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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, June 1, 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 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 252-19(2):
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
REPORT ON ADDICTIONS PREVENTION
AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

HON. JULIE GREEN: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of Health and Social Services in August 2020, I had the opportunity to add two personal priorities to the Premier's mandate letter for me. One of the two was to reduce the toll of substance abuse on the residents of the Northwest Territories by leading a whole-of-government interdepartmental approach to developing evidence-based policies and programs and develop a robust addictions treatment aftercare regime, including a territorial alcohol strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I chose this priority for a couple of reasons. The first is that I am acutely aware of the deep damage addictions does to individuals, families, and communities. The second relates to an experience I had in the 18th Legislative Assembly. The Standing Committee on Social Development at that time toured the four treatment facilities in Alberta and British Columbia used by people from NWT. We met NWT residents there and heard the story of their journey to and through treatment. But, and this is a big but, in some cases they were reluctant to return to their home communities because they anticipated they would have no where to live and few aftercare supports of the kind they had access to in the south.

I want to provide residents in recovery the services they need to heal.

I thought about this priority when I met with staff from the Office of the Auditor General on Monday afternoon to be briefed on their report. I welcome the Office of the Auditor General's report as confirmation of their concerns and as a guide to how we can do better to help residents complete the recovery journey. This audit provides important insights as we continue work to improve addiction and recovery services for residents of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the findings and seven recommendations align with the health system's understanding of where gaps may exist and where improvements can be made. Providing safe, accessible, and responsive addictions services to help people heal is our priority. This is an area in which the department and health and social services authorities are already investing significant energy and resources. A few examples of this work include:

- Improving access and reducing wait times to community counselling through the implementation of the Stepped Care 2.0 model;
- Improving aftercare through the establishment of community-based programming, land-based healing, and transitional sober housing options;
- Engagement with individuals with lived experience and living expertise to increase our understanding of the addictions recovery needs of residents; and finally,
- Improving cultural safety through the establishment of mandatory cultural, safety, and anti-racism training and the work to establish an Office of Indigenous Client Experience.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the work on these initiatives, that it has been validated as useful and significant to addressing addictions recovery needs of NWT residents. To ensure

the meaningful use of the information contained in the report, I can share with you that the results will also be used by the Department of Health and Social Services to inform the development of the Territorial Alcohol Strategy, another aspect of my personal priority in this area referenced at the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, while all of this is promising, I recognize that the audit findings have highlighted shortcomings in the current system of addiction services and supports. There are areas of service delivery and approach that require greater focus and attention, and these are being taken seriously.

The department and the health and social services authorities have agreed with all the recommendations outlined in the Office of the Auditor General's report. The department and authorities have committed to act on all of them.

A more comprehensive draft action plan outlines activities and timelines for improving addictions prevention and recovery services. This document will be shared with the standing committee, and I look forward to further discussion with them about the audit findings. Together, we will create a more comprehensive response to the Office of the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the high rate of addictions in the NWT. This situation is rooted in colonization and the trauma of residential schools. I understand the devastating effect on families and communities across this territory. I am grateful for the work done by the Office of the Auditor General and for the opportunity for the health and social services system to learn from this process to strengthen addiction recovery services. I want to assure residents this opportunity will not be wasted. The department and the health and social services authorities will act on these recommendations to make meaningful and lasting improvements to the addictions prevention and recovery system, and to give those who suffer from addictions the tools they need to regain their health. I am committed to ensuring progress is made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 253-19(2):
CANADA SUMMER GAMES

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the

athletes, coaches, managers, and mission staff, who will be representing Team NWT at the 2022 Canada Summer Games being held in the Niagara region of Ontario from August 6th to 21st. The Canada Games provides our national high-performance athletes with venues to compete in hopes of continuing their athletic journey to Team Canada for the Olympics or other international events.

Every two years, the Canada Games showcase athletes at the highest level in national competitions, alternating between summer and winter games. The 2022 Canada Summer Games Host Society and the Niagara region will host nearly 5,000 participants, including approximately 135 participants from Team NWT, competing in nine different sports such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, swimming, tennis, athletics, beach volleyball, and golf.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered many aspects of life over the past two and a half years, including sport competitions. In some ways, the Arctic Winter Games, the North American Indigenous Games, and the Canada Summer Games have been impacted.

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will take time and will be different for each community and organization. However, events like the Canada Summer Games certainly help our athletes regain the competitiveness that they had pre-pandemic.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is very proud to support our team at the Canada Summer Games through financial supports and a range of other programs that support athletes, coaches, and officials' development at the local, regional, territorial, and national level.

In addition to Team NWT, MACA is pleased to support the Youth Ambassadors Program once again, which will see us bring youth volunteers to the Canada Summer Games.

The Youth Ambassadors Program offers a guided and structured volunteer experience for youth at major territorial, national, and international events. Participants work to develop their life and job skills, as well as build the confidence necessary to deal with some of life's challenges.

The program has successfully identified 21 youth from 10 communities who will travel and volunteer at the 2022 Canada Summer Games. We have four participants who have just completed the Youth Ambassador Program, virtual edition, as well as 17 youth who successfully completed the 2019 NWT

Youth Ambassadors orientation event but missed out on their volunteer placement due to the cancellation of the games. All youth are between the age of 16 and 22, and they are the role models and leaders of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish this year's Youth Ambassadors all the best on this exciting volunteer experience. I would like to recognize the following program leaders for their important work in supporting the Youth Ambassadors: Ashley Gillis, Lauren Modeste, Conan Donahue, Alicia Korol, and Kyle Donavan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the many volunteers who are responsible for supporting Team NWT, including the Sport North Federation, all the territorial sport organizations responsible for selecting and managing the team. Their contributions are significant and an important part of building a healthier Northwest Territories population.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish the very best to our Team NWT leaders, the Chef de Mission, Ms. Rita Mercredi, and Assistant Chef de Mission Mr. Damon Crossman, along with the rest of the mission staff, who are responsible for managing Team NWT and all the NWT while at the Canada Summer Games.

Play Fair. Have Fun. I sincerely hope you all enjoy this truly wonderful experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 254-19(2):
SUMMER CONSTRUCTION SEASON

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, our highways and roads are critical infrastructure that connect communities, allow for delivery of goods, and provide access to the rest of Canada. Regular maintenance is crucial to ensuring our roads serve the public safely and effectively. That work makes the NWT's highway system resilient to climate change and creates employment and training opportunities for residents.

Mr. Speaker, this spring's flooding tested the system's resilience and impacted our highways. I want to acknowledge the hard work of staff, particularly in the South Slave region, who went above and beyond to keep our highways opened and repair any damages to them, ensuring access to essential goods and services during the flood response. I want to thank everyone who played a part in making this happen during a very challenging time.

I also want to acknowledge the Department of Infrastructure's transportation group. They do an amazing job ensuring our transportation system is safe and working well.

Mr. Speaker, as the territory recovers from flooding, the GNWT is also focusing on the summer construction season. It will be another busy one. In fact, a total of \$81 million in improvements will be made to our highway systems this year.

In the South Slave region, the rehabilitation work continues on 12 kilometres of Highway No. 1.

This work includes widening of the embankments, replacing culverts, and chip sealing. This is a multi-year project, which is expected to conclude by September 2023.

A bridge-culvert replacement is also planned at Kilometre 20 on Highway No. 1 and will be completed this fall.

Various sections of the highway near Enterprise, Kakisa, and Fort Simpson will also receive chip seal overlay from June to September this year.

Maintenance and cleaning at the Deh Cho Bridge is planned for this summer.

Repairs to Preble Creek Bridge on Highway No. 5 will also be undertaken this fall.

Mr. Speaker, in the North Slave region, the Whati Access Road will be upgraded. This access road connects the community to the newly constructed Tlicho Highway. This 12-kilometre access road will receive new gravel, as well as have road embankment construction, installing of drainage culverts, and replacing culverts with a short span bridge. This project is expected to be completed by fall of 2023.

Also this year, a 23-kilometre section of Highway No. 3 will receive surface repairs and resurfacing, along with chip seal.

On Highway No. 4, the Ingraham Trail, rehabilitation continues on roughly five kilometres of that road. Work will include repairing dips, widening the embankment, replacing culverts, and chip sealing. This project is expected to be completed by September 2023.

In the Deh Cho region, rehabilitation work continues on Highway No. 7, the Liard Highway. Crews are focused on widening the embankment, replacing culverts, and strengthening the road. This work is expected to be completed in September 2023.

In the Beaufort Delta, rehabilitation work on the Inuvik-Tuk Highway continues. This work is anticipated to be completed by September 2027.

Highway No. 8 at Kilometre 239 will see bridge-culvert repairs.

And Highway No. 10, at Kilometre 8.3, will see rehabilitation of the bridge embankment.

Mr. Speaker, as our summer highway construction season gets underway, our construction crews will be hard at work on the NWT roads. I want to remind residents this summer to watch for highway crews, slow down in construction zones, obey signs while they are driving. Let us make sure the summer construction season is a safe one for infrastructure employees and contractors, and those also travelling on our highways. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1120-19(2): COMPLETION OF THE MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to NWT small communities, each is impacted by the high cost of living, limited business opportunities, lack of sustainable employment, lack of acceptable housing, lack of an acceptable level of health care, education and infrastructure; all issues that have been discussed on the floor of this House over the years by various MLAs with minimal resolve.

Mr. Speaker, in a previous statement I pointed out that, above all, one major project that would have a substantial impact on the economy and on the lives of residents in the NWT is the completion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to the Dempster.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley Highway is designated as part of Canada's national highway system, a national dream in the making since as early as the 1940's.

Realizing this dream has been difficult for many reasons, and it is a dream that cannot be realized without the financial and political support of the federal government and the persuasive political will by this government.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of the NWT are still looking for that elusive highway and the

possibilities it would provide and the dreams it would make come true for many.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to major life changing projects, governments excel at developing more strategy, more social and economic studies, more evaluations, more planning, disjointed consultations, red tape and restrictive legislation – all which work against timely development - while residents are forced to scratch out a living where not only do you now need two persons in the household working, but your children as well if you expect to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several decades, minimal progress has been made on advancing this project, and the lack of speed at which progress is being made is only resulting in the cost of construction to continue to rise exponentially.

This elusive highway, once pegged to cost around \$700 million for the Wrigley to Norman Wells portion, we can now expect that number to grow to well over a \$1 billion dollars. Now you add in the Norman Wells to the Dempster portion, we can add another \$1.5 billion plus to the cost. Then we are looking at around \$2.5 billion to complete.

With the cost of labour, fuel, and materials rising, we can only expect that construction costs will continue to rise to the point where the political will may wane and the completion of the highway will need a push from Indigenous governments and industry to make it a reality. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we talk of lowering the cost of living, providing a gateway to resources, fortifying northern sovereignty, then it is imperative that this government aggressively encourage the federal government to step up to the plate financially on this dream. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1121-19(2): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES JOB DESCRIPTIONS, REQUIREMENTS AND EQUIVALENCIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say how glad I am to see the senior Indigenous patient advocate finally advertised. This is a position that the Regular

Members raised during the budget process, the previous budget process, as a need for this territory.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that this position has been evaluated at a pay range that is not an entry level position, which is excellent, and that the screening criteria is not adding unnecessary barriers like degrees and masters but recognizing experience and lived experience. And I am sure we will get some excellent candidates in this role, in these roles.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to think about how all our job descriptions in the GNWT are in desperate need to be re-evaluated and updated to remove unnecessary barriers that are put into them. I also believe that there needs to be more emphasis put into cultural and lived experience, especially in areas like health, education, justice, child and family services. They need services counted as experience and equivalencies.

With the recent class graduating from the Northern Indigenous Counselling Program, I congratulate them. I personally know some of them, and I know that they are going to do amazing work.

But I look at the screening criteria; for example, the child and youth care counsellor position. They are calling for a masters and one year' experience, or a degree and three years' experience, when I know they would be amazing with our youth in these roles.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT needs to be transparent in how they measure equivalencies and desperately need to add lived and cultural experience to how they measure experience. Mr. Speaker, this needs to be done and made public so the NWT residents and anyone who is applying for jobs can see it and can use it to see what their education and experience will be measured at when applying for jobs, because as it stands right now there is no one way of doing this and sometimes it is not being done at all and therefore people are being screened out of jobs, job competitions, and some who may be excellent candidates are not even applying.

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

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1122-19(2):
LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS OF
FUTURE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the other day, on May 30th, the mayor and council of Yellowknife held a meeting to discuss whether the city should enter into a memorandum of understanding with Aurora College and the Government of the Northwest Territories about the location of the Yellowknife campus for the future polytechnic university. There were multiple media reports about that meeting which implied some concerning and misleading information about the future polytechnic university and where its main campus and headquarters will be located.

Mr. Speaker, it has already been reiterated several times by the Minister of Education that the headquarters and the main campus of the future polytechnic university will be located in Fort Smith.

On three different occasions, Minister Simpson said the headquarters will remain in Fort Smith and will not move after the transformation is complete.

First, on December the 10th, 2019, during my statement and questions, I asked about this issue and the Minister assured me there were no plans to move the headquarters out of Fort Smith.

Then on October 22nd, 2020, I again spoke and asked questions on this and the Minister said he was not aware of any discussion within the department to move the headquarters anywhere else.

Then, on May 29th, 2022, at a Committee of the Whole, Minister Simpson said the department was not going to build a new headquarters because there was already a location for it, which is Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, misinformation in the media and other political agendas must not cloud the opportunity for three strong campuses to exist with the future polytechnic university. Neutral decisions by officials in the Department of ECE need to prevail. Quotes like what was said in today's Yellowknifer newspaper should not be spoken by people in positions like assistant deputy ministers.

It is also very important that one of the first priorities of the new Fort Smith campus is to tear down and replace one of the last remaining residential school buildings, Breynat Hall, which is currently being used as a single student residence by Aurora College. This has to be a priority of the capital plan for the new university for Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I know that new infrastructure on three campuses will be sought after and constructed eventually, but I feel it is important to reiterate that the main campus and headquarters for the university will remain in Fort Smith.

Given the May 30th meeting, I feel it is also very important that the Minister himself provide some clarity on what that meeting was about and to explain it, or how that will change Fort Smith's position as the head campus.

Fort Smith has been the education centre of the NWT for generations and will remain so with the new university, as far as I'm concerned. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, people have got to realize that prosperity of a new university has got to be shared across the three existing campus locations but especially for the ones outside of the capital region. The benefits of the future polytechnic university cannot solely be gained by the capital. I just want to make that very clear today, given the information that came out on Monday.

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

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1123-19(2):
MACTUNG MINE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le Président. Three months ago I asked about the attempts to sell the Mactung mining property and any lessons learned from that process. The ITI minister said "I am very hopeful that we'll be in a position to report back positively in short order." That didn't happen.

Another attempt to sell the so-called "critical mineral" property has failed. This came to light with an April 4, 2022 Supreme Court of British Columbia filing by the appointed monitor for the property. There was no notice or communication from the Minister of this latest attempt to sell the property until the media picked up on this court filing at the end of the April.

The owner, North American Tungsten, went into creditor protection on June 9, 2015, after GNWT agreed to take on this operation under the devolution agreement and allowed that

company to keep Mactung property as part of its financial security for its water license.

As part of the creditor protection proceeding, Cabinet ended up purchasing Mactung for \$2.5 million with a special warrant that bypassed the Legislative Assembly. A lot of junk and hazardous materials were left at Mactung, even though I had been told that there was nothing there.

GNWT then spent \$172,000 on a partial site cleanup of that property. Then GNWT hired a southern consultant to prepare and submit a land use application to the Yukon government for an imaginary exploration program in an attempt to hype the value of the property, which also seems to have failed.

When I asked the Minister about any lessons learned from the mismanagement of Mactung, she said that GNWT is "working together to market the properties and share in the costs of doing so and now work together with the Indigenous governments of the region as we proceed to a point where this is, hopefully, a final and solid proponent who could take over and move this forward."

I had hoped to hear something like GNWT would commit to change its legislation to make full financial security, in a liquid form, mandatory to prevent further public liabilities, something this government has failed to do over the eight years since devolution.

It's past the time for the auditor general to carry out a performance audit of GNWT's management or mismanagement of these resources. Needless to say, there are a lot of questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment about Mactung, how we managed this asset and liability, and whether we can ever expect to recoup the money spent on it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1124-19(2):
YOUTH HOUSING SOLUTIONS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the auditor general tabled findings on addictions prevention and recovery services. The OAG found that the GNWT did not do enough to provide residents with accessible, coordinated, and culturally safe addictions services including specific reference to aftercare supports.

A previous OAG report on the NWT's child and family services found that substance misuse

was a factor that put children at risk in 83 percent of files. The finding is reflected in the accounts of several youth here in Yellowknife. They have shared that though technically they have homes, they resort to homelessness as a safer option because of substance abuse in the home or the need to leave the child protection system.

Mr. Speaker, our northern housing solutions, or lack thereof, are directly impacting our residents' ability to access homes free of substance abuse and violence, homes that allow them to maintain sobriety, and homes that provide avenues for prevention.

Mr. Speaker, 20 percent of Canada's homeless population are youth between 13 and 24. That's at least 35,000 Canadian youth experiencing homelessness and up to 40 percent of those youth identify as 2SLGBTQIPA+. Many young Canadians experiencing homelessness flip between friends' homes, shelters, and the streets.

But Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife might be home to Canada's Arctic only youth-focused homelessness solution called Home Base YK. Every night, Home Base opens its doors and offers a night of safety and warmth to roughly 20 NWT youth. But these beds are not enough and some youth, predominantly girls, are forced to choose the streets.

Mr. Speaker, across Canada many youth experiencing homelessness were also in the care of child protection services. The North is no different. Leaving the child protection system and transitioning to independent living is a challenging process. It requires government support and an aftercare plan. Across Canada, street-involved youth are six times more likely to be victimized and in the NWT, rates of substance abuse and violence are even higher. Safe housing is a human right at every age. Safe housing is at the core of any aftercare plan.

Homelessness exposes our youth to spiralling harms, including sexual exploitation, economic exploitation, traumatic events, declining health, and addictions. Youth-focused housing solutions affording our children safety, security, and the social supports necessary to transition from childhood to adulthood is prevention, Mr. Speaker.

Every child deserves to live and grow in a healthy home. Our children need us, this Assembly, government workers, civil society, and every person to come together and ensure their right to the safe housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1125-19(2):
RISING COST OF FUEL IN TLICHO
COMMUNITIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, previously I spoke in this House on inflation and the rising cost of living in the Tlicho region. The increasing cost of fuel is part of the problem.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the government announced significant increases to the fuel resupply program prices in ten communities. Three communities in the Tlicho region will be affected by this increase. Mr. Speaker, this upcoming resupply season, Gameti, Wekweeti, and Whati, will see an average increase of 44 cents per litre, or 28 percent increase for heating fuel; 45 cents per litre, or 25 percent increase for diesel; and 29 cents per litre, or 16 percent increase for gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the impact these increases will have on my constituents. Without fuel, my people have a limited ability to get on the land. The effects on their well-being, food, and economic security will be immeasurable.

Mr. Speaker, often it is those who are the most vulnerable who suffer the most from these increases. I think of the elders seeing a greater portion of their fixed income going towards heating their home and transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that gas price increases are a world-wide reaction to the tragic events in the Ukraine where citizens are being forced out of their homes, families torn apart, and citizens are being murdered by an oppressive dictator. While I recognize that the GNWT cannot control these fluctuations in global pricing, it is our small and remote communities time and time again that see the worst of the impacts of these price increases.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to see for this government to do is to work with us and to work with Indigenous governments to find a solution that will lessen the impacts of these increases on our citizens.

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

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1126-19(2):
DECRIMINALIZATION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to substance abuse, two principles must inform our decision. That is evidence-based decision making and harm reduction. If these are the driving principles, Mr. Speaker, we will ultimately lower the number of people addicted to drugs and alcohol in this territory.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health spoke today in her statement, I truly believe that she believes these principles are essential to informing our decisions. However, Mr. Speaker, if we believe this, that substance abuse is a health issue, we must remove the criminal law from the picture.

Yesterday, the federal government announced that in British Columbia, starting in 2023, small possession of illegal drugs will be decriminalized. BC's Minister of Health, Sheila Malcolmson, in making this decision, said, "Stigma and secrecy about substance use kills." She said, "Shame and fear keep people from accessing the care that they need and fear of criminalization has led many people to hide their addiction and drug use and ultimately using alone means dying alone."

BC's public health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry said, "That criminal risk of being labeled a criminal, losing your job, not being able to get an apartment, not being able to travel, things like losing your children, it keeps people from talking to their family and friends about drug use. And that keeps people from accessing services."

The federal Minister of Health said, "BC was the template for other jurisdictions." She will soon rule on whether Toronto gets a similar exemption as they have asked.

Mr. Speaker, we have a template to follow. It must be recognized that decriminalization is not a silver bullet. And Mr. Speaker, in BC, in getting this application, had to educate their police on how to properly work with addicts. It had to set out a number of reporting measures and make sure this information is tracked, very similar information that our auditor general has recently asked us to do. It had to sure there was safe supply in place, naloxone in place, and had to increase the number of social workers and treatment available to users. It is not an easy process but BC has led the way in truly making sure we tackle the substance abuse issues in this country.

I know many people feel uncomfortable with the idea. They view it as sanctioning behaviour they feel is immoral. They view it as

lawlessness that will lead to harm. But that is simply not true, Mr. Speaker. And if we're going to truly help those who are addicted, we must do what actually works and follow the evidence.

I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1127-19(2):
LOCATION OF FUTURE YELLOWKNIFE
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you're aware, as is everyone else in the territory based on how my inbox and messages are blowing up, ECE and the City of Yellowknife have announced their intent to consider the parcel of land locally known as Tin Can Hill as the site of the future-proposed campus of the polytechnic university.

Based on the emails and the posts I am seeing online, residents appear to be bewildered to hear that once again their beloved Tin Can Hill is being considered for development. In fact, in one email to the city I was cc'd on, the author provided a long list of unsuccessful projects previously considered that had all been shot down by residents' want to save one of the few dog-friendly urban green spaces in town. Some residents use the scenic trails in my riding as much as twice a day, five to seven days a week.

One comment from social media sums it up perfectly: "Tin Can Hill is a treasured recreational area. It's not compatible with a campus, parking, student residence, and the traffic congestion that comes with this facility. Construction will be destructive, subjecting residents to blasting and removal of treasured green space. It'll ruin the area for dog walkers, hikers, runners, cyclists, and tourists. Many residents have voiced concerns and feel that the city needs to stop allowing development pitches to be made for this space."

Since taking office, I've heard concerns about traffic through the residential areas adjacent Tin Can Hill. With the construction of a campus in this area, Copper Sky Apartments will likely become a thoroughfare. And affordable housing in the area will become non-existent as southern students take away our already limited vacancies. Gentrification will force our long-term and Indigenous residents from their apartments they currently call home.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not against the construction of the university in my riding. However, I'm concerned about the silo in which this work has been carried out. Clearly, residents have a lot to say on the future of Tin Can Hill. And I have to ask, like I do about my own role as an MLA, why weren't we asked? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1128-19(2):
INCREASING COST OF FUEL

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this spring the Department of Infrastructure has changed the pricing for heating fuel, diesel, gasoline and naphtha. Since last month, our communities have seen increases between 4 and 48 percent for heating fuel alone. And diesel price increase between 6 to 41 percent depending on the community. And gasoline saw prices go up between 5 to 33 percent.

The Department of Infrastructure website provides a table of fuel prices by community. Effective May 16, 2022, the price for a litre of gas can be as high as \$2.40, the price at Colville Lake, or as low as \$1.77 in Tulita.

In my constituent community of Łutselk'e, the price of gasoline went up by nine percent to \$1.92 per litre. Heating fuel increased by eight percent to \$1.56 per litre.

Mr. Speaker, I want to help and provide some input to look for ways to improve the lives of our people in our communities. Increasing the cost of heating fuel and gasoline does not do that. It does the opposite.

The GNWT now charges customers receiving social assistance and the senior home heating subsidy 13 percent more for heating fuel. The price in Łutselk'e increased from \$1.38 and \$1.56 per litre.

Mr. Speaker, the price of petroleum products is different from each community in the NWT. Prices have increased for all GNWT customers whether they're government or nongovernment customers.

Communities are hit hard by this increase. It is also a sudden increase and surprise to communities. We just began to adjust after the pandemic measures have been lifted. The prices hit our communities really hard.

Mr. Speaker, our communities did not see this increase coming. Most know that the GNWT

resupply their products once a year in the summer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we are strategic and more considerate of our communities. Let's not create hardship for our communities where we can be innovative and find more reconciliatory approach.

I firmly believe that we can work together and find solutions that are not putting a hardship on small communities and this might mean looking at mechanisms for subsidized fuel costs. Creating subsidy or enabling contribution agreements between the governments, including the federal Government of Canada, with focused goal to leave money in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Edjericon. I'm not sure if you were aware but you were cut off through a portion of it so if you could send us your statement, send us an email, and we'll have it printed for Hansard under Rule 10.4(1). Good portion of the middle part of your Member's statement was cut off. So I think the Minister has enough information to go on though. But we'll go from there.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my constituency assistant Loretta Rogers who is here in the gallery, and she is escorting the pages from my riding down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 1121-19(2):
POST-FLOODING MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES FOR HAY RIVER RESIDENTS

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

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health confirm what mental health supports are available to

those persons impacted by flooding in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for an opportunity to highlight the responses and supports that are available. I'm sure this has been a very trying time for people in Hay River and more so as time goes on.

So the community counselling services, the Member may know, is located in the Jensen Building. It's open Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 5. No appointment is necessary. The counselling services are also on call 24/7 during an acute crisis such as the one now. There are virtual mental health resources available to residents as well, including things such as the Kid's Help Phone, Wellness Together Canada, and the Help Line, the NWT Help Line. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm how many mental health counsellors are on the ground in Hay River and if the department has sent in additional counsellors from other communities? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say we have lots of capacity. There are two full-time mental health and addictions counsellors, one full-time child and youth care counsellor, one part-time practicum student, two community wellness workers, a clinic supervisor for CYCC, and a manager who also sees clients. Two additional mental health counsellors are arriving in Hay River from Fort Smith to facilitate community debriefings that are planned for later this week. We also, through HRSSA's communities counselling service, they attend the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre sharing circle for any needs that they can support there. So it's a well-staffed response. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if there will be any outreach services whereby counsellors set up meetings with victims of localized areas such as the West Channel, Old Town, New Town, Paradise Valley, and the reserve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we respond to requests and we make the services available in those debrief situations to the whole community so that there's confidentiality available. So crisis debriefs have been offered to key players in

the flood response. And there are debriefs scheduled for Friday in the morning and the afternoon at the Hay River Recreation Centre. So I would appreciate the Member's help in making these known to his community so that people can choose to attend. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to actually thank the department and the Hay River Health Authority for having people available right off the start to talk to people, because what I found is that, you know, a lot of the people that were impacted, they needed, you know, somebody to hear their story. So I'd like to thank the department for that, and the Hay River Health Authority.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm how long we can expect to have counsellors on the ground in Hay River to support those victims requiring mental health supports due to the flooding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that long list of health and addictions counsellors and wellness workers and so on, these are permanent staff in Hay River. And so they are there indefinitely. The additional resources really depend on the demand. So we are expecting there could be a surge in demand tomorrow after the -- or Friday, pardon me, after the community debriefings.

At this point, we haven't had an overwhelming response to our offer. But the resources are in place, and we encourage people who need them to use them. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1122-19(2): HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Housing NWT.

Earlier this week, the Minister made a comment to my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes that the strategy as it is right now does not come with any dollars -- for the homelessness strategy, sorry, Mr. Speaker. So I'm wondering will the homelessness strategy end up coming with dollars once it is tabled, or will it at least be costed? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of today, the Housing is working with the social development deputy's table which consists of Health, ECE, MACA, and EIA, to come forward with a plan that can be actioned that identifies the resources required for implementation.

Part of the delay is bringing forward a final document that desires the social departments to bring forward an approach that can be resourced and be successful with its implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, across Canada unique barriers exist for 2SLGBTQIAPPA+ youth accessing shelter systems. One in three transgender individuals are rejected from shelters for their gender identities and gender expression. So was, or is, the Northern Mosaic Network included as a vital stakeholder in drafting this strategy to provide homelessness solutions for our territory? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today much of the work has been done internally within the GNWT. The intention of Housing NWT has been that the action plan would provide an opportunity for input on the strategy once tabled but also that it would include actions that could be put in place immediately while some of those border conversations take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if it's intended to be a fluid document that can be looked at and feedback provided and then changed? Why has Housing NWT, after nearly four years of committing to this strategy, not provided it to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review and input? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in speaking with my department, this became a very complex document that identifies several different areas that involves several different departments as well too. So bringing it back, we're looking at bringing it to standing committee, I want to say, in the fall of this year. And I need to see movement on this document as well too. But once again, once the document is implemented, we need to find resources to making sure that we continue with the implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the saying "perfect is the enemy of good" comes to mind here. And sometimes you got to let something go and let people have a look at it in order to get some feedback and let it fly because right now, as of today, Members in this House have requested the homelessness strategy 65 times since September of 2018 when it was first committed to in the 18th Assembly. And it is getting frustrated at this point, and I understand that it's very important. But if it sits in Housing NWT, it will never get actioned. And so I guess I'm asking the Minister now, have any of the resulted feedback or information gained by working on this strategy for the last four years resulted in any kind of housing policy changes on the frontline of Housing NWT? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, there hasn't been any policy changes at this point as a result of the strategy. The work with all social department partners is to ensure that we have an all-of-government approach and to try to avoid any unintended consequences resulting from the strategy. And I do hear the Member that this document is taking quite some time, and I want to commit that we would be able to present this document in the fall of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1123-19(2):
EDUCATION EQUIVALENCIES FOR
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HIRING PRACTICES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Member's statement, my questions are for the Minister of Finance, which human resources falls under.

Does the GNWT have a document to educate hiring staff on how to measure education equivalencies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly anyone that is involved in hiring does have opportunity to access training through the Department of Finance. There are information packages online that can describe some of this, and the Department of Finance is often, if not always, involved during a recruitment and retention process so that they can also provide some

strategic advice on how to do the evaluation equivalencies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for their response but I've been in hiring process through the education boards, I've been in Health, in other areas, hiring teachers, nurses, you know, and every HR person that I received information of gave me a different way to do it.

So there isn't one strategic way or document that everybody does it equivalently through the Northwest Territories. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Does the GNWT currently use lived experience and cultural experience into equivalencies and if not, will the Minister direct her department to find a way to do this equally across the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the commitments that is under the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. And I certainly recognize that the passion is being brought to it for exactly this reason, that there does need to be, you know, a better way of doing this to achieve the goals that we have of having more inclusive public service. So it's included already in that action plan.

There is the new job description guide. I ought to have mentioned it in the last response.

The job description guide is meant to be a place where there can be more cohesive approach to how, in fact, job descriptions are being done and where evaluation of the combinations of education and experience can be considered and some guidance, indeed, on how to achieve that through job descriptions now, again, utilizing that guide in the context of the framework. So once that is now underway, Mr. Speaker, that will be part of the commitments that we've made in that framework and hopefully we'll see success in that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister's answer, thank you for that. And it leads kind of right into my next question.

Is the GNWT reviewing all job descriptions to remove barriers and add cultural and lived experience to be measured when a job evaluation is scoring how they rate the pay? This is something that must be valued in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's Action 1.1 of the

framework where it speaks to the importance of the job descriptions and, specifically, that all departments and agencies are now expected to conduct a detailed review of all job descriptions specifically with keeping in mind systemic barriers that may exist. And the point is to precisely do that, to remove those systemic barriers.

Every department and agency is responsible for their job descriptions. They certainly can seek strategic advice from human resources. But that is the individual requirements for each department, knowing themselves some of the particularities of those jobs.

But of note, in terms of when we're going to get there and how they're going to do that, we are now all collectively expected to be reporting annually on the completion of those tasks, including job description reviews. And performance measures for the framework includes having job descriptions reviewed over the next two to three years so that we get through, indeed, all of them just as is being asked. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. And I'm glad that you added at the end that there is kind of a timeline that these need to be done so we're not sitting here and some of our pages are the MLAs at the time asking the same question 20 or 10 years from now.

Will the Minister commit to creating these documents, like I had mentioned in my first two questions, for hiring staff to measure education equivalencies and cultural and lived experiences into equivalencies, and will the Minister commit to releasing these documents for the public and hiring managers and any staff that are involved in hiring on their websites to be more transparent and to commit that ensuring that HR ensures the departments are reviewing all their job descriptions. And you said that already so I thank the Minister for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is one resource that I would certainly encourage prospective applicants to take a look at. It is on the website. It's GNWT hiring Q and A. It describes some of the information about who's on a hiring committee, what equivalencies -- what kinds of equivalencies might be considered, how that's defined. But it does not go through job by job providing individual equivalencies.

I had the opportunity to speak with the Member before sitting today. I understand, we don't want people to self-screen. We don't want people to think that they won't meet an equivalency and not even apply. That doesn't benefit the process. It doesn't benefit the public service. You know, the ideal is to have folks coming forward because they think they have the right equivalencies and then we can go through that process of the hiring process.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly go back and see if we can get a bit more information on to this Q and A so that people have a sense of where they stand and so that they aren't screening themselves out and they are applying to jobs to which they had a proper equivalency. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1124-19(2):
LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS OF
FUTURE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Education assure me, and the constituents of Thebacha, that Fort Smith is still the intended location for the main campus and headquarters of the future polytechnic university? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the time that our Premier was the Minister of Education, the messaging has been that the idea of a main campus is outdated. We have three campuses, and we have a number of community learning centres that all form one organization.

That being said, there is no plan to move the administrative headquarters from Fort Smith to Yellowknife. I think that some people perhaps, you know, saw that there was something happening with the campus in Yellowknife and assumed that everything was getting sucked into the capital. That is not the case. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please provide some clarity regarding the meeting that took place on May 30th at city hall of Yellowknife about the polytechnic university. What is the intended purpose of that meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The City of Yellowknife, ECE, and

Aurora College have been working together to, you know, identify a site for the future polytechnic university campus in Yellowknife.

If anyone is familiar with the current campus in Yellowknife, you would know that it is small. It's cramped. It is in a location that is inconvenient for many people. There's limited parking. And there's no possibility for growth there. And so there is a need for a new campus in Yellowknife. That has been, you know, discussed many times here. And there's also need for new infrastructure in the other campus communities of Inuvik and Fort Smith as well.

The meeting that took place with the City of Yellowknife was to discuss the MOU between the City of Yellowknife, Aurora College, and ECE regarding the Tin Can Hill site as a potential future site for that campus and just to discuss how everyone can work together to work through the process to transferring that property. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to have ECE and Aurora College staff meet with the mayor and council of Fort Smith to have a similar meeting, as they did with the Yellowknife city council, to discuss plans for the future polytechnic university. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A similar meeting isn't necessary because it's not a similar situation in Fort Smith. That being said, I was on the phone with the mayor of Fort Smith and a number of councillors on Friday discussing this very issue. I wanted to give them assurances that this was not a situation that, you know, some people are now assuming that it is, that there is going to be a single campus in Yellowknife or Yellowknife is absorbing all of the campuses or anything like that. I wanted to let them know that this was part of the ongoing process of developing a facilities master plan that will guide infrastructure investments in the polytechnic university for decades to come. And in order to do that, we need to have sites identified as well as the needs of the polytechnic and the students identified. But that being said, if the mayor and council want to meet and have a discussion, I'm happy to do that. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to provide this House with an updated status on the polytechnic university at its earliest possible time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I gave an update last week with one of my Minister's statements, and I'm always happy to discuss this exciting project. So yes, I will provide an update to the House. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1125-19(2):
SALE OF THE MACTUNG MINE PROPERTY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I've raised the issue of our failure to prevent liabilities at Mactung, and Cantung, and our inability to sell the Mactung property at least 11 times since I've been an MLA. I can't quite match the 65 times raised by my colleague here. But can the Minister tell us how she can improve communications with MLAs and the public on what is happening with this mining property? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to any sort of sale program or process that may be underway, it would not be unusual for that to involve confidential discussions. And if that's the case, it's very difficult, if not impossible, considering legal obligations, to be displaying that out publicly.

That said, Mr. Speaker, we are a consensus government and there's been a lot of work done in this Assembly in terms of understanding better how to communicate between Ministers and MLAs when it comes to the development of legislation and the development of regulations, and perhaps there's an opportunity to here to consider what other processes we might have in place to improve communications on confidential items.

We've seen some other communication improvements in that regard here and so this may well be one of those opportunities to look here and see what might be done in the future, to find avenues by which we with communicate information that may be quite sensitive and have legal requirements or obligations attached to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm happy to talk with her more about that and get more information about Mactung in a timely manner.

The GNWT decided to try to market the Mactung property with the Cantung mine site with the federal government but all attempts seemed to have failed. Can the Minister explain what is going on with proposed sale of the Mactung property and when the taxpayers of the NWT can expect to recover their investment? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a joint decision made, quite some time ago now, between GNWT and Canada to attempt to market those two properties, Cantung and Mactung together. And that effort was underway to have a joint effort and a joint RFP out seeking to seek prequalified proposals. I believe that is the item that the Member was mentioning earlier with respect to the publication on the Supreme Court of British Columbia's court filing with respect to that not having yielded any positive results. But there do continue to be discussions by the GNWT, and we are stay remaining hopeful that ultimately a sale will be concluded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm actually getting more information out of the Cabin Radio story than I guess what I've heard so far about what the process is going to be, but.

These Mactung and Cantung properties are 140 kilometres away from each other by air and 700 kilometres by road. It was always extremely unlikely that some buyer would ever take these on as some sort of a viable mining operation without significant concessions and subsidies.

So can the Minister tell us what incentives, concessions, or subsidies will be offered to sell the Mactung property this time around? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had it described to me that when the decision was made, before my time here, to purchase the property, that it was thought to, in fact, be a good maneuver and, indeed, that it would in fact not have difficulty being sold. So regardless of that, at this point I will still note, Mr. Speaker, that the two properties, although being 140 kilometres apart, were jointly owned previously. They remain high grade Tungsten properties. Geopolitical events and the critical minerals and metals discussions suggest that there may well be a good opportunity right now for these particular properties.

There are no subsidies being offered, concessions, or incentives. There is, of

course, the mineral incentive policy that we have that applies for anyone who might be seeking to apply in order for some supports when they go out to do exploration. But as far as the sale and the RFP process, that is not subject to subsidies, concessions, or incentives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In my view, the Cantung and Mactung saga is another example of post-devolution mismanagement of our resources. When I asked the Minister for lessons learned last time, she spoke about hope for a solid proponent to take over the property. I'm going to try the question again, perhaps a little bit differently.

Can the Minister explain what lessons have been learned about financial security and public liabilities from the Cantung and Mactung saga? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we are characterizing the events differently. I wouldn't characterize it as a saga nor would I say that the story has ended or is closed. As I had mentioned at the beginning, there are still confidential discussions underway. I am still hopeful to have a positive update here at the end that might close out the chapter. And at that point whether there are lessons to be learned in one direction or another, that would be the time to do that consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1126-19(2):
LOCATION OF FUTURE YELLOWKNIFE
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ECE. And first I'd just like that thank my colleague for raising her concerns around this process. And I'm really glad to hear that the Minister's been having lots of ongoing conversations with Fort Smith and with the city. However, Mr. Speaker, I would have to wonder where my consideration was as the first time I heard about this was through the rumour mill and found out along with the rest of the public.

So Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of questions around this.

First off, can the Minister explain what other locations within the city of Yellowknife have been considered and why were they not selected and Tin Can Hill was? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I understand the Member's frustration. Sometimes the rumour mill gets ahead of government and before there are decisions made, before all of the steps are followed, that information can be shared. Information gets leaked and so that was the situation. It came as a surprise to a number of people and so it wasn't by design that things were out there in the public before the MLAs were informed.

Really, the team looked at everywhere in Yellowknife. There were some requirements that, you know, were needed. So the space needed to be large enough for future expansion. There's a desire to have a site that would allow for on-the-land learning, for cultural spaces, a place that was close to the downtown core, somewhere where all of the, you know, facilities could be located together. So these are some of the requirements that we wanted to have as part of this. And, you know, for perhaps many of the reasons that there's a long history of proponents trying to develop Tin Can Hill, it's because it's a great site. It's because it has all of those aspects. And so it is clearly the most preferable place for a polytechnic university. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That could have been answered in just as an everywhere answer, so I would just ask that the Minister please speed up his responses.

Can the Minister please tell me when the public consultation began?

Mr. Speaker, it seems to be a bit of a habit that things become a done deal before we're ever asked about them. Clearly, my residents were also, my constituents were also very surprised by this decision and now many are worried that they will not have an input and it will all just be lip service. So can the Minister speak a bit to the public consultation process and when is that going to begin? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a City of Yellowknife consultation process. From what I understand, it's already began. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what I hear, then, is that the GNWT and ECE

itself did no public consultation before they made their decision to go with this site so I'm really glad to know that our inputs are being considered here.

How much consideration has been given to the fact that the access to this location will be through residential areas that cannot sustain the traffic patterns that a university or college would require? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the facilities master planning, students were engaged, staff were engaged, Indigenous governments were engaged, the city was engaged, and now we are in the public portion that is being run by the city. It's a city process. There will be plenty of opportunity for public input in this zoning process. And the types of things that the Member is talking about right now - traffic access. Those are exactly the types of things that this established public process is going to consider. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we're done here, I will forward the email that I received and referred to in my statement about the numerous times that Tin Can Hill has been proposed for development, and it has been shot down by residents. I'm, again, concerned about the waste of money on this project going forward as I can tell you, from what I'm gauging from listening to residents, they do not want it. And for them to not have been asked, for my constituents to not have been asked, is unacceptable. And, again, it's just a matter of this government doing whatever they would like to do. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear a question there but the asking is happening now. There's actually a process being administered by the City of Yellowknife where public input will be solicited. So that's what's happening. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1127-19(2):
INCREASING COST OF FUEL

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that global gas price increases due to the Ukraine-Russian war are creating staggering impacts for our communities, what steps, if any, can the GNWT take to soften the tremendous blow of these increases on our citizens? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, this government is alive to some of the issues in terms of, you know, the rising prices. And we, as a government, have done a number of things to be able to help the residents in the communities. You know, Education, Culture has some subsidies. ENR has some subsidies. So we are helping the residents in the communities. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Can the Minister commit to looking at all potential actions, including a potential short-term reduction in gas taxes, to offset the impact of global price increases when carrying out the next gas price adjustment? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Petroleum Products Revolving Fund Act requires the GNWT to recover all operating costs from the sale of petroleum products. In other words, we are not permitted to undercharge or overcharge our customers for what it costs to provide petroleum products to each community that participates in the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Will the Minister commit to look in to further subsidies to stabilize the rising costs of living in small communities or programs to ensure people can get out on the land? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can definitely have a discussion with Cabinet on how this government can be able to provide subsidies or programs out there. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1128-19(2):
DECRIMINALIZATION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In yesterday's auditor general report, it became clear that we have to make sure there is coordination in our response to the substance abuse issues in this territory. And I think one of the clear lines of coordination is of the RCMP's role. But I think before we even have that conversation, we have to make sure we're on the same page.

So my question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is does she believe that our response to substance abuse issues is first

and foremost a health issue and not a criminal one? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for the question.

There's obviously an overlapping responsibility here where Justice is primarily responsible for what's criminal and how to enforce that, and Health and Social Services is responsible for what is a health issue and how to respond to that. So the change yesterday doesn't address the primary concern of health which safe supply of illicit drugs, the amount of drugs, and whether they qualify as possession or should be seized is really a Justice issue. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I have asked these questions of Justice before. Today I directed them to Health because the decision ultimately made was by the BC public health asking for an exemption to the federal Minister of Health.

And so my question for our Minister of Health is does she agree with the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, 60 percent of the Canadian public, the overwhelming amount of public health officials, the federal Minister of Health, the BC Minister of Health, and really anyone who has worked on the front lines, that decriminalization is a step that saves lives and is a tool we need to use in our fight against substance abuse? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't offer an opinion on that. This is a first in Canada, the decriminalization of the possession of small amounts of illicit drugs. We're very interested in seeing what comes of this in BC. And of course because the toll of overdose deaths has been so huge in BC, we are hoping that it is successful in helping people to address the stigma of receiving treatment for illicit drug use. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister of Health say in her first response that one of the key things to a health response is safe supply. And this was fundamental and essential to BC being granted this. I know Yukon has implemented similar safe supply work. I'm wondering if the Department of Health has any plans to address safe supply here in our territory? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that

the situation is very different in the Yukon. They have declared a public health emergency around overdose deaths following a series of deaths right after the New Year. We had three overdose deaths in the NWT in the first three quarters of last year. And three is too many. But compared to the toll that alcohol takes on people in the NWT, alcohol is a much more significant problem, and it's the one that we are addressing with the development of the territorial alcohol strategy. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware that alcohol is of a primary concern and issue to our substance abuse issues. But I think absent action now, we will find ourselves in a similar situation to the Yukon in the years to come. We have seen increasing drug use and many people on the front lines speak to that regularly.

But my question for the Minister of Health is BC in granting this -- or in receiving this application, the federal Minister of Health said this is really a template for how to respond to substance abuse issues. So I'm wondering if the Minister of Health will commit to looking at that application and looking at the federal guidelines that they put on BC in regards to reporting into tracking this. I want to at least make sure we are aware of what's going on in this area, because much of the data that BC was required to track is similar to what our own auditor general has asked us to track. So if the Minister of Health could at least commit to look at the application and see what we could learn from that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the suggestion and I'm prepared to take it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

ORAL QUESTION 1129-19(2): INCREASING COST OF FUEL

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure, I got your message there that you didn't get my comments clear as when I was reading it out so I do apologize for the bad internet services here in the community of N'dilo and my other constituent riding of Lutselk'e.

Mr. Speaker, the fuel service division buys fuel once a year and stores it in the tanks throughout the Northwest Territories. Each summer, the division resupplies its fuel storage. Why are customers being charged more in April and May in the community of Lutselk'e when the prices for the Government

of the Northwest Territories has not been increased and is selling fuel bought in 2021? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned to the Member from Monfwi about the rising prices in fuel here in the Northwest Territories, we do have a Petroleum Products Revolving Fund Act that again requires us to recover some of the costs. The wholesale price of petroleum products has increased dramatically, as have transportation costs to be able to get that fuel to the communities as a result of the price of diesel. So the wholesale pricing, petroleum pricing was volatile during the resupply program, and the GNWT made reasonable efforts not to purchase petroleum products when the prices spiked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain why increases for community government customers, social assistance and senior heating subsidy has increased more than for non-profit customers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could ask my colleague why his costs have increased but we can get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister. Can the Minister explain why this increase was necessary despite the existence of the fuel service division revolving fund? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, retail fuel prices are adjusted periodically to reflect the recovery of full laden costs of fuel, including the product costs, the transportation costs, commissions from sales, operation and maintenance expenses, evaporation loss, and taxes. Those are the reasons, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister. My next and final question will be what can we do this fiscal year to help reduce the fuel prices for the community of Lutsek'e? We just don't want to have another price increase midway through or three quarters of this next fiscal year. So normally when these fuel prices go to tender,

it's all inclusive. But then this year, it increased. So I want to know what we could do for next year so that the community's not caught off guard again for another fuel increase -- increases of fuel prices. Mahsi.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The capital costs and the financing charges are not recovered from the consumers. So I mean that's another reason. And what can we do to, you know -- whether we increase or, you know, the fuel costs, the adjustments are made by commodity and by community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1130-19(2):
COMPLETION OF THE MACKENZIE VALLEY
HIGHWAY FROM WRIGLEY TO NORMAN
WELLS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the importance in ease of access to goods and services is something many Canadians take for granted, but not so much for small communities in the NWT and more so when there's no highway access south.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Infrastructure confirm what progress is being made on completing that portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you will recall that back in 2018 the GNWT secured \$140 million under the transportation Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund to be able to continue to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway. This is also a priority of this government.

In the time since, extensive work has been done on a desktop and a field studies to gather environmental and engineering baseline data to be able to support the regulatory applications and the environmental assessment.

The focus this year is on collection of outstanding and environmental engineering baseline data. We will also continue to focus heavily on engagement to gather public input on the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway corridor alignment and anticipated construction activities.

We have continued to work with SSI through an establishment of an MOU for the project. We've had discussions with PKFN in regards to how best we can work together to advance these important projects.

All this work will inform the developer's assessment report, which we expect to submit to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Review Board this fall.

With regards to the bridges, Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, extensive work has been done to replace most of the existing water crossings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. I think it might have just about answered everything here. But I'm going to ask anyway.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm what is the expected cost to complete that portion of the highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells and what are the factors driving any increase in cost? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, back in 2018, a very high level and general project estimate was developed and put the overall project in the range of about \$700 million, Mr. Speaker. Not only was this estimate high, it is now outdated as the Member mentioned in his Member's statement.

We know that many factors have changed since this time, including some of the inflationary pressures, labour market conditions, and chain supply issues, to name a few.

As the environmental assessment progresses, we will be finalizing the engineering design for construction. These plans will inform detailed internal construction cost estimates which will be required to inform engagement with Canada for future funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell this Assembly what are the barriers to completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway to Norman Wells within a reasonable timeline? Is it rights agreements? Is it money? Is it environmental requirements? Is it GNWT's capacity? Communities have been waiting too long for year-round access to the south. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, the submission of the Mackenzie Valley Highway Developers Assessment Report to this Mackenzie Valley Review Board is the next major milestone for this project and will trigger

the board's environmental assessment process.

We are anticipating the board requiring the full allotment of time available to them to complete the EA which will see a final report of the environmental assessment to be submitted to responsible Ministers for a decision in late 2024.

Provided this project is given the go ahead, an additional year would likely be required to gain all the necessary regulatory authorization and permits so we can start construction.

As previously mentioned, between now and then, a revised construction cost estimate needs to be developed and construction funding secured. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that this project's going to, you know, be south of \$700 million.

So Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm what discussions are taking place with the federal government to access the required funding and supports for the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway between Wrigley and Norman Wells? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has provided significant financial support to be able to help us advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway project through the environmental assessment. There's been meetings at all levels to garner support for this project. Support of our Indigenous partners is the key to be able to move forward as well as to secure federal funding.

As the EA progresses, we will continue to finalize engineering design plans for construction. These plans will inform an updated cost construction cost estimate which is critical to be able to inform the engagement with Canada for future funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1131-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES MANAGEMENT SERIES
TRAINING

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

Given some of the answers and thinking of some of the programs that their department offers for managers in the training of exactly what I was talking about, hiring processes and things like that, are all managers given the management series program? And if not, who decides that they could take this course if they haven't and are in a management role? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, all managers do go through the management series program. That is mandatory. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that they add a course with the new training or the new guidelines for equivalencies.

How many employees are currently taking the Indigenous Management Development Training Program right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2021-2022, there were 13 employees who accessed funding to take Indigenous Management Training Development. And to date in 2022-2023, we have two applications pending to access this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. Only 13 and only two, and we think about how our Indigenous in senior management and management is pretty low numbers. How much funding is allocated to this program, and is it being fully utilized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Indigenous Management Training Program can support up to 40 grants at \$10,000 per grant. So it is undersubscribed. And I would note, Mr. Speaker, it is actually under review right now for exactly that reason or that's one of the reasons, to help increase utilization.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, when we started this Assembly the Indigenous Career Gateway Program was also underutilized and is now oversubscribed. So I do believe we can get there with this one too. Thank you.

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

correction. This is your final. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. Okay. Knowing that this program, you know, looking at it, it's for people who are working in the department, not necessarily in management roles, and so my question to the Minister is has your department -- will her department -- Minister have her department ensure -- now you just got me all flustered -- department to ensure that this program is raised with Indigenous staff and to all managers and senior managers to offer it to those interested into their departments or take an inventory on how many Indigenous staff are interested if there's lack of funding? And, you know, I was one of the first ones to start raising the Indigenous Career Gateway, and I'm going to do this with this program because we're going to oversubscribe it, okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me give a qualified yes. Because the program is under review, we can certainly promote the program in its current iteration but it might be best to promote the program once it has had its review so that staff are, indeed, getting the very best that is available.

But at the same time, all departments are now expected to start increasing their Indigenous representation at all levels. Those levels are being looked at and monitored for the targets that exist in our business planning process, that were put in place as part of the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. It is in the interest of every department to be maximizing every training opportunity they have if they're going to hit their targets. So I'm confident we can get some messaging out to that effect. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 1132-19(2):
ADDICTIONS TREATMENT FOR YOUTH

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Access to addictions treatment for youth is provided through child and family services. I'm wondering why has Health and Social Services chosen to fragment adult and child treatment access? Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we consider in providing addiction services for our youth and children is the vulnerability of the population and our ability to support them. So I feel very confident that having that response come through child and family services is very important.

One of the services they offer, for example, is when a child goes to treatment outside of the community, outside of the territory, they arrange for courtesy supervision, which means that there's a social worker where the child is who will check on them, connect them to any additional services and make sure the youth is safe. So I don't think this system is fragmented. It's set up to assist a vulnerable population of youth which is different than what adults need. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how does Health and Social Services address the barriers created by housing this service in child and family services given the history of our country and the fear of child and family services? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thanks. I think the Member is talking to the possibility that discussing addiction for youth would trigger protection concerns. That is not the case at present. If a family approaches child and family services, the first step would be a needs assessment followed by an offering of different options that the family could take advantage of and when they choose one, then a plan is tailored to that family and to the person who needs treatment.

We're working hard to combat this stigma that admitting any difficulty in parenting is going to trigger protection concerns. We are very dedicated to dividing these two issues, protection from prevention. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the request for community-based solutions, what types of funding is available for grassroots programming specifically geared toward youth addictions treatment? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've done quite a lot of work in my time expanding the number of community-based treatment programs that are available to Indigenous governments primarily and also to community governments. It's really driven by those entities about what range of ages they take into their programs.

So, for example, we have the On the Land Healing Fund, Community Suicide Prevention Fund, Peer Support Fund, and Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Fund.

So these funds are set up with a focus but the implementation is really, as I said just now, up to the Indigenous governments, and they can take in the age of the participant of anyone that they choose. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak to what harm reduction programs are available to youth in the NWT? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, harm reduction is certainly a focus for us and addiction services for youth really mirror the same that is offered to had adults.

And so just to briefly recap those offers, there's community-based counselling through the community counselling program or through the child and youth care counsellors. It's the youth's choice which to access.

We have the 24/7 Help Line through the NWT Help Line, and then the kids help phone service which also includes a texting option.

We have apps that are specifically directed to children and families, such as the Strongest Families Institute and the Breathing Room app. We have specialized treatment options for youth and children, both in territory and out of territory. And then we have, as I just mentioned the community-based wellness programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Member for Monfwi.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 43-19(2): DELIVERING EQUITABLE EDUCATION SERVICES TO SMALL COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Delivering Equitable Education Services to Small Communities in the Northwest Territories.

In response to the Office of the Auditor General 2020 report on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest

Territories, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment committed to actions toward improving student outcomes in the NWT. It has been two years since ECE responded to the auditor general's recommendations and committed to take action to support schools in small communities and ensure students in the territory have an equitable learning experience. I submit the following questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment:

1. How does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students in the Northwest Territories and provide the approach chosen and identify the applicable policy documents;
2. What action has the Department of Education, Culture and Employment taken since the 2020 auditor general report to support schools in small communities and ensure students in the territory have an equitable learning experience, indicating which actions are on hold and delayed, providing the reasons for the status, and indicating the partners involved and the amount spent or planned to be spent by activity;
3. How does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment know that it meets students' needs in small communities, including needs for specialist services; how are the needs identified, measured, monitored and reported; and what are barriers and problems in data collection;
4. How is the Department of Education, Culture and Employment considering the socio-economic diversity and residential school legacy in small communities in its approaches to providing education services and collaborating with communities, explaining which actions, services, and funds are explicitly targeting small communities and the distinct socio-economic situations and legacies; for example, are actions like providing food allowances or liaising with Housing NWT considered; and
5. Has the Department considered designing a targeted approach to improving student outcomes in small communities within a set timeline that may include partnerships and allocate funds to support students based on needs; and if yes, will that approach be actioned upon, and if not, why not?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's

address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety Compensation Commission.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 664-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
NUNAVUT WORKERS' COMPENSATION
APPEALS TRIBUNAL 2019 ANNUAL
REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 665-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
NUNAVUT WORKERS' COMPENSATION
APPEALS TRIBUNAL 2020 ANNUAL
REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 666-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
NUNAVUT WORKERS' COMPENSATION
APPEALS TRIBUNAL 2021 ANNUAL
REPORT

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents, 2019 Annual Report, Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report; 2020 Annual Report, Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report; and, 2021 Annual Report, Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 667-19(2):
REPORT ON JURISDICTIONAL SCAN AND
GEOMATICS ANALYSIS EV4919,
ARCHIBALD ROBB CONSULTING AND
AURORA GEOSCIENCES LTD.,
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following document, a report on map staking for minerals obtained pursuant to an access to information request entitled "Report on Jurisdictional Scan and Geomatics Analysis" by Archibald Robb Consulting and Aurora Geosciences Limited dated September 28, 2021. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 58-19(2):
A STRATEGY TO MATCH CANADA'S
POPULATION GROWTH

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 3rd, 2022, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to create a comprehensive strategy to match Canada's population growth; and further, that this strategy aim to sustain the population of each community and grow the territory's overall population by 25 percent by 2043; and furthermore, that this strategy is linked with a goal to add at least 3,700 new homes, or 25 percent, by 2043 and an update to each community's housing plan to make this a priority; and furthermore, that this strategy bring together existing policies, programs, and campaigns aimed at keeping residents in the North and attracting new residents; and furthermore, that this strategy include:

- An analysis of what brings people to the North;
- An analysis of what keeps residents in the North;
- A plan to address the increasing cost of living to keep residents in the North;
- An immigration strategy;
- A communication strategy to attract people to the North; and
- A review of business programs to help residents establish and grow their business in the North.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 59-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO OCTOBER 13, 2022,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June the 3rd, 2022, I will move the following motion: I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that

when this House adjourns on Friday, June 3, 2022, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, October 13, 2022; and furthermore, that at any time prior October 13, 2022, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at that time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Colleagues, before we proceed, we'll call a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome back, colleagues. Motions. Member for Deh Cho.

Motions

MOTION 54-19(2):
IMPROVING HEALTH CARE IN SMALL
COMMUNITIES,
CARRIED

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS half the population of the Northwest Territories is Indigenous;

AND WHEREAS there are 33 communities in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS there is one capital, six regional centres, and 26 small communities;

AND WHEREAS Indigenous peoples make up the majority population in the small communities;

AND WHEREAS Indigenous peoples were subjected to colonization and genocide; and whereas the legacy of colonization is embedded in the health and social services system as systemic racism;

AND WHEREAS Indigenous peoples were forced to experience systemic racism in the health and social services system, which is a significant contributor to lower health outcomes;

AND WHEREAS Indigenous peoples suffer disproportionate health inequities as a result of a lack of access to quality health and social

services care where cancer and other chronic diseases that are misdiagnosed;

AND WHEREAS those Indigenous peoples who have cancer and other chronic diseases that are misdiagnosed, suffer and die prematurely;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to provide increased access to physicians and medical specialists to offer quality care, diagnoses and second opinions;

AND FURTHER, the Government of the Northwest Territories prioritize cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and anti-Indigenous racism professional development training within the health and social services workforce, including locum doctors;

AND FURTHERMORE, the Government of the Northwest Territories provide additional training to nurses, health care workers, and locum doctors in the small communities on the detection of cancer and chronic illnesses;

AND FURTHERMORE, the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a quality review on the health centres in the small communities, including an external audit of client treatment records and client satisfaction;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give points related to my motion, the reasons for it.

I came to the 19th Assembly with the intent on improving health care in the small communities and especially in my community where I went out campaigning and I was hearing all the stories regarding health care. There were many instances and complaints, lack of compassion, and the seriousness of illnesses. Many patients, they became patients after numerous visits to the health centre for the same ailment. That was about three, four, five times, and each time they were sent home with a Tylenol.

This led to medivacs after about the third, fourth, or fifth visit, in which case the patient

was seriously ill and in great danger for their lives.

There are instances where patients did end up losing their life. Many were due to misdiagnosis of their ailment or a total disregard of their problem. And they're also being sent home without any follow-up whatsoever.

I realize that small community health centres are not equipped with the appropriate medical devices to properly diagnose an unknown ailment. This is an increasing dilemma, and residents have grave concerns of this situation.

I have made several statements of this situation over the course of this Assembly since I've been here. And I believe that it's not a new issue. I believe that it's been brought up many times in previous Assemblies.

And after the statements and all these complaints and everything, there's still no actions nor any intent to action to address these concerns. There was more of the "fill in a complaint form" is all, you know, people are receiving.

I just want to note that we as MLAs are the voice of the people. And when we come into this House, we bring forth all those concerns. We shouldn't have to look for consent forms. These are real lived experiences. I live in a small community. I experienced all this. I bring it to the floor or the House. Something should be done about it. That's what we expect from this side of the House. We need someone to listen to us, to help us.

And there are also several news stories. There was the stories of the ladies in Fort Res that brought up concerns. You know, there's lots of concerns. And there was also the recent one from the Deline elder, and we know what happened there. It was newsworthy. So it is a serious concern.

You know, we expect, you know, from all these concerns not to fight us and make us think that it's not real. We would expect to get respect from Ministers to say okay, hey, I will come into your community and I will meet with your leadership; I will listen. Because there are many complaints. You know, I've had to deal with many. I have made statements galore on these issues, and I've finally figured well, I better put a motion in and see what happens there.

I'm hoping for concrete action from the department by way of this motion. And that's all I have for now, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Motion is in order. To the motion? Call on seconder, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, I support this motion. Just hang on.

There was feedback. Sorry about that, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to say in speaking to the motion that the issues that I've been raising the last little while has really hit home, and I've been dealing with everything from mental health issues to suicide to medical travel. And the things that really makes me think is that, you know, a lot of this stuff could be easily fixed if we went back and take a look at some of the policies that are in place that are prohibiting some of these problems we're having in the community. I think it's an easy fix if we went back and take a look at it.

But the issues in the community are alive and well up and down the valley, and I've been hearing from a lot of people, getting feedback on this issue. And I'd like to work with the Minister of social and health and see what we could do to look for solutions to these problems we're having in our community. And when I was asked to support this motion, I agreed to that. And I'm just asking if there's a way where we could all work together and to look for solutions so that we could provide better outcomes in health issues in the communities a lot better and so that we're not able to say no to, or get back to the families that are asking for help and let them know that I'm sorry, you know, this is what happened.

I'm just saying that, you know, this is a good time to come together. And in terms of spirit and content, you know, and I'm asking that maybe with this motion that we look for a solution to some of these problems. So I just want to just leave that there, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't really have any comments. But I guess listening to my colleagues and reflecting on, you know, some of the people I know, some of the things that have happened in the past. You know, my own sister, for instance, she was diagnosed with cancer at the last minute after a few years of going to doctors and, you know, and passed away, you know, two months after that. So, you know, the issues here are, you know, small communities and even regional centres

and whatever, but I think it comes down to, you know, Indigenous peoples.

You know, we have -- like, there's a lack of doctors, lack of nurses. We have restrictive policies. We see misdiagnoses. We have -- you know, there's a lack of culturally appropriate services, lack of understanding of Indigenous peoples. You know, there is some racism as well. And all this affects the way, you know, medicine and health is dispensed. And I think that, you know, it's time that we took a hard look at how we're -- you know, how we're treating and, you know, the people of the Northwest Territories when it comes to health because, you know, like I've always said we've got one life to live, and I think it's very important that we do everything we can, everything in our power, to make sure that every person is treated with respect and gets the help they need.

Again, you know, this government is in charge of health. This is where the dollars come. People have nowhere else to turn. And, you know, when they start coming to us, you know they're lost. You know that we're probably their last -- you know, their last hope for some type of help. So, you know, I support -- and therefore I support this motion. And, you know, I think we all see that there's, you know, pitfalls and downfalls within health care for Indigenous peoples. But there's pitfalls and downfalls in all areas. And this is one of them. And this is an important one because, again, it's a matter of life and death. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. To the motion? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I may not be a small community MLA but what I am is an MLA that listens. And as a result, I do speak with a lot of people from across this territory who share with me their stories. And oftentimes I'm told that they've been told to come to me because their own Member doesn't listen to them. And as a result, I've now find myself in a situation where because I care so much about the people in this territory that I'm struggling to deal with the stories that I'm hearing and the trauma that I'm hearing our people are experiencing on a daily basis.

And when it comes to medical care and health care, there's nothing scarier in the world than facing a medical crisis and it being unknown.

Mr. Speaker, I've been in that situation time and again, and I'm currently waiting in that situation. However, I can't imagine now being

someone from a small community and being turned away when I come to say something isn't right and I don't feel well.

So Mr. Speaker, I've stood up here before to stand in support of my small community colleagues. I will stand up here again today. As they spoke, I sat here and nodded along. Everything that they've said, I feel in my heart. I'm sure the rest that continue on to speak after me, I will feel the same way. I couldn't support this motion more, and I thank my colleague for bringing it forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too am in support of this motion. As everybody here knows, my past experience as a registered nurse. I am still a registered nurse. You know, I have many past colleagues who've worked in these health centres. I've sat on hiring committees that hired nurses, you know, in these small communities. And these nurses are trained to be -- most of the nurses that are trained in the communities are hired, they're trauma nurses. They're emergency nurses. Some have community health experience but because of the lack of nursing experience, they mostly are trauma, ICU, you know, nurses because they need to be able to deal with the emergencies in the health centres as they come as they are the only ones there to deal with them. You know, and I've raised this in the past that, you know, in our small communities, we don't have specific designated home care nurses, health promotion nurses, public health nurses, mental health nurses. We don't have them. That one nurse is everything. And when you're dealing with a community that is short staffed, you know, the nurses are -- I know that they're probably -- they're working. They wouldn't become a nurse if they didn't care. But there is a difference between being in a health centre and working overtime, constantly tired, patients coming in, you know you don't have the equipment that is needed. You know, I don't know if there's more that we can do but, you know, the thing is is I think there's a barrier when it comes to medical travel. Because when we talk about some of these appointments or some of these clients that are going to the health centres, you know, they can't just ask for a second opinion when there's only one nurse there and the other one can't come in because they're on downtime and they're on mandatory downtime, you know. They can't get a doctor's opinion right now. So we're not allowing them to fly in to see doctors. Especially, you know, when I

think of the studies that have been done in Aklavik and in the Sahtu on all the cancer because of the high rates of cancer coming out of those communities and now we're seeing, you know, like my colleague said, you know, the gentleman that went to the news that said it was too late. You know, he arrived too late. The reason a lot of our people arrive too late is they don't have trust in the health care system. They don't go to the health care. I lost an aunt because she refused to go to the doctor. And when she finally went to the doctor, she had end stage cancer, you know. I have family members that are dealing with cancer. You know, I've got ongoing family members who have been able to access cancer treatment early because they live in a regional centre. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, in these small communities, they don't have that. They don't have an advocate sometimes too that they can go to. You know, we've stepped ahead and we've got these senior Indigenous patient advocates in our hospitals. We need to do more. We need to make sure there's advocates in our communities or that there's a reasonable place for them to access these advocates to support them. Because, you know, when I'm asking for an elder to -- this is the complaint, I'm bringing it forward, and I'm told well, they can do a complaint through this. Well, they don't use email. And the majority of our elders are Indigenous elders. When we say we got to do this, we got to do this, you know, I hear never mind, it's okay. You know, that's what they do, and then they get sicker.

You know, I mean, Mr. Speaker, your own community has a nurse once a week and during breakup and freeze-up. You know, we know that this is a problem in our small communities that our patients, our clients, our residents, are not able to just access any care. And, you know, I fully support my colleague on putting this motion forward because, you know, I know we can't put a doctor in every community but what can we do to support these nurses and these community residents so that they are being able to access the care in a culturally safe way and try to make sure that they're being heard, and they're not being turned away, or is it they feel? Because I can't -- you know, because that's the thing. Is myself, even if I was working in a health centre, you know, and I did something, a lot of times people don't sit down and explain everything that they're doing. It's such a rush. We need to take that time with our clients. They don't understand. They're afraid of the system. And they won't ask questions. It's not polite. We don't ask questions. We just let you do what you got to do and we'll get out of your

hair. You know, that is -- especially with elders.

So we need to understand that culture. We need to sit down and explain and ask them if they understand and give them their options. If they don't agree with what care that they're getting, what their options are. You know, these are the things that we need to make sure. And this motion will hopefully start to turn the department's way of looking at how we can support small communities better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do feel the same, and I do support the motion as well. And I know that it is about time, Mr. Speaker, that we start paying attention to small communities, give them some recognition that they do lack lot of services, especially in health care. It needs attention. It needs to be improved.

We have some communities with no nurses or some do not have any health centre. So that needs to be -- so we need to recognize those communities as well. There are people living in those communities. And people that are living in the communities are mostly Indigenous. So that's what I do support and we do need -- we need to do something about it, Mr. Speaker.

And as a result of the lack of health care, a lot of services that we're lacking in the communities, a lot of community members are moving away.

For example, dialysis. We have some community members that are relocating from their community, wherever they are from, maybe from Tuk, from Gameti, whenever, they are relocating to Yellowknife to have access to that dialysis machine. And these people are moving away from their family, from their home, from their culture, their tradition, their language. I mean, that's another burden on these people who are not used to those lifestyle.

So for that reason, I really do support, and I'll tell you that, too, I do agree. Tylenol are overprescribed in many of the communities. And I also do have some community members, Tylenol could not fix the problem that they were going through. By the time they paid their own way to get to Yellowknife, it was too late. They already had stage 4 cancer.

So things like this are happening too often. So I think that it is about time that we have lot of

services. We need to improve the services in the healthcare system, in healthcare system in the communities.

I cannot stress it enough that we need to do more with the small communities. If not, more of those community members are going to move to Yellowknife and they are going to become your responsibilities, the Yellowknife MLAs. So are you guys ready to receive them? If not, then we need to do something about the small community healthcare system. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the mover, the Member for Deh Cho, and the seconder, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, for bringing the motion forward.

I want to acknowledge what I've heard from small community MLAs over my six years as an MLA here in the House and in committee about issues around healthcare in small communities. At the same time, though, I want to recognize the work and initiatives by the department and the staff. I think we are doing some things in these areas. You know, we worked together to get funding for Indigenous patient advocates. I know the department is working on that cultural safety. Change is slow, but I think this motion is another step in making the change that we all want, and I look forward to the response from the other side, from our Cabinet colleagues. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the Member for the Deh Cho for the hard work that he put into this motion and for bringing it forward here today.

I want to reflect on something that the Member for Monfwi said. And the Member for Monfwi reflected on services not being available in communities and the result of that hollowing out small communities.

Hollowing out small communities is not true reconciliation. True reconciliation is ensuring that Indigenous communities have the services that they need and the resources that they need to continue to practice their culture and to continue to be in the North and to continue to be in their home communities. A

lot of the work that this Assembly is doing is trying to create that space for communities to continue and communities to thrive. And so healthcare is a huge part of our communities and access to healthcare is so incredibly important to our communities.

One of the things that in social development we hear most often is about services and resources being culturally safe, and that goes beyond the way that policies are written. It is in how people and what they are saying is received and how they are listened to. And how that support is provided and heard.

And what I'm hearing here today is my colleague saying that it's not okay and that their communities are not being adequately serviced and resourced, especially when it comes to healthcare.

As our population ages, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see more and more chronic illness in our communities. And so this is an opportunity to listen and receive what MLAs from small communities are saying to us and to make changes to get it right.

This motion is an opportunity to listen, receive, and reflect, and be leaders in remote Indigenous healthcare in the Northwest Territories. And we owe it to the people of the Northwest Territories to do better if that's what they're asking for. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank all of my colleagues for speaking to this motion and bringing it forward. I just also would like to rise in support. I think it is clear that many in our small communities don't have trust in our current healthcare system. And I think we always have to keep that top of mind.

I'm well aware that in many ways Health is by far our largest budget, and it is going through a deficit reduction exercise right now and I fear, when we look at models that we've seen in other jurisdictions, rural healthcare is always a potential target from that deficit reduction. Closing health centres has happened in many areas across other jurisdictions, and I think this motion is just a reminder to Health that we have to adequately resource to make sure that our health system is equitable, and that's going to take some hard conversations about other budget priorities. But our small community healthcare could not be at the expense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will get up in support of the motion.

This motion is to address the healthcare deficiency in small communities; the access to doctors, specialists must be addressed.

Personally I've always addressed each concern brought to my attention from my own constituents to the Minister's office. I just want to mention that 99 percent of the answers, in the replies, have always been positive. And I want to thank the Office of Health and Social Services for that.

The Indigenous file for small communities is extremely important. And the leaders at all the former meetings, in my 14 years as chief of Salt River, have always brought this to the table, especially at the Dene Nation meetings and Metis Nation or any of those. And I want to thank MLA Bonnetrouge for this motion. And I know it's very dear to our heart. And for that reason, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. The motion is in order. To the motion? Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the points that are being made today. It is a priority of the health system to ensure that people have equitable access to safe and effective healthcare. I know that isn't the case all the time. But "all the time" is certainly what we are striving for.

It's important to say that we are facing an unprecedented crisis of staffing in our healthcare system. We have vacancies across the board. We have, coming out on Friday, our health human resources plan, which will discuss some of the medium and long-term initiatives that we plan to take to increase staffing. But in the short term, we are still very short staffed and I anticipate that that will continue through the summer.

This is being portrayed as a racial issue, and I understand why that is. I've done the Living Well Together training and so have 92 percent of my colleagues in the department and 61 percent in the health authorities. And there is a segment of Living Well Together that deals with the trauma that was caused by what were then called "Indian hospitals" where people went, usually for tuberculosis treatment, and

often stayed over the very long term until they felt they were strangers to their communities and cultures.

So we have a division within the Department of Health and Social Services called community culture and innovation. It is staffed primarily by Indigenous people. And I feel that they have done good work over the last nine years to assist us in understanding systemic racism and developing materials that help us to become culturally safe in the interactions that we have.

I want to say that the health and social services authorities were accredited in 2019, following an extensive process of both internal and external review, and that the next review is scheduled for next year.

We provide surveys; they are online. I heard that people don't always use online. But we have recently closed the patient experience questionnaire, and I hope that we'll have some good learnings from that.

We recently put out our community counselling questionnaire, and I was very pleased to learn that 73 percent of the people surveyed who completed the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the care they received.

So Mr. Speaker, we hear the concerns that are raised here. We will provide a response to the motion. Today, the Cabinet will be abstaining in this vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion? I will allow the mover to do closing comments.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a big mahsi to my colleagues for your unwavering support for small community issues.

Excuse me.

This is about the concerns of the residents of the Northwest Territories, the many people that have been affected by the lack of quality healthcare. That is the big issue. Not a question there. It's an insult. And I really hope there's sincerity on that side of the House for our issues, because it won't go away. We understand there might be shortages. But there is always that trip you can take to Ottawa, because healthcare is supposed to be looked after by both the governments, the GNWT and the federal government. And we need the Ministers on that side to really hammer home that issue in Ottawa.

You know, this is about the concerns of the residents of the NWT. I'm just a voice for

them. It's not about me; I don't look for glory or nothing. This is real. I'd like to say mahsi again to my colleagues for all their positive comments and support. Mahsi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: For.

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

MR. EDJERICON: In agreement.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: For.

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

MR. O'REILLY: For.

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

MR. JOHNSON: For.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: In favour.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Abstaining.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: (audio).

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: (audio).

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Abstain.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Abstain.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Abstain.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Abstain.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: Ten in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 55-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY
COMMISSIONER,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint an Integrity Commissioner to exercise the powers and perform the duties set out in the Act;

AND WHEREAS the appointment of the current Integrity Commissioner, Mr. David Phillip Jones, expired on November 30, 2021;

AND WHEREAS Section 91(4) of the Act provides that the Commissioner continues to hold office after the expiry of his or her term of

office until the person is reappointed, a successor is appointed or a period of six months has expired;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner essential to exercise the powers and perform the duties under the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner, effective June 2nd, 2022, should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that pursuant to section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories the reappointment of Mr. David Phillip Jones as Integrity Commissioner, effective June 2, 2022.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

MS. CLEVELAND: For.

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

MR. EDJERICON: For.

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

MR. O'REILLY: For.

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

MR. JOHNSON: For.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: For.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: For.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: For.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: For.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: For.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: For.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: For.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

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

MS. SEMMLER: For.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: For.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: For.

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

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, and 40, Committee Report 30-1(2), Tabled Document 657-19(2), Tabled Document 658-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

---SHORT RECESS

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame le President. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 658-19(2) and Tabled Document 657-19(2). Mahsi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now call committee back to order.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 658-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2022-2023. Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

TABLED DOCUMENT 658-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2022-2023

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am happy to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2022-2023. These Supplementary Estimates propose a total increase of \$56.956 million, \$32.7 million of which will be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada. Notable items which are partially or fully offset by federal funding include the following:

- \$9.4 million to support early learning and child care in the Northwest Territories;

- \$7.1 million for activities associated with the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund;
- \$5.5 million to continue the transformation of Aurora College to a polytechnic university;
- \$2.2 million to support the provision of education programs under the Canada-Northwest Territories Agreement on minority language education and second official language instruction 2019-2020 to 2022-2023; and.
- \$2.1 million in support of the northern aviation industry.

In addition, these supplementary estimates include the following items which are not offset by federal funding programs:

- \$12.9 million to continue to support flood recovery efforts across the Northwest Territories;
- \$6.2 million to support core housing needs and emergency shelters in the Northwest Territories;
- \$5.6 million to support our healthcare system as we transition to the endemic phase of COVID-19;
- a reduction of \$2.3 million to contract services; and
- \$1.8 million to enhance the capacity of the Emergency Management Organization.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. I would be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

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

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I have some questions about what's in here and also something that's not in here.

So I'd like to start by acknowledging that the Minister has carried through with her commitments, as I fully expected, in terms of some increased spending that we had negotiated as part of the budget discussions earlier this year. There is extra money in here for housing, \$4 million; \$2.2 million for shelter funding; an increase of half a million dollars for heritage centres; there's some reductions in contracted services, but the area that's not covered in the supplementary appropriation is the increased revenues from a tobacco tax increase.

So can the Minister tell us why that's not included in the supplementary appropriation. I'll start with that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it does require a regulatory change and so that is being worked on at present. And we are expecting that those regulations should be implemented by August the 1st. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. So we passed the budget on -- and received assent I think on March 31st, so April, May, June, July, August - five months. Is there no way that we can do this a little bit quicker next time? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, these things do take a bit of time. I mean, the commitment was made at the time of budgeting but then, you know, it does have to get -- the drafting has to get put through the Department of Justice, as well as ourselves, and in this case, there is an element where we rely on Manitoba for the -- it's not quite a sticker, Madam Chair, but essentially it's something to that effect. So there's just a few steps to be taken. We knew it wouldn't be immediate.

And Madam Chair, I'm having trouble hearing but I gather there was a question as well with

respect to needing to bring back a further sup to appropriate revenue. We don't need to appropriate the revenue. It would come in by way of it being revenue. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, okay, thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister. I'm sure I don't have to remind her that every day we wait for the tobacco tax increases, money that's not captured, but.

I want to move on to the supplementary reserve. Can someone tell me what that was originally set at and where it will stand as a result of this set of supplementary estimates. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, this year we had set aside -- not set aside but had created a supplementary reserve of \$35 million. We are down to 10.754 after this.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. So this is the first of a supplementary appropriation for the current fiscal year, and I expect that there's probably going to be at least two, maybe three more. What happens when we exceed that reserve amount and what does it mean? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's an excellent question. I'm happy to answer it although the news isn't necessarily good.

If we exceed the supplementary reserve, essentially what we are likely to be doing is any projected surplus would likely get dipped into in a sense. So if there was a projected surplus and we run out of supplementary needs and we continue to have more needs, then we're likely eating into that projected surplus. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and as we eat into the supplementary reserve, that means that there's less money for capital projects, the capital budget, which we're going to get to, moving forward as a result of the

fiscal responsibility policies; is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So yes, you'll recall the Fiscal Responsibility Policy requires that 50 percent of our capital budget is funded through supplementary -- or from operations surpluses. So yes, if there's less surplus available, then there'd be less money to spend in compliance with that policy. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So moving forward, would we expect, then, to have an increased supplementary reserve? You know, I also note that inflation is running nationally at 6.7 percent. Here in Yellowknife, 7.1 percent April to April. So is this something that we would want to do moving forward, is looking at increasing the supplementary reserve so that we don't end up eating into other surpluses or, God forbid, go into short-term debt? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, you might recall that during COVID, we actually had increased the supplementary reserve to I believe it was \$60 million. So that certainly is -- there is an option to increase. We kept it at 35, which is higher than it traditionally had been, and it may well be that for Budget 2023 we want to look at moving back up again. So again, certainly under consideration. As I say, that's a number that has moved around during COVID. So thank you, I appreciate the idea. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I've got in terms of general comments and questions. I'll have some more specific ones once we get to the detail. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. General comments?

Seeing no further general comments, we'll proceed to a review of the supplementary estimates by department and activity.

Committee, please turn to page 4 of the tabled document. Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$55,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Legislative Assembly, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$55,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee please turn to page 5 and 6 of the tabled document. Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Education, Culture and Employment, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$12,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, culture heritage and language, not previously authorized, \$340,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, early learning and child care, not previously authorized, \$9,336,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, income security, not previously authorized, \$1,318,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, junior kindergarten to grade 12, school services, not previously authorized, \$1,715,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, \$5,395,000. Does committee -- oh, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that there's \$5,470,000 for the transformation to a polytechnic university. I'm

very happy to see that this is 100 percent federal money. But I believe there was a couple million in the capital budget previously for some upgrades to the college as well. But I'm just hoping the Minister could give an explanation of what we are spending this \$5 million on. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, can I turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister MacKay.

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the money that came from the federal government is spent for the transformation team that's overseeing the transformation to a polytechnic as well as some contract services to put together the facility's plan which -- so they'll require some specialized architectural and engineering services to put that together as well. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, glad to hear that, and I know the facility's master plan is well underway and there's a lot of work to be done on that.

I guess my question is, can the Minister provide an update whether there's any further money committed from the federal government for the transformation? You know, I think -- well, obviously, there's hundreds of millions needed one day for infrastructure. But I know we're also doing a programming review which is kind of key to that, and we've actually agreed to re-implement some programs so I'm just wondering if there's any federal money in the programming area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's nothing currently appropriated that's not -- well, if it's not showing up here, it's not coming in as an appropriation at this time. I think it is probably reasonable to assume that more is going to be needed before we get to the point of a polytechnic. But that, we'll have to stay tuned for that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. General comments? Or, sorry, any

on this section, labour development and advanced education?

Okay, so Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, \$5,395,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, Education, Culture and Employment, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$18,092,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, please turn to page 7 of the tabled document, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Environment and Natural Resource, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$15,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Environment and Natural Resources, environmental protection and waste management, not previously authorized, \$311,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Environment and Natural Resources, environment stewardship and climate change, \$379,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized -- Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if I've beaten my colleague to asking about this one.

It's my understanding that there is a prediction of a warmer and hotter summer this year and, as a result, probably a higher forest fire risk. So could the Minister please speak to how many airplanes are we getting for that \$830,000? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that provides for two aircraft. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And are those two aircraft with one company, or will that be spread over two organizations? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are anticipating this is with one company. Thank you. It's for 45 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. What happens when, or if, we don't use that money, or is this going to always be spent as a result of just keeping those airplanes on standby? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, quite often the finances would be restricted for particular purposes but let me just turn this to the deputy minister and see if he can provide more detail on this one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister.

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the department required, at least for this year, to ensure that they had those planes available in case they needed them, and that was because it was apparent that there was going to be a shortage of planes available this season. So they wanted to make sure they had those available in case -- so that they wouldn't be short planes if they needed them. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So then is it correct to say that this is just the amount of money to hold the planes and then should the planes then be used for suppression, we wouldn't be incurring more costs? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my understanding is that this is meant to be a

contract for the use of those planes for the 45 days. It's similar, if you might recall, to what was done last year, again, just given, you know, what the impacts of COVID were on the airline industry and the predictions for the potential for a significant fire season.

It's not necessarily intended to be long term in the sense of multiple years but will provide for the use of the planes for this year. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one last question, does that then include like the cost of fuel, all costs in for suppression, or would there be additional sort of materials costs on top of that? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it is my understanding that this should be the full costing for the use of those airlines for the 45 days. Now, I say that, always, with just a note of caution that what we're seeing right now in terms of inflation and fuel costs, and essentially all costs around us seemingly rising, it's not to say that there couldn't be increased costs to the forest fire season this year. We're certainly very hopeful that it's not. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Maybe you can ask the Minister of Infrastructure then if you can buy fuel from her, since it's always steadily laid out. No more comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): As a comment. Or a suggestion.

All right, environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized, \$830,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Environment and Natural Resources, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1,535,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, please turn to page 8 of the tabled document.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Cabinet support, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Executive Council offices, not previously authorized, negative \$80,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, negative \$120,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 9 of the tabled document. Department of Finance.

Finance, directorate, not previously authorized, \$6,190,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see there's \$6,200,000 increased to the Housing Corporation which shows up in the Department of Finance as a transfer. My understanding of this money was that it was going to be a permanent increase to the Housing Corporation so that their grant from the government, or the GNWT, has been rather consistent for almost a decade or so.

So I'm just wondering if this is a permanent increase to what we give the Housing Corporation, and if so, is there anything that kind of reflects that in the main estimate -- or in the supplementary appropriations? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the core programs amount there that you see for \$4 million is going to be ongoing. It wouldn't necessarily be reflected here. This is a supplementary appropriation to the 2022-2023 Main Estimates but it should be showing up

when we do the review for the 2023-2024 Main Estimates and through the business planning cycle. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and then I take it that the 2.2 emergency shelter homeless funding may be in a bit more of a question than the \$4 million then.

My understanding is that this -- well, this goes to a number of shelters but one of them significantly was the Arnica, now known as the Spruce Bough, in Yellowknife. I'm wondering if the Minister has an update of whether any hope of ongoing funding, whether funding for what next fiscal would look like for that organization? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, yes, the amount for the emergency shelters was not intended to be ongoing but to help provide some support to the Housing Corporation so that they in turn could support some of the shelters that were in sort of immediate need and to tide them over because it's my understanding that there were federal funds that were coming available but they just weren't ready at the time. So it was meant for one time to get them through what was a difficult cycle. If there is further needs ongoing by the next cycle, then that would have to come through a business planning process. This \$2.2 million won't be reflected as a permanent increase. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right, so Finance, directorate, not previously authorized, 6 million -- oh, Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. I like this where it says it's going to go towards home repair, emergency repair, fuel tank, and all -- you know, elders, seniors aging in place. I just want to make sure that, you know, some of this gets spent in communities. And I hope this fund that we're going to be approving will not be used to hire more people to do more planning, studies, etcetera, as mentioned before. So I hope it will get spent in the communities. I would like to see it get spent in communities, in small communities or larger centre -- outside of Yellowknife, that's what I'm saying. So I would like to see this get spent out there than spent -- I hope I -- it doesn't get spent to hire more people. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, these funds, and I take note, and I appreciate the comment here, that these are programs that really one of the reasons I think that they were chosen or targeted is that they are funds that people can apply to so that they are funds that then are -- the dollars go out to the communities or to individuals who can apply to the funds. So rather than relying on what is, frankly, often already stretched to capacity to deliver further capital planning programs from within GNWT departments, and particularly and including Housing, here individuals who would like to access the money from any community can do so. So I'm quite happy to have that opportunity to highlight the fact that there's been this increase to exactly that - emergency repairs, fuel tank replacements, the Home Purchase Program, mobility modifications, several others as well. Seniors aging in place, etcetera. So I am looking forward to, you know, certainly this is money that we hope does get spent by individuals in communities across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Finance, directorate, not previously authorized, \$6,190,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Finance, human resources, not previously authorized, negative \$150,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Finance, management board secretariat, \$1,615,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question about the reduction in contract services here in the management board secretariat. It's rather significant. And I'm just wondering how -- what contracts we expect to lose from this? I don't really understand what the management board secretariat does to be honest.

And if we don't actually expect to lose any contracts, just if someone could colour how we end up, you know, with about \$700,000 of surplus in a specific accounting line for this group. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so there are a few things bound up in there.

I am mindful of time, but the management board secretariat is an integral part of the Department of Finance, and they provide the strategic advice and analysis that goes into the financial management board to help analyze decisions that are being made and they'll provide us advice when the financial management board meets.

There's quite a lot of information about them on the website, and I'd certainly be very happy to have the Member go and look at it because they are an important -- they do perform a very important function.

With respect to the contract services, and we've already seen a few, this one is perhaps more notable in terms of its size.

The decision that was made around which departments and divisions within them to reduce contract services, it's not because there was necessarily a surplus or a known surplus. The effort was made in concluding the budget discussions with other Members, with MLAs, that we made these reductions but that we would try to make them in departments that have historically had the most surpluses as compared to some departments or divisions that actually often do run in deficit and actually need to go back and get more money put in for their contract services. And so that's the reason why this one here, again, historically hadn't see a maximization of it.

For any specific contracts that might be impacted, I would suggest we go to the deputy secretary, or to Mr. Courtoreille, please.

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

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thanks, Madam Chair. The contract service budget for management board secretariat is really one of the main placeholders for all contract services done within the Department of Finance. So by default, it was one of the larger budgets in the department. We're not expecting that no work, or contract services work is going to be foregone because of this reduction. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Finance, management board secretariat. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to question the funding for air carriers for the period of January 1st to March 31st, 2022.

I understand that there was a million that was put aside for regional airlines that was not spent in the previous year, and the Government of the Northwest Territories received an extension for an extra year to get the money out. Is that million going to be spent on regional airlines? And if you did that, there would be only \$1,091,000 that would be left for the other airlines, is that correct?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so there was no extra money remaining in this particular line item. There is a surplus amount in the Regional Air Transportation Initiative, or RATI agreement, which is managed under Infrastructure and which I think we'll come to shortly.

These funds are specifically -- were negotiated with the Department of Transportation Canada really out of COVID relief. And, yes, as I say, there was nothing that wasn't spent in what we had available.

Madam Chair, I think there was another question in there, and I apologize, I forgot what it was.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Government of the Northwest Territories did not spend \$1 million of support that was supposed to go to regional airlines by March 31st, 2022. And so they've asked for an extension of an extra year to get the money out.

I want to know why these funds weren't spent before March 31st, 2022?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, again, the Department of Infrastructure does manage the Regional Air Transportation Initiative, or RATI. It's a federal fund that is there to help maintain and reestablish regional air connectivity services across Canada that might have been impacted by COVID-19. It's being delivered by CanNor, and that money did not all get out the door. But that is not the same -- it's not the same money as what Department of Finance manages for the purposes of COVID relief.

The RATI money was something that was helping to shore up services, shore up the airports. You know, essentially it was really

assisting with things that might come up as a result of COVID-19 but not necessarily relief funding to airlines or air carriers.

The Department of Finance had the airline and air carriers relief funds that we were managing, and that's this one. And this came through in four different phases. And this is simply the last, the fifth of the phases, and I anticipate likely to be the last of the five. Or to be the last, this fifth one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, it's disturbing to me that Canadian North got 46.5 percent of the contributions that were given. Every other airline across the board all are less than 10 percent. And regional airlines, especially the one from Northwestern Air Lease, was 4.1, the lifeline to some communities like Fort Smith and -- especially Fort Smith, because that's all we have there. And it was a major problem the last time, the phase 4 was brought out. And it concerns me that the majority of the monies that go out to these major airlines, ownership is not in the Northwest Territories.

The ownership with Northwestern Air Lease, and all the people that live in Fort Smith and work for the airline, are all residents of the community of Fort Smith. But Canadian North ownership is in Calgary. There's other -- Summit Air is in Ontario, the ownership.

So likewise, our government is constantly making sure that southern interests overrides northern interests.

This is extremely important to the people of Fort Smith because, you know, first of all, they used to employ about 75 local people that all lived there and own homes there and do business in Fort Smith, including the owners. And yet we're sending all this money, 46.5 percent out of 51 point some million, that's about \$25 million or more, to Canadian North, and ownership is in Calgary.

I'm not saying that they shouldn't get money to ensure that the airline still serves the North, but I just wonder where the priorities are. And I'd like to know what the priorities are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so again, this is a program that was cost shared with the

federal government, and it was part of funding that was being delivered through COVID-19 and the pandemic when airline services across the country were facing fairly dire straits, when there was the sort of significant and immediate shut downs of airline services and impacts to them.

The portion that we received was to help maintain air service costs across the Northwest Territories. The federal government wasn't, you know, supporting which -- you know, based on where ownership might be. They were supporting based on where the air services were based or being required.

We were able to get some flexibility where, for other regions, there may have been only passenger services that were receiving the funding relief and supports. We were able to demonstrate that in the Northwest Territories there are carriers that service regions and communities that provide essential services, whether it's cargo, medical transport, medical supplies, etcetera, and in fact, you know, COVID-related supplies ultimately. So that was the focus of these supports.

Again, these are not, you know, an economic development opportunity. It was really ensuring that various networks remained alive and at least healthy so that services and routes could be maintained. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, economic recovery starts at home, okay. It wasn't an economic opportunity for a small airline to get some help in the fourth phase and now in the fifth phase. Economic recovery is for those people who live and reside in the Northwest Territories.

We are constantly -- constantly doing the wrong thing when it comes to these kind of initiatives where we're always making sure that the southern interest is always looked after. And, you know, that's not okay.

When you have people in a community, like Fort Smith, with over 50 employees still there, all living and working there, spending their money there, going to the grocery store and all these other things, and our government and this Minister decides that the criteria -- they don't look out of the box with the criteria. They have a set thing to make sure that they look after the bigger air carriers, and they -- and the ownership is not here.

That is unbelievable, unacceptable, and I'm not really happy about that. And I hope that when the amounts come out after we're done this session like usual, that they take into account the regional airlines that actually serve the North and the people that are living here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Did you have any question for the Minister?

MS. MARTSELOS: No questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Finance, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$1,615,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Finance, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$7,655,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 10 of the tabled document. Department of Health and Social Services.

Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$2,684,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Health and Social Services, COVID secretariat, not previously authorized, \$11,707,000. Does committee agree?

Or sorry, negative \$11,707,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Health and Social Services, health and social programs, \$15,504,000. Does committee agree -- or sorry, not previously authorized, \$15,504,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I think we should maybe talk about this. It's \$15 million new dollars to the health authority and, you know, \$10 million of that is coming from what was previously budgeted for the COVID secretariat. So I think we are in the final days of winding down the COVID secretariat. I guess I was just hoping the Minister could perhaps give us an update a few months ago when we approved the total

COVID secretariat budget. There was some talk of keeping some staff on going forward as we switch to endemic status. There was some talk about perhaps keeping 8-1-1, just a bit of an update about what is going on with the COVID secretariat. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I wish there would have been the ability to give more of an update back when we were doing the main estimates as well. I think we all did. But it was really a time of significant transition and flux with COVID-19 at that time so it was difficult to pin down exactly the timing or the amounts. So this is before us now.

With respect to more generally what's happening, there are efforts here to reflect a transition. That transition is not only out of COVID but into hopefully better system capacity given the impacts of COVID over the last two years and given, likely, to be some ongoing impacts.

There are still, you know, indicators that there's consistently higher demands on public care services, higher demands on beds day-to-day, and that those that are there are there for particular periods of time. So they're able to track those things. So some of this reflects that.

There are still questions being called in and asked and the need to deliver ongoing vaccine services and anticipated, as vaccines become available for youth, that that will continue, as boosters are required that that will continue. And again that, you know, there's a view to what can be done to transition successfully into, again, better services longer term, you know, utilizing the phone capacity, utilizing the public health services that we have now for testing for vaccinations.

So again, it sort of reflects truly a transition from just what was focused almost solely or exclusively on COVID-19 to being focused on providing care in the context of long-term realities of COVID-19. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and I'll just point that, you know, this \$15 million here going, \$10 million of it was from COVID secretariat, so clearly the department did a bit of an assessment of what is needed to increase that capacity for the endemic going

forward and needed an extra \$5 million. But we also know the Department of Health and Social Services, even with its budget, runs a deficit consistently.

I'm just trying to understand if there is still a gap, we think, of increased COVID costs on the healthcare system going forward or whether we think -- you know, I know we're not going to make up the deficit but whether we think this \$15 million is adequately responding to what we need to do to make sure our healthcare system's properly funded in the year to come. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at this point, there's certainly the, you know, expectation based on what was being done and what was being tracked over the last few months, the last few months of where COVID was at. You know, this is expected to get us through that transition. I'm hesitating because of course I don't think anyone really knows what may or may not happen, say, this fall. You know, there's certainly a hope that with the vaccination rates that we have, with the availability of vaccinations for youth, for boosters, etcetera, that we won't be back in any kind of significant situation and that this transition will provide a transition that carries us through into a longer term state.

And the comments with respect to the challenges that are in health and social services more generally, you know, again, I would point to the fact that there is inclusion here of, you know, increased capacity in community healthcare, community LPNs, primary care, public health, you know, recognizing the impacts of COVID-19 and what that did and allows now for -- while this is transition related, it actually may well have longer term benefits that have to go through the business planning cycle that is -- but, you know, when you start to move forward, you can go into the business planning cycle at least with a sense of what these impacts might be and what the hiring might be. And so, you know, it may well be that this is a transition that leads to longer term change, but that certainly remains to be seen. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Health and Social Services, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$15,504,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, Health and Social Services, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$6,481,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 11 of the tabled document. Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$201,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$609,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and in parks, not previously authorized, \$600,000. Does committee agree? Oh, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Sorry, Madam Chair. You're just so efficient; I missed my spot to stick my hand up.

I'm just curious to know under the Tourism Restart Program, maybe the Minister can just provide a little bit of detail on is that money going to end up in the hand of tourist businesses, or will some of that be used for corporate or administrative costs? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is intended to go out to the operators. It's an extension of funding that is coming through the federal government in this case. Areas that we're targeting here is marketing and promotions, the operations again of tourism operators themselves, their capacity development, so training. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm really glad to hear that. I know the tourism operators probably are as well.

I'm curious to know that if we, and I would assume we will reach the \$600,000, is there

an opportunity for us to have more money come here, or will we see another supplement coming? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is, right now, a one-time programming. It is -- we're part of -- I missed the name earlier, Tourism Relief Fund, which came out from the federal government and is extended through to the end of next year. I do hope that it's fully subscribed. That is certainly the point.

Whether we'll need anything further, you know, I can't say. Again, hoping we don't continue to need any sorts of relief or recovery.

The next stage of tourism funding would probably be looking over to the Tourism 2025, which is part of ITI's Main Estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, \$600,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1,008,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, please turn to page 12 of the tabled document. Department of Infrastructure.

Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$8,065,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I've seen a lot of money kind of moved around, shuffled around within this Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund agreement. And it looks like we're not able, quite frankly, to get money out the door. Maybe the criteria for accessing this money don't allow for folks to access it; I just don't really understand what the problems are. Can I get an explanation here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there were a

number of reasons -- well, there's a number of different funds operated, as the Member has indicated, and the different funds, there was different reasons why they may not have gone all out initially. But it is my understanding now that with COVID-19 behind us and various challenges associated to that that there should be some money going out.

There's initiatives, including Arctic Energy Alliance programs, GHG grant programs. There was some low uptake under the industry buildings GHG grant program but, again, my understanding is that some of that was capacity that has now been resolved. And as well building retrofits and carbon sequestration which was led by ENR are all now, is my understanding, anticipating that they will be able to utilize these dollars in full. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me, then, this commercial and industrial Greenhouse Gas Grant Fund, what is all about and who can actually access it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, I believe that the industry and buildings GHG grant fund or grant program, and that, Madam Chair, would be an application-based grant program to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fuel substitution in industry and commercial buildings. So, Madam Chair, that is -- and by application-based. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The money for the Arctic Energy Alliance programs and services, it just kind of fluctuates up and down. And I know I've raised the issue of at least one federal program that requires an energy audit by certified auditors, and there's only one or two of them or something here in the Northwest Territories. How do we increase the access to some of these programs that Arctic Energy Alliance is running? And has there been any progress made on a requirement of an audit before you do something and then again afterwards. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think, you know, with respect to the administration of the program, that is probably a question best left to the department. I can certainly direct it to my colleague, or I can certainly undertake to ensure that, now that we are seeking to move this money forward, that the departments that are involved, both Infrastructure and ENR, are doing so mindful of the fact that we want to get the money out the door. So taking the comments around the availability of assessors into account when we do that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I would actually like to hear from the Minister of Infrastructure about that if that's at all possible. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. My computer just locked up so I'll try and give this a shot. It won't do anything for me.

The Arctic Energy Alliance, you know, we did have -- we're in the process of training some of the staff. There is a federal requirement in terms of, you know, what sort of training is required. But we have two that are in the process of getting trained to be able to keep up to the amount of work requests that we're seeking. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, once the Minister's able to get her computer unlocked, I'd be happy to get more information on that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

We'll get that commitment from the Minister of Infrastructure to get back to us with that information. Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, I think I saw the Minister shaking her head vigorously yes, so happy to take that commitment. And that's all I got on this item. Thanks.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've got a rather specific question about the Active Carbon Sequestration and Forestry Fund.

My understanding is this was initially a 2019 election promise by the prime minister to plant two billion trees, that's where it started I believe, and then we, for a number of years, couldn't spend it because there's a long standing kind of policy in ENR that we don't actually do tree planting and reforestation. It's a -- we wait for the forest to naturally regrow itself. But now it appears we are spending that money and replanting some trees. So if someone could just tell me the total amount we're spending on tree planting and what -- how that kind of changed or where we're planting trees, anything about this, really. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I just might, Madam Chair. Thank you.

So 2021-2022, I have nothing in front of me indicates a firm policy against planting of trees. And 2021-2022 ENR, in fact, exceeded their budget by \$28,000 and change and are planning to continue to do this, to plant trees and to participate in this program.

This is mostly summer field work, which is why there were some delays in terms of the timing of the funds flowing out. But again, as I've indicated, it's certainly my understanding that they will be able to make use of the dollars by doing so in a way that, you know, accounts for the northern climate and for the kinds of environment that we have here. So that may, you know -- I hope that provides the Member enough assurance that we'll be participating in that fund. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I'm going to ask a couple more questions, I guess. I'm wondering out of the total amount on tree planting we're spending and if the Minister has any idea or knows in front of her where we're planting trees. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So for 2022-2023, anticipated total spend is \$291,000. The total amount under the Active Forestry Carbon Sequestration Fund, ultimately, Madam Chair, is projected to be \$1.333 million.

As for where they will go, they will be planted in the Northwest Territories, Madam Chair. I don't have that information. But I'll endeavour to get it for us. Thank you.

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

Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$8,065,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Infrastructure, regional operations, not previously authorized, negative \$1,097,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Infrastructure, total department, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$6,968,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, please turn to page 13 of the tabled document, Department of Justice.

Justice, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, \$750,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. As I understand it, this is federal money, and I know I've spoken to the issue of victim services before. And the Minister of Justice in the last government actually undertook a review of victim services at my request and had found that, you know, we could be providing better support to the coordinators and the NGOs that actually do much of this very important work.

So this \$750,000 kind of windfall from the federal government, is there a breakdown of how that money is going to be spent? And I guess what I want to make sure is that some of that funding is going to go to support the important work of the coordinators. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, for 2022-2023, it's not a windfall. It's funding that does come in from the federal governments under anticipated programming to a certain degree. So for 2022-2023, we have just shy of \$200,000 in salary and benefits. But \$492,000

does go out for contributions and grants, and a small proportion for occupations and maintenance.

Now as for, you know, the individual breakdown of how that happens organization by organization, Madam Chair, I am conscious that there is an additional outstanding obligation that was agreed to, to look at how we were doing those contribution agreements. So I don't have the update on that yet, but I am certainly alive to the fact that that commitment was previously made in our budget discussions, and I'm still committed to it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. And okay, yes, I understand we are going to get some further information about that. Yes, part of my reason for asking that too is that we don't have a complete network of victim services coordinators across all of the regions, let alone the communities themselves. So I think we do need to do some more work towards better supporting victims of violence and the coordinators that try to connect them with services and support as well. So I'll be curious to see whether any of this funding is going to be used to move towards a more complete network. But I look forward to getting that information. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, did you have any -- to follow?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, only to note some of this funding does specifically support a victim services coordinator position, which can help hopefully answer some of that concern of ensuring that there are services being provided to those communities that don't necessarily have staffing.

I can note that there is an extension now of victim services programming into Fort McPherson and Fort Providence that previously did not have staff. So incrementally there is at least some increase in the availability of staff to communities outside of regional centres. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The windfall of \$750,000 should be going to the actual victims of serious crimes. You know, there's a very serious crime that happened in the community of Fort Smith and, you know,

some of these funds should be allocated to people that -- the whole community was affected by this crime. And, you know, they -- on the website, it has cleanup, you know, securing the doors and some of these things. But you know, we always make sure that the person who committed the crime has legal services all the way through, but the people that are victims of the crime, the complete family of a violent crime, is not covered. And it's at the discretion of the Justice department.

So I'm just wondering if you could just, please, Madam Chair, if the Minister could explain that part of it. You know, it's all right to ensure that we look after the administration parts but I'm more concerned about the people that are affected, especially the victims, whether it be -- it could be other crimes, but there's got to be a better way of actually looking after the victims and not so much concentrated on -- because we all have those -- we have all those other things in place already with victim services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there is the Northwest Territories Victim of Crime Emergency Fund. I would certainly, you know, acknowledge that there's not really going to be any amount that remotely compensates someone who's been a victim of a serious crime. This is one of the ones, though, that does try to help out in terms of some emergency or immediate planning that might happen. And I think the Member mentions, you know, fixing of a door, for instance, or replacing of a lock. So, you know, really small things in the scale of what can occur to someone who's been impacted by a violent event. And some of the funding within this does go into that fund to support those activities. It's a fund to which individuals can apply. I am grateful for this opportunity. I think some of those people don't know that that funding is available when they need it. So this is certainly an opportunity to highlight that.

I mean, more generally, Madam Chair, there's, you know, a host of things that the Department of Justice no doubt provides in terms of availability of legal counsel and Legal Aid and that the community organizations then turn around and provide as well in terms of legal services, advice, supports. You know, assistance in attending in court for instance. Public Prosecution services as well, federal government has as well witness coordinators who can also provide supports and assistance.

So it is a challenging area in terms of understanding and making available all the many and different supports that would be needed. I don't have sort of dollar by dollar because, again, some of that won't be GNWT-provided services.

I certainly could undertake, and I don't know that Minister Simpson or I have the number here, but the total amount that's in the Victim Emergency Fund. If that's of interest to the Member, I'll certainly commit to provide the exact dollar. I mean, it would have been in the main estimates, and we can now update as to the total amount that's available following the supplementary appropriation. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, during that time that this -- of the serious incident in March, the whole community was in lockdown. It was a very, very serious situation. And, you know, and there's a lot of disappointment with some of the things that happened with regards to seeing -- we always seem to protect the person who potentially committed the crime but we always -- and we kind of make sure that everything is right for that person, but we always forget about what's right for the victims.

And I think that that family was victimized and they will never ever get over it. It's a life changing situation for them. It's a life changing situation for the community. People are very, very sad about what happened there. And when you have funds available like this, we should be making sure that the victims of crime are looked after first and not administration. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Justice, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, \$750,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Justice, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$750,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 14 of the tabled document. Department of Lands.

Lands, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$48,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Lands, planning and coordination, not previously authorized, negative \$70,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Lands, total department, operations expenditures not previously authorized, negative \$118,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 15 of the tabled document. Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, not previously authorized, negative \$10,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$2,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, \$14,762,000. Does committee agree? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to talk about the \$10 million that has been set aside for emergency response activities related to the 2022 flooding.

So is that -- I guess I'm trying to get a sense of if that amount was used during the, I guess the initial stages dealing with the flood, or is that amount to be used for I guess covering damages for people who have -- I guess who are victims of the flood? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. It's Madam Chair. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at this point, having made it into the supplementary appropriation, this is really just a very initial amount. And at this point, my understanding is that the assessors of course still have to do their work in order to ascertain exactly what the damages will be and then the full damage compensation process can begin under the Disaster Assistance Policy.

You know, and again for whatever it's worth in this place, Madam Chair, I know the Minister has asked all of us to emphasize the importance of folks registering, both businesses and residential individuals -- who have residential impacts. But this \$10 million really was an initial amount to help support Department of MACA to get out as the emergency was unfolding, provide emergency services, such as sheltering. And I anticipate that there will be more to come as the full extent of the damage is better known. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Has any of this money I guess made its way to victims, especially ones that don't have the financial resources to I guess sustain themselves?

Like, we have people out there that, you know, that are financially stable. They, you know, they may have a mortgage but they're able to, or -- you know, if they have to move out of their house they can rent a hotel or whatever. But we have those people who are, you know, living paycheque to paycheque. They just don't have those resources. They're paying a mortgage. They're paying rent. So I guess I'm asking this, has any of these funds made their way to any of them? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at this point, I think that's unlikely. And you know, I will say that I know when I had attended in Hay River, and I know Mr. Thompson has been there with the Premier. I think several ministers now have actually attended to Hay River. We were all quite keenly aware of the impacts. There has been an RFP out now to help support and provide short-term accommodations within the community for individuals who can't return to their homes and who will require those supports.

As far as, you know, providing money into the hands of individuals, you know, again this \$10 million is not that amount. There's no doubt going to be -- we will see in a future session, which will be the fall session, a much more detailed update of amounts that are being provided for those who are needing disaster assistance funds into their hands. But, you know, this is not that piece. This \$10 million here was just the emergency part. But, you know, again, the department will have, and already is in there in the community, providing pathfinding services and providing the emergency services, including accommodations.

So if there are still individuals who are struggling, I can only encourage them to contact the pathfinding services which are, you know, many lessons learned from last year about the importance of having those four individuals who will be in a state of emergency need for some time. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I guess my concern I guess with this amount, it is a start, and I understand that, you know, the amount that we're going to be looking at is going to be substantially higher than this. However, you know, we have assessments that have been completed. I'm not sure if numbers have been put to them but I'm hoping that's going to happen soon. And if that does, you know, it goes back to pathfinders, my understanding, and they sit down with the resident and I guess come to some agreement that the number's good and maybe an advance.

So if all of a sudden, we get, you know, an influx of those people in there, the \$10 million isn't going to cover it, so. I guess the question is, you know, how soon will we be seeing an additional amount? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we don't have substantiation of amounts in time for the spring session. I don't know that it was ever anticipated that we would have had the kind of substantiation necessary to make it into the spring session. You might recall that last year with the floods, a special warrant was done and had it brought in for fall. So, you know, I certainly don't want residents to think that simply because of the timing of session that funding won't be available. The Disaster Assistance Policy was updated such that the

cap is now at \$240,000, and that doesn't change based on the timing of session. You know, there are ways in which the government can manage funds to ensure that when people have their assessments done and that the monies are ready to go out that we can ensure that that money will be available to them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank the Minister for the answer because, you know, that's what I was looking for, is that when those assessments start to, you know, start to hit the desk of the pathfinder and the agreements are made, I'm hoping that, you know, the advances can go out and people can start working on repairing their homes or replacing them right away. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, and I appreciate the question as well. Again, I don't -- you know, I don't have the answer. I'm not going to necessarily suppose or say exactly for sure this'll be a special warrant situation or if there will be other tools used in this instance.

What I can state again is that, you know, that people should be using their insurance if they have it, going to the Disaster Assistance Relief Policy via MACA or by registering, and the policy is there, and we are going to adhere to it, and the money will be there for people who qualify. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: No questions, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Members, noting the clock, I will now rise and report progress. Thank you to the Minister and thank you to the witnesses.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

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 Tabled Document 658-

19(2) and I would like to report progress. And Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, June 2nd, 2022, at 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 56-19(2), Reappointment of Human Rights Commission Member
 - Motion 57-19(2), Housing NWT Transfers to Long-Term Tenants
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
- Committee Report 31-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 40: An Act to Amend the Medical Professional Act
- 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. This House stands adjourned until June 2nd, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.