

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Travel Budgets**  
**Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Supplementary Operations Expenditures**  
**Budget Review**  
**June 3, 2021**

**MR. O'REILLY;** Thanks, Madam Chair; sometimes we all look alike. I want to start by thanking the Finance Minister for carrying through with a number of commitments she made as part of our budget negotiations on the main estimates back in the last sitting. So there's a number of new spending items in here to carry through with those commitments and that those are much appreciated, and I think they were mutually achieved by both sides of the House to-- on behalf of all the residents of the NWT.

One of the other areas, though, that they agreed upon was changes-- or reductions in travel expenditures. And I just want to confirm with the Minister that these reductions are to travel outside of the Northwest Territories for nonessential purposes. So if the Minister can maybe just talk a little bit about how the travel expenditures have been reduced across all departments, that would be helpful for, I think, the public to understand that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK;** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate the commitments that were made, I want to echo that, you know, that really was a consensus government approach was a very positive one for the people of the Northwest Territories. So I think the appreciation really does flow in both directions on all of those commitments.

Madam Chair, with respect to the travel reductions, this was not a simple process and it was not a simple calculation. It was done in a way where the departments came forward, did an analysis of all of their travel spending in order to understand what of the various travel budgets is in the category of discretionary as opposed to nondiscretionary. And, certainly, all of the travel that takes place takes place for the purposes of advancing the initiatives and efforts in programs and services of various departments. Some of that, though, of course, is to -- has transitioned to being more in line. Some of that is not going to be occurring because of various restrictions-- well, outside of the territories as well as in the territories over travel. And so what they looked as was to determine, indeed, what type of travel is critically and critically required, and generally that would, of course, be in the Northwest Territories as opposed to the discretionary and certainly non-Northwest Territories travel. So it wasn't a blanket 20-percent across all. It was 20percent in the total budget but applied differently to different departments depending on the needs.

So there's some departments, for example Health and Social Services, their travel budgets might be not impacted the same way as, say ITI, because just of the nature of the travel that gets undertaken in the course of the year. But it was done, again, the focus was on ensuring that Northwest Territories travel and essential travel for the delivery of programs and services was maintained. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler);** Thank you, Minister. Member for FrameLake

**MR. O'REILLY;** No, thanks, Madam Chair. That's good to hear, and I think important for the public to understand that. And it's one of the reasons why we couldn't make the reductions in the main estimates themselves, because we wanted to make sure that this was done carefully and thoughtfully. So I think it's fair to say that there's going to be a number-- some concerns or questions around some of the other items in the supplementary appropriation and we'll get to those items a little later this afternoon. Thanks, Madam Chair.