.7 per cent nationally, and 7.1 percent in Yellowknife. This agreement handcuffs our operators to increases 4 points below inflation, and I wonder why Cabinet agreed to such a cap.

Then there's the question of creating additional spaces and the allowable use of the agreement funds. For operators, questions remain unanswered on whether funds can be applied to training and staff development, or to wage subsidies for marginally-paid workers. Crucially, can the funds be used to meet the costs of infrastructure that must be built if we are to expand capacity and access? \$10 a day child care is meaningless if there are no spots available for care in all our communities. There are at least 10 communities that lack any child care at all, a huge handicap to the development of local economies as well.

I will have questions for the ECE minister on the status of this agreement and its implementation that lie ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1119-19(2):
EULOGY FOR ADRIAN LIZOTTE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in April, we lost an

outstanding son, husband, father, officer, manager, mentor, and friend much too soon.

Adrian Lizotte was born in Fort McMurray on June 20th, 1979. He came to the NWT in 1990, late 1990s, and his appreciation for the beauty of the growth, northern growth. He loved to get out on the land, participate in traditional activities, and spent much of his time hunting, fishing, and camping with friends and family.

Adrian carried that love for the land with him into his work as well. He started his career with the GNWT as a corrections officer and then joined ENR as a fire tech summer student in 2008.

As life took him down the ENR path, he became a renewable officer, finally to manage our wildlife and environment in the North Slave region. He committed 23 years of his life to the GNWT and the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, Adrian had a pivotal role in the wildfire management programs. I can say he was a natural leader, colleague, mentor, supervisor, and friend to many people who have worked with him. He was well-respected in the community and took pride in work with people sharing his passion for wildlife and keeping people safe.

Adrian received the Premier's award as part of the team that responded to the largest outbreak of anthrax in wood bison in 2012 and was recognized as the ENR Manager of the Year in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, Adrian, just as Adrian served the public at work, he also was a very active member in the community in the evenings and on weekends. Everyone who spent time at the rink in Yellowknife in the last ten years would have been hard pressed to miss Adrian. If he wasn't coaching young hockey or watching his kids play, Boomer was on the ice as an accomplished well-liked and respected player. He was an avid sports fan, and he was always a team player.

As proud as Adrian was of being an officer and a manager at ENR, Mr. Speaker, his real pride and joy was his family. He and his wife Amy met through a friend who introduced them in Yellowknife and quickly fell in love. Together, they had three children - Wesley, Cole, and Sophia, and the centre of their lives. Adrian was a very proud father who would do anything for his kids to be happy and successful, succeed in life.

He instilled in them the same love of the land, tradition, and community that were so important to him. Among of the many contributions Adrian made in his 42 years, there's no doubt he holds raising his children above all.

After his passing, there was a flood of memories and tributes for Adrian from friends, colleagues,

and acquaintances from across the NWT and beyond. To paraphrase one of those tributes, may Adrian's kind spirit travel across the land, among the animals he protected over the years.

I'd like to extend my deepest condolences to Amy, their children, and extended family, friends and colleagues, and the countless others he touched over the life. Adrian's passing is a monumental loss for us all. He is and will be missed, Mr. Speaker, and he will always be remembered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and his fellow colleagues. I know he will be deeply missed, mahsi.

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are three officers here that were colleagues of Adrian here. So I'd like to recognize Lee Mandeville, Lorne Hudson, and Daniel Bouvier Junior. Thank you very much for being here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize the officers that are here in respect, but I also want to recognize Lorne Hudson who I believe is a constituent of Range Lake, so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, if the Premier's going to do it, I'll do it too. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a Yellowknife North constituent Lee Mandeville, a friend and colleague of Adrian Lizotte, and one heck of a fiddle player as well, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

I too would like to welcome Mr. Lee Mandeville, famous throughout the Northwest Territories for his fiddle playing. I was just thinking oh, it would have been nice to have a good square dance in here one day, but. Welcome to the Chamber. It's always good to have an audience. And also if there's anybody else that we missed, welcome to the gallery. I hope you enjoy our proceedings today. Mahsi.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 31-19(2):
REPORT ON BILL 40: AN ACT TO AMEND THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, Your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its Report on Bill 40, An Act to Amend the Medical Profession Act, and commend it to the House.

Introduction

Bill 40, An Act to Amend the Medical Profession Act, was first introduced by the Department of Health and Social Services on November 25, 2021, and then referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. A plain language summary for Bill 40 was tabled on November 26, 2021.

Bill 40 proposes changes to the Medical Profession Act to:

- Exempt physicians in other provinces and territories providing virtual care to NWT residents from needing an NWT licence when there is a referral from an NWT doctor or nurse practitioner;
- Clarifies a regulation-making power to adapt and adopt standards of practice for the practice of medicine;
- Allows the Minister of Health and Social Services to enter into agreements with other governments or organizations about physician licensing;
- Creates a new category of registration and licensing for physicians practicing virtual care without a referral; and
- Allows registers of physicians to be posted online.

The main changes made in committee include:

1. Removal of the virtual care register; and
2. Requiring the Minister to consult with the Northwest Territories Medical Association before recommending regulations on standards for the practice of medicine.

The committee thanks everyone who took the time to participate in the review and provided us with comments and concerns on Bill 40.

This bill provides a permanent arrangement for virtual healthcare services based on NWT referrals. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, the state of emergency, the Minister of Health and Social Services authorized virtual care through a ministerial directive. In accordance with section 3.3 of the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act, the Department of Health and Social Services made a temporary agreement with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta to exempt its members from having to licence in the NWT and to continue to provide services needed in the NWT.

The agreement was renewed by one year and will expire by the end of 2022. This bill provides a more permanent arrangement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass to my colleague for Great Slave further reading of this document. Thank you.

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

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

What We Heard

The committee held a public engagement period from December 22, 2021 to April 31, 2022 and a public hearing on May 16, 2022. Near the end of the committee's review period, the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services identified issues with Bill 40 that could require substantial amendments. These issues addressed some of the points of contention identified by stakeholders.

At the suggestion of the Minister, the committee sought and received an extension of the review period on March 28, 2022. The committee indicated its willingness to work collaboratively with the Minister of Health and Social Services to improve Bill 40.

When a bill is before a standing committee, it is unusual for the Government of the Northwest Territories to be involved in consultation with stakeholders. However, in this instance, committee took the unusual step of requesting that the Minister of Health and Social Services again consult with key stakeholders on the bill during this extension.

The committee received written submissions from the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Northwest Territories Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and the Registered Nurses Association of the NWT and Nunavut, and also heard from the Northwest Territories Medical Association in a public presentation on May 16, 2022.

Submitters expressed two key concerns: The lack of integration of care providers into the NWT medical system if virtual care is permitted without a referral and the role of the government in establishing professional standards of practice.

The committee received additional recommendations on future virtual care access and standards of practice considerations beyond Bill 40.

Virtual Care and Exemption to be Licensed

All submissions welcomed Bill 40 for continuing access to virtual care beyond the COVID-19 pandemic emergency measures. As part of clause 9, this change would add subsection 31.6 and create an exemption to the NWT registration and permit requirements for medical practitioners registered in another jurisdiction and referred to by an NWT medical practitioner or nurse practitioner. The proposed addition of subsection 31.6 was not contentious.

The exemption from licensing based on a referral from NWT practitioners has enabled physicians to practice virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic. All submitters made it clear that this was a welcomed practice that should continue.

The Canadian Medical Association and the NWT Medical Association supported the proposed exemption to allow physicians licensed elsewhere to provide virtual consultation to NWT residents beyond the current public health emergency given the care originates in a request from an NWT care provider with a referral. The NWT Medical Association pointed out that the referral allows for integrated and coordinated service delivery.

Medical practitioners providing virtual care based on a referral are integrated because they can work within an NWT-wide electronic medical record system. The fact that NWT-wide territorial staff are all employees of the NTHSSA allows coordination of virtual care within and outside of NWT.

The NWT Medical Association considered those aspects of the act that would enable referrals to physicians outside of the NWT an essential element of NWT healthcare and wants to continue this.

The Registered Nurses Association of the NWT and Nunavut, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, welcomed the exemption. Both submitters explain that the exemption would remove barriers to accessing safe and quality care for the NWT residents and leveraging virtual care as a complement to accessing in-person healthcare and services.

Virtual Care Register

Most respondents expressed strong concerns about the proposed creation of a virtual care register. Bill 40 proposed creating a new 12-month registration and licensing requirement for physicians practicing in other jurisdictions and in good standing with the Canadian Medical Protective Association to provide virtual care in the NWT (section 31, 81).

The registry would allow out of territory health practitioners to practice virtual care to NWT residents without a referral from an NWT health practitioner. This scenario raised several concerns in the medical profession.

Submitters were concerned that allowing practitioners to see patients without a referral may create a parallel system and leave doctors unable to integrate into the NWT medical system by not having access to NWT pharmacies. The NWT Medical Association expressed that the register would not be necessary and potentially harmful to patient care quality and cultural safety in the NWT.

The Canadian Medical Association saw concerns with continuity of care due to the fragmentation between in-person and virtual patient and physician relationships. Challenges with tests and diagnostics would potentially increase demand in hospital emergency departments. Equity concerns would arise, considering potential private pay options in virtual care services.

To address the lack of integration with NWT systems, the College of Family Physicians of Canada asked to include in the virtual register requirements for physicians. Physicians would need to have the ability to ensure informational continuity so that medical records are available and complete, have established connections with an in-person point of care in the NWT, not be affiliated with for-profit paid-access solutions, and have experience and appreciation for the uniqueness of the NWT's regions.

Concerned with continuity of care, the Registered Nurses Association for the NWT and Nunavut advocated for physicians practicing virtual care to understand the role nurses have in communities and healthcare in the North. This would recognize that the proposed amendments would affect the practice of registered nurses and nurse practitioners who work closely with the residents in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to now pass this over to the Member for the Deh Cho. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Standards of Practice

Bill 40 proposes adapting standards for the practice of medicine by adding a code of ethics and competency programming. The new paragraph would allow the Minister to recommend regulations on code of ethics, continuing competency programs and the nature of those programs, and scope of practice frameworks and guidelines. The medical community responded with concerns that in most provinces, licensing colleges set and enforce standards of practice within the framework of self-regulation of the medical profession physicians.

The NWT Medical Association pointed out that the profession's priorities may not always align with the priorities of the government. The College of Family Physicians of Canada recommended aligning the application of standards with comparable structures in neighbouring provinces and suggested Alberta is the best fit due to proximity and existing integration.

The College recommended considering an affiliation with an existing licensing College for ease of operation. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada encouraged the NWT government to collaborate with the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada and its regional authorities to ensure pan-Canadian alignment in professional standards of practice.

The Registered Nurses Association of NWT and Nunavut welcomed the new paragraph as it would lead to "increased patient safety and satisfaction by ensuring that virtual practice physicians clearly understand the context of virtual practice in the North."

Gaps to be Addressed in Legislation

The College of Family Physicians of Canada noted that the amendments proposed in Bill 40 do not address issues the Physician Executive sees with the current MPA. These include the reliance on outdated certification requirements, the differential and discriminatory treatment of family physicians compared to other specialists, the inability to administer conditional licenses, etc.

The College recommended consultation with the local physician leadership from the Territorial Physician Executive to understand these requirements.

Future Collaboration Toward Virtual Care Access The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada encouraged the NWT government to ensure pan-Canadian alignment in professional standards of practice in Canada. It

recommended actions toward virtual care access and standards of practice beyond Bill 40:

1. Leverage virtual care models in an ecosystem that promotes continuity of care (ensure availability of information in the NWT Electronic Medical Record);
2. Provide virtual care within NWT's publicly insured system, which meets the principles of the Canada Health Act;
3. Provide all people living in NWT, including those in rural and remote communities, access to reliable high-speed internet to ensure they reap the full benefits of virtual care;
4. Design virtual care services in genuine partnership with Indigenous communities of the NWT to ensure care is delivered in a culturally safe manner;
5. Collaborate with people with lived experience (including patients and care partners) to ensure that the virtual care model meets the needs of the people relying on it;
6. Pursue ongoing quality improvement to assure NWT's successful deployment of virtual care;
7. Integrate virtual care services with in-person care. Consider physician workforce, medical facilities, specialized equipment, clinical teams and other necessary resources, to ensure a proper balance of in-person and virtual specialty care within the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn it over to Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Mahsi.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Considerations

The committee considered several motions that would improve Bill 40, including removing the virtual care register, and adding a requirement to consult with the medical professional community before proposing regulations concerning standards of practice.

Virtual Care and Exemption to be Licensed in the NWT

Committee members noted the strong endorsement of an exception to registration to continue virtual care with referral and to allow the Minister to enter into agreements that would exempt care practitioners from licensing in the NWT and permit them to provide virtual care services to NWT residents. To this effect,

subsections 31.6 and 31.7 of clause 9 were maintained.

Virtual Care Register

The committee took into consideration the risks and concerns expressed in the submission. It was noted that the proposed virtual care register would not apply to every situation to prevent unlicensed physicians from practicing in the NWT, not ensure continuity of care or connection in the NWT system, not entirely remove the administrative burden; and, may create a sense of oversight not truly reflective of the situation.

Committee put forward Motions 2, 3, 4, 9, 12 to 19, and 23 to remove the virtual care register from Bill 40.

Standards of Practice and Professional Self-Regulation

Bill 40 proposed establishing or adopting standards of practice, codes of ethics, continuing competency programs, and the nature of those programs, and scope of practice frameworks and guidelines.

The committee observed that the Health and Social Services Professions Act uses the exact wording to give Cabinet the power to make regulations to establish standards of practice, codes of ethics, and competency programs and guidelines.

After hearing from various medical organizations about the potential for the Minister to infringe on the independence of the medical profession through this clause, the committee deliberated whether the concern was the regulation-making power or the standards themselves.

The committee recognizes the position of the professions that creating regulations on standards of practice may infringe on the independence of the medical profession. In connection with those concerns, committee members heard that the concern is not at the level of the standards themselves but that should the Minister choose the standards, it could mean competing interests because the Minister's interest may not be in line with patients' interests.

In conversations with the committee, the Department of Health and Social Services expressed the commitment to consult the medical profession on standards of practice adapted from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta to bring standards into force in late 2022. The Department plans to include consultations on adopting the Canadian Medical Association's Code of Ethics and Professionalism.

The current legislation allows the Minister to develop regulations respecting standards for the

practice of medicine. Therefore, Bill 40 does not contemplate removing or adding the power that the Minister already has. Therefore, removing this power would not be within the scope of Bill 40. The committee considered all comments on self-regulation out of scope but looked to other ways to ensure collaboration as noted in the next section.

The Requirement to Consult before Proposing Regulations

The committee proposed that the Minister should consult with the NWT Medical Association before recommending making regulations regarding establishing or adopting standards of practice, codes of ethics, continuing competency programs and the nature of those programs, and scope of practice frameworks and guidelines under clause 24 para 94.

Committee pursued an amendment with Motion No. 10 allowing the Commissioner to make the stipulated regulations only after consultation with the Northwest Territories Medical Association.

Mr. Speaker, I will now ask to pass it on to my colleague, Member for Monfwi. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

Several concerns from witnesses were about aspects of virtual care or professional regulations that the committee did not consider in scope with Bill 40. However, the committee found the recommendations relevant to creating a supportive environment for the legislative changes to be successful.

Standards of Practice

The NWT Medical Association requested the NWT government consider the alternate process by contracting organizations such as College of Physicians to develop the standards of practice for physicians. The committee recognizes the position of the professions and accordingly makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Minister engage the services of an independent body, such as other Colleges of Physicians, to develop standards of practice for physicians practicing in the NWT

Ensuring Meaningful Participation

The committee noted that while meaningful participation by physicians in discussions of standards for physicians is desirable and necessary, the NWT reality is that physicians are

often working at maximum levels of their capacities with little time left for extensive consultation. Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 2: The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the GNWT work with the NWT Medical Association to ensure they have the ability to meaningfully participate when they are consulted on any proposed standards for physicians in the NWT.

Understanding Certification Requirements.

The committee considered further comments by the College of Family Physicians of Canada on the Medical Professions Act. The College notes problems with the current legislation, the reliance on outdated certification requirements, differential and discriminatory treatment of family physicians compared to other specialists, and the inability to administer conditional licenses as current gaps not addressed by legislative improvements. The College states that "consultation with the local physician leadership from the Territorial Physician Executive would be beneficial in gaining further understanding" of these requirements. Further, committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 3: The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services consult with the local physician leadership from the Territorial Physician Executive to understand certification requirements, differential treatment of family physicians compared to other specialists, and the administration of conditional licenses.

Recommendation 4: The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the GNWT provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

I'll now pass it on to MLA Caitlin Cleveland, MLA from Kam Lake. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respond to all of the above.

Clause-by-Clause Review.

The clause-by-clause review of Bill 40 was held on March 19, 2022. At this review, committee moved ten motions. The Minister concurred with all ten motions.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Social Development's review of Bill 40. The

committee thanks the medical profession and the public for their participation in the review process, the Department of Health and Social Services for the collaborative effort to improve the proposed changes, and everyone involved in reviewing this bill for their assistance and input.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 40: An Act to Amend the Medical Profession Act, as amended and reprinted, as ready for consideration in the Committee of the Whole. This concludes the Standing Committee's review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 31-19 (2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 40, An Act to Amend the Medical Professions Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions. The motion is carried. Report of Bill 40, An Act to Amend the Medical Professions Act, will be moved into Committee of the Whole later today. Thank you.

Reports of standing and special committees.

Colleagues, we will take a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome back, colleagues. Returns to Oral Questions. Acknowledgements. Oral Questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 1111-19(2): FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Minister of MACA.

Mr. Speaker, we have flood victims sleeping in tents, staying at the shelters, some with friends, and some with no place to stay. Can the Minister tell me when and how we will house those that have been displaced from their homes as

residents need immediate accommodation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand this is a very challenging time for residents, as I've experienced that in the Nahendeh riding last year as well as residents from Fort Good Hope and as well as Little Buffalo. Disaster events are stressful and disruptive. And I understand that people just want to get things back to normal so that they can have a place where they can put their head. The reality is that things are not normal and that people have been displaced from their homes for anywhere from a week to several months, depending on what damages have been done to their homes. I know that every day is a very long time when you are out of your homes but we are working as quickly as we can to put -- but we will -- it'll take some time to get people into all the accommodations needed, long-term accommodations. Evacuees who cannot return home to do the flood damages are encouraged to contact our pathfinders who will talk them through about what's their available requirements are and to make sure that they're register reflects their full housing situation. So we will work with them. We encourage you to reach out to the pathfinders and we will work as fast as we can to get people into accommodations, medium to long-term accommodations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm the process for approving accommodation requests for those who are displaced and are without accommodation; which department or departments have that responsibility? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the health system which was the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, and the local housing authority are working together to ensure those who cannot return to their homes will be provided with long-term accommodations. So we do have a system in place that will triage them, I guess is the best way to describe it, and then we will see what their needs are and we have a system in place for how we do it. Damage assessments will help determine who requires accommodations and for how long. Pathfinders will follow up with anybody who is registered to better understand who needs accommodations and help support individual specific accommodations are required. So, again, reach out to our pathfinders. We have two in there right now, and we have in the

process of hiring additional pathfinders and they're going to be located in the ECE building which is by the courthouse there. So we will have people there as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many residents welcomed those displaced by flooding into their homes when accommodations were needed. Will the Minister confirm if there will be an opportunity to compensate those who opened their homes when accommodations were needed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, no. There's no provision within the Disaster Assistance Policy to provide funding to those households who have taken in evacuees. Mr. Speaker, though, the outpour of support for evacuees has been amazing to see. And I know the residents of Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation will continue to support their neighbours, family and friends, during this very difficult time. And unfortunately this is the process, and we need to follow it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, accommodations is very important to many people, and I know that right now there are some that are staying in motels and hotels, and you know, they get news that they might get kicked out one day or the next day and they're not sure what's going on. So can the Minister confirm how long will accommodations be covered for those displaced by flooding? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for that question. And it is a very important question moving forward.

The duration of long-term accommodations will depend on the level of damage to the residence and their homes and a reasonable duration for the repairs to be completed. So that people understand, from the 2021 flood people put up in the accommodations to meet their needs while their homes are being repaired, some of these people are still in accommodations and -- so that there is we're not going to kick people out. We are going to put people in accommodations until such time as they can get back into their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1112-19(2):
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier on the work we're doing to implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

My understanding is that the Premier had kind of -- at step zero asked the GNWT to take each of the articles of UNDRIP and then do an internal inventory of current programs and services or current policies to kind of show where we already would align or perhaps didn't align, you know. Perhaps there's some areas, some articles which we are considering we are already complying with. So this would kind of just be something the Premier was going to take to the Council of Leaders so we're all on the same page of where we're starting from.

My question is, has this work been completed and, if so, is it something that could be shared? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually the request to look at the programs across to see if our programs and services align with the United Nations declaration was done by all of the departments across the GNWT. However, it was also -- that information was also provided to our special committee on reconciliation. I want to make sure I got the -- Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs as a part of the research that was compiled to be able to provide the interim report.

I do know that the Member is part of that committee and had access to that information. But right at this moment that information is not public. We are also working with the working group of the Council of Leaders to -- to also identify what programs align and what don't align and then develop an action plan from that work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'm curious about any internal work that's kind of occurring. I recognize that there are larger questions that the declaration raises, you know, how we are going to operationalize free prior informed consent is obviously a very large question we have to work with the Council of Leaders. But to me, there's a number of smaller internal changes to GNWT internal policies, perhaps our consultation policies, perhaps how we structure the government to empower regions differently. I think there's probably a lot of work that we just need to do internally.

So my question for the Premier, has any of that work started; have we made any internal changes to how the GNWT operates in the hopes of implementing the declaration? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're always trying to improve our services, programs and services. I'm just thinking a couple of them that stick off my head right now are the Indigenous Government Procurement Policy. That has never been attempted in any government that I know of before this so that's work that we're starting now. And then of course the government already has their mandatory Living Well Together, which is an Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training that we're asking every employee and every MLA to actually review. So that services people. All staff are more cognitive of the issues Indigenous people have faced and hopefully will reflect on the services that they provide.

And like the Member said, there's lots of small things but those are the two bigger ones that stick in my head right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Premier state that the plan is, you know, we're doing this inventory exercise and then hopefully there will be an action plan. I'm just wondering whether we have a timeline on when that action plan will be public? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the Member always looking at this. It's really important work, the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples. However, I keep having to remind Members that this work is done by Indigenous people in partnership with us. They're taking the lead on this. And so as when that work plan will be done, there is a working group of which the GNWT has one Member and all the Indigenous governments have membership on that. So I can't say at this point when that work will be done. It's contingent on when the Indigenous governments have said "we're done." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's my hope that since this was a priority of this Assembly that we would see something in this Assembly. And if we have to live with an action plan that, you know, we get on the last day and we actually don't do any of the work in it in the life of this Assembly, well, that's better than nothing. And I guess the other debate here is that BC and the federal government have introduced actual legislation which create a legal obligation

for the government to do this work and for departments to do this work. Are we going to see legislation to implement the declaration in the life of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to acknowledge, again, and thank the Member for when he did his opening comments today in talking about the issue, talking about we can't do this unilaterally, I agree 100 percent. Nothing about us without us is a comment to be -- pointed with me.

We did bring the concerns to the Council of Leaders table and stated when legislation that we're getting -- I'm getting pushed in the House to get legislation across by MLAs and then gave them a timeline of when we could expect what work had to be done before legislation could be done to get into this term of this government. I've had mixed reviews. Some Indigenous governments are saying, yes, let's get on it now and other ones have said, I don't care what MLAs say. I care about this and this has to be done on our time.

So we did hire a facilitator to help with that process. They are aware. The Indigenous governments are aware of the timelines and the work that has to be done before. So I'm hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that we will have some legislation during the term of this government. But I'm also respectful that if they decide that it's not to be, then the next government gets the glory for that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1113-19(2):
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE IN
FORT SMITH

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke about a shortage of RCMP staff in the community of Fort Smith. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if he believes that a lack of RCMP staff would translate to a lack of overall public safety for the people of Fort Smith? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member's asking me for my opinion, I don't want to give my opinion about situations like this. I'm not a police officer. I don't know the ins and outs of the situation in Fort Smith. But the RCMP are aware of their staffing numbers. This is not the first time that they haven't had a full complement of officers in a community. And as the Member stated, they have sent someone in to

that community. They have the ability to send in additional officers to that community if they feel that they need to. So I would say that the RCMP has this situation in hand, and if there's a need for additional officers temporarily, they have the ability to do that. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us what the Department of Justice is doing to address the RCMP staff shortage that is currently affecting Fort Smith and other NWT communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is a national issue. This isn't just one community in the Northwest Territories. During the pandemic, the depot where RCMP officers are trained in Regina was shut down and it was not accepting new recruits and was not graduating new recruits. So we are now in a time where there's a shortage across Canada of RCMP officers because they weren't training. So this is an issue that everyone is feeling. However, this is part of the daily operation of the RCMP. If there's staffing shortages, they deal with them. And the department works with them to deal with them. We do have a contract with them. And we work through the mechanisms in that contract to ensure that they are providing the services that we are paying for. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide a timeline or any further details for which he anticipates that all or most of the vacant RCMP staff positions will be filled in Fort Smith? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that level of detail. But I can get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister assure me that the RCMP vacancies can be filled with casual members from other jurisdictions until the permanent staff are all in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have control of the operations of the RCMP so I can't make that assurance personally. But the RCMP is aware of the situation and they do have the ability to bring in other officers, as I've stated. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice.

In regards to my Member's statement, has the Minister of Justice considered ways in which women, children, and those in the LGBTQ2S+ communities will be impacted by this recent supreme ruling allowing for the self-induced extreme intoxication defence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the Member is talking about is a Supreme Court case. There's a recent ruling that changed the rules on defence and the types of defence that can be put forward. That doesn't really change the situation in the Northwest Territories however. The issues that we're facing are the issues that we're facing. This is a defence that would, you know, rarely be used. I don't know if it's ever been used in the Northwest Territories. But it doesn't change the fact that we face the levels of sexual violence that the Member has already stated. So the work that the department does is focused on those issues already. So this, you know, has the potential perhaps to exacerbate the issue but nonetheless that work is the focus of the department at all times. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that response, and I'm glad that the department is always focused on the issues that we have in the Northwest Territories.

So my next question is how will the Department of Justice ensure that women, children, and those in LGBTQ2S+ communities, especially those who are Indigenous, will be supported during any criminal process? And I guess this could mean during a process that's got to do with this as a defence or like sexual violent process. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member's likely aware, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada recently established a sexual violence legal counsel team, and that's independent from the Department of Justice; I won't take credit for that. But that's a new development that's quite recent. And the department is also currently developing a new program to provide free legal advice and navigation supports for survivors of sexual, intimate partner and domestic violence, and assault. So we've secured funding to do that as well. So we are taking steps to address these very issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORAL QUESTION 1114-19(2):
SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too am an Indigenous woman of the Northwest Territories and have grown up here my entire life and have known of many other women, and even when I was younger, young girls who were being, you know, sexually -- had sexual violence against them, and the majority of the time the perpetrators were intoxicated. So my concern is with this defence, you know, and now that it's gone through the Supreme Court of Canada as possibly could affect, this could come out -- I mean, we will have defence lawyers that may try to use it if there are, so that's why I'm raising it here. And so I want to know how will the Department of Justice ensure that self-induced extreme intoxication defence will not be used to perpetuate gender-based violence against women in the Northwest Territories. We are already higher than -- the second highest in Canada. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know the federal government is likely going to respond to this decision by the Supreme Court, but we have no influence over the Supreme Court and the laws, the common law that they create, or the federal Department of Justice and the Criminal Code of Canada, or how the courts operate or the defence counsel or the prosecution service. So it is difficult for us to do what the Member is asking.

That being said, the case that the Member is referencing was a case where someone ingested a significant amount of psilocybin I believe, magic mushrooms. So it wasn't someone getting blacked out drunk. It was something else. And it's a different level than just being too drunk to know what you're doing essentially. It's not the kind of drunk you see perhaps at a party or something like that. It's a different level. And so I don't think that there's concern that this will now become commonplace in the territory. It is a very high threshold that people have to meet, and it's an extremely rare -- that people will meet that threshold. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for your definition. And I -- you know, I've read there are three cases, and there were some hallucinogens that were the cause of the three cases. But the -- my concern is is that, you know, like I said, if it is -- if it is being used, then -- then that's my concern, against the women and girls of this territory.

So will the Minister discuss some of the examples -- because there were some examples described by the Supreme Court judge that did the ruling, Kasirer, that they provided in their ruling with the federal minister. So will this -- will

our Minister ensure that they raise this issue when they have their FPT and make sure that there is going to be some -- you know, something in place or where this is going, or are they are -- you know, just to continue this conversation so that way this is not end up in -- going backwards for women, you know. We don't need to be going backwards in Canada for protection of women, especially Indigenous women will be the ones that are in effect because they're less likely to even go to the court system as they do not trust, as I mentioned in my Member's statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every time I speak with a federal minister, I bring the concerns of the territory to that Minister. And this is a perfect example of an issue that I'd be happy to bring to the Minister and have those discussions to let them know about the unique nature of the Northwest Territories, the rates of violence that we see here, and the concerns that are being raised. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1115-19(2):
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN
SMALL COMMUNITIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question for the Minister of Education.

Can the Minister tell me what actions are being taken to address recommendation number 5 of the Standing Committee Report Number 15 of June 2021? What has ECE done to support the schools in small communities?

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been planning to make plans, and then we've been implementing those plans. I can say that much for sure.

It is clear that we need to support small schools and the students in those schools, and that's why prior to the OAG releasing their report, we've been taking steps to better support students in small schools.

One of the biggest things is junior kindergarten. You know, that's a few years old now, but that is the age where intervention has the greatest effect. And so we've implemented that and we spend millions of dollars each year on that.

Northern distance learning is a way to bring some more experienced teachers essentially into

communities, virtually, to give students access to those teachers. Often in small communities, teachers are fresh out of school. They don't have a lot of experience, and they might not even stay in the community for very long. And so bringing some of those more seasoned instructors in is a way to help those students and give them some advantages. We have a territorial based support team that works with all of the different school boards and gives small schools access to some of the resources that you would generally only find in larger centres.

We have the career and education advisors that we've recently moved out into the regions so that they are closer to the small communities. And now with an end to the public health order and the restrictions, they will be travelling directly into communities to work with students.

As the Member mentioned, some of the plans going forward, as well, that have been delayed because of COVID, but there's a number of different things that we're doing to work with small communities. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. ECE committed to several actions. Can the Minister give an update? For example, I have six example but I will do two for now.

Has a team been established that can travel to small schools and provide ongoing wraparound support and training throughout the school year, and is it already travelling -- are they. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if that's the team that would support principals and teachers in small communities. If that's the case, that has been delayed. But we are working on that one. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay. So what is the progress on piloting training and support for small school principals and teachers of multigrade classroom plan for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the work is going on to create those supports so that we can go into the communities and support the teachers. So I hate to say to the Member but we are making those plans. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: What impacts will the partnering with BC for the NWT JK to 12 curriculum have on commitment made following the auditor general's report? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So curriculum needs to be updated, you know,

every once in a while, and it's been quite a while since our current curriculum was updated. Updated curriculum is generally better at, you know, teaching students, giving them the skills they need. My hope with the BC curriculum and how we can integrate northern culture directly into the curriculum, not as some sort of an add on but into the curriculum, my hope is that that will engage students more in school, make them want to go.

One of the biggest problems we have is that the attendance rates, especially in small communities, are quite low. And there's a number of reasons for that. The Member earlier spoke about the need for a whole-of-government approach essentially to change education outcomes. If a student isn't going to school, it might have nothing to do with the school. It might be that they didn't get any sleep that night because they're in a home that, you know, is too crowded and there was a lot of noise and then they couldn't sleep.

You know, there's a number of different issues that we need to address. And so curriculum is one aspect of it. But I am working with my colleagues to address some of those other issues as well in hopes that, you know, we can really make some fundamental changes because for too long, we've seen this disparity between small communities and larger centres and, you know, we are very committed to working on it and implementing changes so that we address some of those issues. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1116-19(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF CANADA-NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

My statement dealt with the current status of implementation of the federal-territorial childcare agreement and, particularly, the childcare fee reduction program, a rebate program. There was an April 15th deadline for opting into the program.

Can the Minister tell us how many childcare providers opted in, how many didn't, and have funds flowed to the enrolled providers for distribution of fee rebates to parents? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe there's 98 organizations in the Northwest Territories all together who provide childcare and charge fees. And I can say that 100 percent of the centre-based programs that offer infant and preschool programming opted in to the childcare fee reduction subsidy for 2021-2022, so prior to the beginning of this fiscal year -- or last -- the end of last fiscal year as well as this current fiscal year. All but one family day home opted in to that time period as well. And all but two organizations who offer after school programs opted in for the entirety of the program starting from January 1st of this year. So of the 98 organizations, three have not opted in. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that, and I'm sure he's going to tell me next whether the money started to flow.

But I mentioned the provisions in the agreement that cap fee increases for operators to 2.3 percent annually. And, you know, this is in an environment where nationally inflation is running at 6.7 percent. Here in Yellowknife, 7.1 percent. The Minister's confirmed the increase is above 2.3 percent will be allowed when deemed necessary. So what's the definition, Mr. Speaker, of "necessary" and when would the Minister allow increases beyond the 2.3 percent cap? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And to question 1(b), I can say that the ECE has processed the January to March payments for all programs and the majority of programs have received payments for the current fiscal year as well. And there is a 60-day window after receiving that that programs can start flowing that to parents, understanding that, you know, it could take a little bit of work.

The 2.3 percent increase was based on historic averages. And, you know, I understand that historic average is comprised of highs and lows. And so going forward, we don't have a cap set for the upcoming year. We've moved some money around within the program to ensure that we can keep up with the unforeseen costs of inflation.

Sorry, the Member was asking some -- a number of questions here. So I'm just going through the notes to see what else I can answer here.

The 2.3 percent cap, a few programs were exempted from that, and that was based on whether or not, you know, they needed an increase beyond that to survive essentially. And so in those instances where the operating costs were exceeding what they were bringing in, that cap was adjusted. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I appreciate the detailed answers from the Minister, and of course I gave him the heads up with these questions ahead of time.

So I've cited the use of funds for costs like training, staff development, wage subsidies, or costs of infrastructure to increase spaces. Can the Minister tell us whether there has been any new decisions or direction allowing use of agreement funds to meet these costs and how can providers access that funding? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the new money from the federal government, it's about \$10 million a year, and it doesn't quite double what we were already spending. We were spending \$10 million in GNWT funds and about \$2.4 of federal money. So there's already a significant amount of money going into the system prior to this new influx of money.

So the current funding that is flowing out that everyone knows about is intended to reduce the costs for parents. However, there is obviously additional money, and we are working to get that out the door.

So the childcare fee reduction, that's the money for parents, we got that out the door. Parents should see probably over \$4 million more in their pockets this year because of that. The wages for early childhood educators is the other big issue.

ECE already provides an incentive for early childhood educators based on the level of education. And so that's a payment of however many thousands of dollars based on education levels. This year, we are also rolling out the retention incentive bonus for early childhood educators out of the new federal funding recognizing that their wages don't reflect the importance of their roles.

There's also additional funding -- there's also funding now for post-secondary education. We have bursaries. We provide money to Aurora College or College Nordique to provide programming to educator -- early childhood educators. We'll be doing more of that as well.

So we're doing a lot, and this money is essentially allowing us to do more of the same as well as further reduce costs. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I've talked here about, you know, the need to create more childcare spaces, particularly in communities that don't have childcare.

So can the Minister tell us what action needs taking now to create or ensure that new spaces are created in those communities that do not have childcare providers, period. And how is the Minister going to meet the demand for more childcare workers to provide universal and affordable childcare? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are very complex questions with many aspects to them. I will do my best to try and remember everything that the Member asked and provide some answers.

So as the Members know, we have the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund, and that is being prioritized for communities where there are no childcare programs. There's currently 12 communities with no childcare programs, and that \$1 million is available on application to communities to help them build that type of infrastructure.

We also have existing programming to help retrofit or make spaces more appropriate for early learning and childcare centres when perhaps not a new build or substantial renovations are required. So we're already doing that.

The other component is ensuring there are enough childcare providers or childcare workers to staff these childcare centres. And I spoke about the supports for students earlier as well as the retention incentive bonus, which I think really is key.

If you have people looking at the job market and you have a job where people are making good money, you're going to attract people. So that really is one of the keys of this program as we roll it out, to ensure that that is significant driver of people into this industry. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1117-19(2):
FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Minister of ITI.

Mr. Speaker, there will be gaps in the Disaster Assistance Policy. Therefore, will the Minister of ITI confirm how her department will work with MACA and other departments to close those gaps for businesses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first off, I do want to

acknowledge the troubling times that are being faced by many businesses in Hay River. I think it's been mentioned a few times that several of us had the opportunity to attend to see what's going on for ourselves, and it's plainly obvious that there's quite significant impact to the community and to the business community there.

We are of course all working together as one government. That's why multiple Ministers did attend to bring to bear each of our perspectives. And ITI will continue working with MACA. MACA is the first point of call for the Disaster Assistance Policy, that that still the -- should be the people's first stop, or using their pathfinders if folks aren't familiar with how to make those accesses quickly. But beyond that, ITI's regional offices and our local staff here out of headquarters, given that some of our regional staff have been impacted, they are working directly with businesses. Similarly, staff at BDIC are in contact directly with the businesses to try to identify indeed what those gaps are likely to be. And once we have a better understanding, we'll be working hard and diligently to figure out what kinds of initiatives we could potentially bring forward to fill those gaps, or working with federal partners to see what opportunities they might have to help fill those gaps. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during her visit to Hay River and meeting with business owners, does the Minister expect there will be businesses in the fishing, agricultural, and tourism sectors requesting assistance above what DAP may provide? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I should say thank you to the MLAs from the region who invited us there and invited me to attend and helped arrange some of the meetings that we had. It definitely -- it helps myself, it helps the department to have that hands on and have eyes on. You know, I -- my own -- I'm certainly not an expert so I'm hesitant to conclude that it is inevitable which businesses will or will not be experiencing impacts beyond what's available in the Disaster Assistance Policy. I mean, I can certainly say that there is, you know, some of the businesses were essentially wiped out. So, you know, what conclusions there are from that, I would think are probably obvious. But that's the work that's happening right now, is to try to quantify them as best can be done to do that as quickly as can be done, and then to then go back to, for instance, Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Similarly, agriculture. There is national programs. We are already having those conversations, not waiting for the final numbers, but with that groundwork in place and then with

the numbers coming in, it's my hope that we'll be in a position to react quickly once the final numbers are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if her department will assist those in the fishing, agriculture, and tourism sectors with funding to offset loss of revenue and wages, something that I'm sure isn't included in the DAP process. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's not a standing or standalone program that offers support for lost wages or lost revenue. And as many will recall, early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, both -- not only our government, the federal government had to be creating and crafting those types of programs sort of in the moment and in order to respond. So I can't say necessarily what type of additional programming or programs might become available, might need to be crafted. But I can certainly, again, indicate that we are in touch with the businesses in the community. We'll continue to do so. If there's community businesses that aren't being connected with or haven't had those connections, you know, I certainly would want them to reach out, whether through their MLA or through their regional ITI office, because hearing and understanding exactly the needs, what are those areas of need, and what is being covered by insurance, what is being covered by disaster assistance, and what gaps are there going to be get these businesses back up and running as quickly as possible. You know, the more we can help be flexible by understanding those specifics, the more we can then tailor any programs that might need to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now what's happening in Hay River is that the businesses that have been impacted are basically cleaning up, trying to repair, you know, damages. And the reality is that no one will break even. But what I'm hoping is that we can get them to close to break even as possible.

You know, the ones that are working, you know, they're making a paltry \$20 an hour under the DAP process. So Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if her department has identified or set aside funds specifically to assist those businesses affected by the flooding in the South Slave?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this I think actually draws on the Department of Finance.

So when there's emergencies of this nature, emergencies of any nature, you know, there's certainly money that gets set aside in our supplementary reserve for requests and issues that come up over the course of a fiscal year. Individual departments, once they have their appropriation on April 1st, may have flexibility. You know, this is depending on what's going on in the department. Projects might get deferred. Different work might get deferred in order to have some flexibility in a budget and to provide some short-term relief or short-term programs or enhance certain programs.

Beyond that, though, Mr. Speaker, there of course is just the simple reality that the government right now, we were protecting a significant surplus. So we do have some flexibility within our own GNWT budget and are keenly looking at what's happening in the South Slave working with MACA, asking everyone to register with the Disaster Assistance Policy so we have a good handle on what the needs are going to be, and then, as a whole-of-government, can be looking at what types of gaps there are and going back to the federal government to see what they can help us with to ensure that we are responding in a way that is flexible and responsive and really truly meeting the needs of those communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1118-19(2):
BUILDERS LIEN ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice in regards to the Builders Lien Act.

Multiple NWT businesses are asking and calling for modern legislation in regards to the builders lien legislation. Following public engagement in March of 2021, the Department of Justice tabled and public shared published a What We Heard report. And in that report, it indicated that a bill would be brought forward later in 2021 but the bill still has not been tabled. And so I'm wondering what has held up this work. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the department is currently drafting the bill for the new Builders Lien Act, which will replace the existing Mechanics Lien Act, which is quite a bold piece of legislation. The legislative proposal, which is one of the very first steps in turning a need into a law, was submitted in summer of 2021, was approved in late November, and the drafting began earlier this year.

The department was hoping to introduce the bill last year but, you know, things take time and it's fallen a bit behind. Nonetheless, we are considering all the feedback that the Member referenced and hope to have this bill ready soon. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if we can expect a bill to be tabled in the House in the fall session? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's the plan.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on feedback from residents, can the Minister give us an idea of the scope of what will be included in the bill from what they heard in the What We Heard report? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there's been really no major amendments since 1980s on that bill so that's why it's a repeal and replace essentially.

So in terms of scope, the purpose of the legislation is to ensure that parties who contribute work, labour, or materials to a construction project in the NWT are paid and to provide a remedy if they are not. Lien legislation also creates stability and predictability for owners of construction projects by setting out obligations they have to other parties involved in the project. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Minister. Minister, can the -- sorry, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if the bill will include mediation or arbitration as an alternative to court solutions? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the department has considered mandatory arbitration within the bill but is not contemplating this further based on the feedback that we received from the public. However, nothing in the bill will interfere with or prohibit the application of the Arbitration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1119-19(2):
FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Minister of Housing. And I appreciate the fact

that she came to Hay River last weekend and toured the assets looked after by the Hay River Housing Authority. So the questions I didn't provide them to you, but they're easy to answer.

What support is the department providing to those housing tenants displaced from their homes? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the questions. And I did travel to Hay River over the weekend as well. And I was glad to see that we do have the LHO and the manager very active at the ground level.

Right now, the Housing NWT is in the process of renovating and repairing the current units in Hay River that have been affected. Also we are looking at -- we also provided sea cans for people's belongings that have been damaged that are required. We did honestly provide as well too emotional support. I was very, very impressed by the LHO being at the ground level, and such a traumatic event. I was very, very glad to hear that the staff at the ground level has been very available and very cooperative with the community. It was something very tragic for that region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister is correct in saying that the LHO has been very supportive of the residents. They've done a great job in assisting them in making the move, especially out of Whispering Willows.

So what additional supports or supports are being provided to the Hay River Housing Authority and the board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now the Housing NWT, we did have employees going down to the community immediately as of last Monday, and they were doing the assessments of our public housing units in the community as well. But I need to bring this back to our department because I know this is going to be a really lengthy process but it is going to end up coming with a financial contribution to the LHO as well too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell me if there is a timeline to complete renovations to housing units, more specifically, I guess, Whispering Willows because that impacts, you

know, a vulnerable sector of residents. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to also report that the LHO as well at the ground level had been very cooperative in trying to help us find additional places for our residents in our public housing units. The last update I did get was three to four months depending on availability of the contractors and the specific repairs that need to be done in Whispering Willows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me whether her department is in discussions with the federal government to try and get the empty houses that they have sitting in Hay River for use as temporary accommodation for some of the families that were displaced? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been able to enter into an agreement with the federal government to have access to the four federal housing units in the community, but that administration will be handled by Municipal and Community Affairs as this would be for homeowners. Housing NWT is providing assistance to our public housing tenants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1120-19(2):
FUNDING FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: This is a question for Education. Will the Minister commit to reviewing how it allocates funding to small communities particularly to see if they are adequately funded and resourced? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There will never be enough money for Education. I think that's fair to say. You know, we can always do more. But I can say that we have made some changes to the funding formula that do benefit small communities. The way communities are funded, they're based on school population and at times there's a bit of a cliff when the school falls below a certain number of students it can experience a drop off in funding. So we have smoothed that slope for a number of different funding streams. And so that is something that

happened this year that is benefitting small communities.

As part of the larger Education Act to modernization initiatives, we will be reviewing how schools are funded. Because I've been saying since day one I would prefer to see funding that ensures equitable education across the territory. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Will the Minister commit to providing more flexibility on how funds can be spent so communities and staff can be more creative on program delivery?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So where there's a district education council or like the TCSA, the department provides a lump sum of funding, and there are essentially three pots of money. One pot of money has to be used for inclusive schooling, and so that's ensuring that there are supports to support students at different levels in the same classroom. One portion has to be used for Indigenous language and education. And the rest can be used for anything. We don't really have strings attached to it. The delivery of education is the responsibility of the local education body. And so ECE is quite hands off and allows as much creativity as an education body can muster. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. This is one of the example that, you know, I said I had six examples so I'll add one more. We still have time.

Has ECE advanced the piloting of a support network that meets the need of students, educators, and principals, is centered on Indigenous view, and when is the pilot completed?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that information. Perhaps I can check the dashboard. Everything in the action plan that was a response to the Office of the Auditor General report is online in the progress tracker. And so when an item is in progress, that is noted on the online tracker. So I don't have that information but I can check that out and let the Member know. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Another example is in 2020 -- in 2020 and 2021 school that did not align their calendars saw some of their NDL students missing up to 25 percent of NDL class periods for some courses during the academic year.

What has been the progress in working with educators, administrators, and district education authorities in aligning the calendars of schools

offering northern business learning programming? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that is not a simple answer. So what I can say is that northern distance learning has produced some amazing results. You know, I hear great stories about it. I hear about students who, you know, in small communities who are taking these, you know, advanced level courses, academic courses, and making their way to university. And it's not obvious that they would have that opportunity in their community if not for northern distance learning. So it is a very valuable project, and I'm -- I don't want to say proud, but I'm happy with the investments that this government and the previous government have made into that program. It's been expanded. However, its progress really hasn't been helped by COVID, both because communities, you know, understandably, did not want people coming in to their communities to install the hardware and things like that associated with northern distance learning. As well, there were of course school closures and things like that that -- that slowed things down.

That being said, we are making some progress, and it's been unfortunate that education bodies have been busy dealing with other things with school closures, with school reopenings. It has really hindered a lot of the progress that we would have liked to see.

I can say, though, that because education bodies themselves determine their school calendar, they submit their school calendars for approval, there have been some progress. So I know in the Beaufort Delta, for example, the school calendars have been synchronized this last year.

Now, I haven't spoken with the chair about this but I presume it is for things like northern distance learning because that was -- that's where it's from. Northern distance learning originated in the Beaufort Delta. And however, the DEC, the district education council, the overarching body, their decisions are sometimes at odds with what the communities want. So I've heard from local communities that their desire to have calendars that differ from their region has not been heard.

You know, in different -- the territory is vast. And even though there could be a single district education council, it covers education bodies over a large area. And you know, one of the main issues is the hunting season. You know, we face that situation here in the Assembly when we look at our calendar and how we want to, you know, when we want to meet. Basically our calendar here is crafted around the different hunting seasons around the Northwest Territories.

Similarly, we hear those concerns from education bodies as well. And so while we have -- there has been movement in aligning calendars within regions, we are not at the point where we have a territory-wide calendar yet. And I'm not sure given local bodies' desires that we'll get there. But we are working on it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Way to run the clock there.

Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 660-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF BILL 52:
ELEVATORS AND LIFTS ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Plain Language Summary for Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 661-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF BILL 53: AN
ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Plain Language Summary for Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 662-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SURFACE
RIGHTS BOARD 2022/23 BUDGET 2022/2024
STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUSINESS PLAN

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2022/23 Budget, and the 2022/2024 Strategic Plan and Business Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 663-19(2):
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF
CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: ADDICTIONS
PREVENTION AND RECOVERY SERVICES IN
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES,
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR REPORT 2022

Colleagues, I wish to table the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly: Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services in the Northwest Territories, Independent Auditor Report 2022.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 56-19(2):
REAPPOINTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION MEMBER

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 2nd, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Legislative Assembly recommend to the reappointment of Ms. Gail Cyr of the city of Yellowknife for a term of four years to the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission.

And further that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of this appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 57-19(2):
HOUSING NWT TRANSFERS TO LONG-TERM
TENANTS

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 2nd, 2022, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes that this Legislative Assembly calls upon Housing NWT to increase efforts to transfer ownership of Housing NWT units to long-term tenants who have lived in their existing units for 20 years or more and are willing to assume ownership of their family home for a nominal fee.

And further that Housing NWT will work with municipal and Indigenous governments to ensure land leases or fee simple titles for their units remains affordable when transferred from Housing NWT to the current tenants.

And furthermore that Housing NWT increase efforts to transfer unused and vacant units to interested residents in the communities throughout the territory.

And furthermore that efforts supporting the transfer of unused and vacant units as well as units of long-term tenants commence immediately by Housing NWT.

And furthermore that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within the 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 52:
ELEVATORS AND LIFTS ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act, be read for the second time.

The bill establishes a framework for regulating elevating devices, amusement rides, passenger ropeways and other regulated products and regulated work performed in respect of those products;

- establishes requirements for certificates of qualification, contractor licences, operating permits and other authorizations in respect of regulated work and regulated products;
- provides for the establishment of a registry for the purpose of furthering safety in respect of regulated work and regulated products;
- allows for the adoption of codes or standards respecting regulated work and regulated products;
- provides for administrative measures such as the appointment of a Registrar of Standards, a Superintendent of Standards, a Chief Inspector and other inspectors;
- allows the Chief Inspector to accept an alternative approach to safety that is consistent with the objectives of the act, or to issue a variance for an individual circumstance on a single occasion that allows for deviation from a provision of the regulation;.
- creates prohibition and offences;

- provides for the enforcement of the act and any regulations made under it; and
- authorizes the making of regulations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 52 has had second reading and is referred to a committee.

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 53:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 53, an Act to Amend the Liquor Act, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Liquor Act to continue the Liquor Commission as the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission;

- Include the regulation of cannabis in the Commission's list of duties;
- Reinforce the separation of enforcement and adjudication responsibilities under the act by removing the supervision of enforcement actions from the Executive Secretary's duties;
- Remove provisions disqualifying persons from licensing eligibility on the basis of being charged with but not yet convicted of an offence; and.
- Clarify the rules pertaining to the personal importation of liquor into the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the list of amendments are pretty innocuous and I'm not all that opposed to them. But I do want to speak to -- I think is an absolute priority that this Assembly amend the Liquor Act. I know the department did a What We Heard, did

some engagement, and has gotten that feedback from the public which we hopefully will see soon. And it raises some very significant questions about how we're going to update our outdated liquor regime in this territory. Clearly this bill does not do that. But I grow concerned by introducing this amendment to the Liquor Act. It is essentially a concession that we will not make any significant changes to the Liquor Act in the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 53 has had second reading and is referred to a 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, 29, and Bill 40, Committee Report 29-19(2), Tabled Document 657-19(2), Tabled Document 658-19(2) with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

COMMITTEE REPORT 29-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Committee Report Report 29-19(2). Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 29-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2020-2021. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee's report was read into the record on Thursday, May 26th, 2022. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. The Official Languages Act requires the Commissioner to prepare an annual report. The report includes information on the number of complaints filed. It can also include recommendations. The Speaker tables the report in the Legislative Assembly. Once tabled, committee reviews the report.

As part of the review the languages commissioner, Ms. Brenda Gauthier, appeared before the committee on February 17, 2022. She delivered an excellent presentation on her 2020-2021 Annual Report. The committee commends her work to relocate the Office of the Official Languages Commissioner to Fort Smith as well as her work building relations to understand and promote language rights.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 29-19(2), Standing Committee on the Government Operations Report on the Review of the Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2020-2021.

Seeing that there's no comments -- Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 239-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021 – CLARIFICATION OF
LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER'S ROLE,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment clarify the role of the languages commissioner, specifically regarding how the languages commissioner may bring forward

concerns and recommendations to the Minister responsible for Official Languages. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. I know even in the last Assembly, the last official languages commissioner, there was some confusion over who the recommendations should actually go to and who is responsible for acting on them. And in some previous language commissioner's reports there was some criticism leveled at the Legislative Assembly itself for not acting on recommendations from previous reports. And I think there was some misunderstanding between the executive and legislative branches of government. You know, if recommendations from the official languages commissioner would come to the Standing Committee on Government Operations but the government OPs committee doesn't write legislation, can't make changes to the legislation itself unless someone wants to bring forward a private Member's bill, and maybe that's something committee might want to think about at some point. But anyways, there was some confusion over who actually is responsible for responding to recommendations and actually following up on this. And I do believe that those are the responsibility of the executive branch. So that's what I think this recommendation is aimed at, and I'm sure we can clarify that in the legislation moving forward as well. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 240-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021 – REQUESTS FOR
INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC BODIES,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this and committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment strengthen the languages commissioner's ability

to get requested information from public bodies including time-bound requirements to respond to requests. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 241-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021 – PUBLIC BODIES'
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment impose time-bound requirements on public bodies to respond to the recommendations from the Languages Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 242-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2020-2021 – GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

---Carried

The motion is carried.

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 29-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2020-2021,.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 29-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2020-2021.

Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame le President. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

---SHORT RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 29-19(2) and would like to report progress with four motions adopted. And Mr. Speaker, I move the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

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

---Carried.

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 46:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE MOTOR VEHICLES
ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 46, an Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I also request a recorded vote. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion? All those in favour, please rise.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 46 has had third reading.

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 47:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT
STANDARDS ACT, NO. 2

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 47, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, No. 2, be read for the third time. And Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Recorded Vote

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

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour; zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 47 has had third reading.

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 1st, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to 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 54-19(2), Improving Health Care in Small Communities
 - Motion 55-19(2), Appointment of Integrity Commissioner
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Bill 40, An Act to Amend the Medical Profession Act
 - Committee Report 30-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
 - Tabled Document 657-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2022-2023
 - Tabled Document 658-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2022-2023
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Colleagues before we leave today, I just want to say one thing – Let's Go Oilers.

This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 1st, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:01 p.m.