



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Thursday, May 2, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2024 Spring Sitting

**SPEAKER** — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE** — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin  
**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE** — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Acting Deputy Clerk	Allison Lloyd
Table Clerk	Christopher Tyrell
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, May 2, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.  
We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

**Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Before we proceed with today's Order Paper, the Chair would like to remind members of some important rules for order in the Assembly: First, Standing Order 6(4) says that when the Speaker speaks, he "shall be heard without interruption"; second, pursuant to Standing Order 17(1), "Every member desiring to speak shall rise in his or her place and address the Speaker."

Members must then wait to be recognized before continuing to speak to the House; and finally, according to Standing Order 6(1), debate on the Speaker's decision is not permitted and the Speaker's decision cannot be appealed.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House to join me in welcoming members of the Ukrainian Canadian Association of Yukon. We have Jeff Sloychuk and Donna Reimchen. The musicians who are here will be performing at the Ukrainian Canadian Association of Yukon fundraiser taking place tomorrow evening: Taras Luka and Dean Thiessen. Please join me in welcoming them.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to help me to welcome a number of nurses whom we have here today for the tribute. I am very honoured to have them with us. We have Sarah Curtis, a registered nurse; we have Cecilia Fraser, a licensed practical nurse; we have Lindsay Rawluk, a psychiatric outreach nurse with the program for Mental Wellness and Substance Use services; we have Shellby Fulton, a Yukon immunization program nurse; we have Loryn Sand, the Panorama program nurse; we have Shannon Duke, the director of the Wellness Yukon transformation team; we have Randeelyn Koshman, a nurse practitioner; we have Laura Gray-Ellis, a nurse practitioner; we have Alyssa McCoy, a nurse practitioner student; Jessica Murphy, the director of Integrated Health Programs; we have Sheila Thompson, interprofessional practice and the chief nursing officer; and last but not least, we have Lori Strudwick, the senior manager of professional practice.

Thank you so much for being here.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to please help me in welcoming and acknowledging Paolo Gallina to the Legislative Assembly today. Paolo acts as my ministerial advisor. This being the last Sitting day of the Legislature, I would like to welcome you.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any tributes?

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of Emergency Preparedness Week**

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Emergency Preparedness Week takes place the first full week of May.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the importance of getting ready for whatever disaster might visit where we live and to thank Yukoners who are making emergency preparedness a priority for themselves and their families. Preparing for disaster starts with each of us long before an emergency occurs.

Emergency Preparedness Week is a time to remind ourselves of the importance of taking responsibility for preparing our households for an emergency.

Public Safety Canada coordinates this national event in close collaboration with the provinces, territories, and other partners. The annual event has been running for over 25 years. Across the territory, municipalities, First Nations, and emergency response agencies are holding events to raise awareness about the importance of emergency preparedness.

On Wednesday, May 8, there will be a nation-wide test of the Alert Ready emergency alerting system, including here in the Yukon. The test will occur at 10:55 a.m. local time. There is also likely a preparedness event or workshop happening near you, like the FireSmart fair being held here in the capital on May 11. Some communities are celebrating Wildfire Community Preparedness Day and hosting FireSmart barbecues. Wherever you are in the territory, I encourage everyone to find out what might be happening in their community.

I also encourage Yukoners this week to reflect on the risks that we all live with. It is an important part of taking care of yourself, your home, and your family, and it makes it easier to create an emergency plan. What would you do if your family needed to leave home at a moment's notice? Where would you gather if you were separated from loved ones? Do you have everything you need, including contacts for family and friends? Do you have a plan for what happens to your pets and livestock? As important as it is to write these details down, it is equally important to review your plans regularly with your loved ones.

Finally, prepare an emergency kit that includes food, water, and other essential supplies for everyone in your household to be self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours. Keep your emergency kit in a location that is easy to find. Consider putting one in your vehicle or keeping one in your workplace.

We will never regret doing these advance preparations, and I would like to salute everyone who has already taken these steps and assembled a 72-hour kit, prepared a household emergency plan, and taken the time to acquaint themselves with the risks that most of us live with every day. Those simple steps are a huge help and a large part of the Yukon's preparedness.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize May 5 to 11 as Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada. This important awareness campaign takes place at the perfect time of year to start thinking about how to prepare yourselves and your households for an emergency such as snowmelts as the temperatures and waters begin to rise. This year's theme is "Be Prepared. Know Your Risks".

We are no strangers to the threat of flooding and wildfire, and we have had both affect individual homes and, on a broader scale, entire neighbourhoods and communities of people. Our officials diligently track data, snowpack, and other water levels throughout the territory to give us a better understanding of what we might face throughout the summer months and when so we know where to focus our efforts and how we can help different regions to prepare.

Despite all of the work put into tracking and predicting emergencies, it's important for individuals to know that they have a responsibility to ensure that their own households and families are ready should they be affected.

We would like to thank all of the Yukoners working on emergency preparedness, whether it's fire, flood, earthquake, or another unanticipated natural disaster.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP ahead of Emergency Preparedness Week to remind us all that emergencies can happen anywhere and anytime and sometimes without warning. Prevention and preparation are essential, so make an emergency kit that can support each member of your household for up to 72 hours. Make an emergency plan that will help everyone in your family know what to do in an emergency, how to contact each other, and where to meet. Make sure that your home is wildfire-ready. In the City of Whitehorse, you can even book a FireSmart home assessment to help you to identify vulnerabilities. And make sure that your home is flood-ready — learn your home's vulnerabilities and take preventive steps.

The lessons for us all are to be prepared, be self-sufficient but ready to help if needed, and, during an emergency crisis, be kind.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of National Nursing Week, Indigenous Nurses Day, and International Nurses Day**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to our dedicated nurses as we proudly celebrate National Nursing Week, Indigenous Nurses Day, and International Nurses Day.

It may go without saying that nurses are an integral part of our health care system, but we should take every opportunity to salute them. They are invaluable health care professionals who provide holistic, compassionate, and critical care, and we rely on them to take care of us and our loved ones.

I certainly could not do the thanks that we have for nurses justice in the short time that we have for tributes, but I ask all Yukoners to join me in thanking and sharing our appreciation for nurses during National Nursing Week, which runs from May 6 to 12 this year. The week begins with Indigenous Nurses Day on May 6 and finishes with International Nurses Day on May 12.

Across our health care system — in long-term care homes, in hospitals, in health centres and clinics, mental wellness and substance use treatment centres, immunization clinics, and emergency medical services — nurses examine, support, and treat Yukoners.

The theme for this year's National Nursing Week is "Changing Lives. Shaping Tomorrow." Yukon nurses are changing lives through impacting their patients and through advocacy. Nurses play a crucial role in directly impacting the lives of patients. Through their expertise, delivered with care and compassion, nurses contribute to incredibly positive changes in the health and well-being of all Yukoners. Nurses also frequently advocate for their patients to make sure that they all receive the best possible care and support to meet their needs. This advocacy can bring about transformative change in the lives of Yukoners.

Yukon nurses are shaping our tomorrow in two key ways: through innovation and education. Nurses are at the forefront of health care innovation in the Yukon and across Canada, contributing to advancements in treatment, technologies, and patient care practices while helping to inform and improve health care systems across the territory. Their commitment to learning and adapting helps to shape the future of health care in the Yukon. Nurses as educators have a significant impact on shaping the next generation of health care professionals in the territory. Their knowledge and mentorship influence the future of their nursing profession.

On behalf of all Yukoners, I say a heartfelt thank you to nurses in every corner of the territory for their leadership as they work to support and improve the health care and well-being of Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate to have such a caring and compassionate community of nurses who are dedicated to boosting the health and wellness of all Yukoners. I wish them all a happy National Nursing Week and I encourage them to celebrate their profession and themselves with each other and their loved ones.

*Applause*

**Mr. Cathers:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to nurses across the Yukon as we recognize National Nursing Week, which begins on May 6 and ends on May 12, which is International Nurses Day. We also recognize Indigenous Nurses Day.

Recognizing the impact nurses have throughout society, the theme of National Nursing Week this year is “Changing Lives. Shaping Tomorrow.” We recognize the many important roles that nurses have in our health care system and how vital their professionalism, knowledge, and service is to our public health care system and to all of those who are served by it. Nurses work in our rural health centres, in our three hospitals, continuing care facilities, medical clinics, public health, addictions treatment, home care, medevacs, and the list goes on.

Nurses work in our communities in so many capacities that it’s hard to touch on everything they do. They are educators and leaders; they are students and mentors. They work hard to give all of us the care we need and, if you have the chance, please thank the nurses you know for all they do to keep people healthy and improve the quality of life for Yukoners. My colleagues and I thank all of the Yukon’s nurses as well as all of our dedicated health professionals for your service to the people of the Yukon.

*Applause*

**Ms. Blake:** I am pleased to pay tribute to National Nursing Week and Indigenous Nurses Day on behalf of the NDP.

We are so aware and grateful for the work that nurses do for all of us in so many different situations and places. We find these health professionals everywhere in our communities: health clinics, the hospitals, extended health care facilities, home care, rural health centres, and more.

We banged pots and pans during the COVID pandemic to thank all nurses for their hard work under such trying conditions. We also lost nurses to COVID during the pandemic. We see them still working hard to fill the gaps within our health care systems and we continue to honour their hard work and dedication to holding our health care system together.

I want to acknowledge Indigenous Nurses Day and say how proud I am to know that my daughter will be entering the practical nursing program at Yukon University in the fall. I want to encourage all folks thinking of a career in health to consider this program here in our home territory.

Again, mahsi’ cho to all nurses across the Yukon for their hard work.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling six legislative returns in response to written questions that were submitted by members of the opposition.

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling an e-mail from Chief Loblaw from the Ross River Dena Council in support of Motion No. 982.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a legislative return in response to questions during debate on March 25, 2024.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling two legislative returns and the *Fleet Vehicle Agency Business Plan 2024 to 2027*.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a legislative return based on a question yesterday from the Member for Copperbelt South. I also have for tabling the 2023 Yukon Minerals Advisory Board annual report.

**Speaker:** Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the Yukon for its continued real GDP growth for the fourth consecutive year, up 1.6 percent in 2023.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House:

(1) congratulates the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Association of Yukon, Jeff Sloychuk, Vice-President Eileen Melnychuk, and the entire association for their continued support of Ukraine against Russia’s illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and the recent Yukon-to-Ukraine trip, which brought a medical evacuation vehicle full of supplies donated by Yukoners to Ukraine, and the two aforementioned individuals for being sanctioned by the Russian Federation, highlighting their strong support and the support of Yukoners for Ukraine and Ukrainians; and

(2) thanks the Whitehorse Firefighters Charitable Society, Health Partners International of Canada, Yukon health and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and all involved businesses and individuals for their strong support of the Ukrainian Canadian Association of Yukon and the recent delivery of a medical evacuation vehicle for Ukraine.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House:

(1) congratulates Inspector Kent Langley for receiving his King’s Commission as an officer in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He holds the role of district and support services officer for Yukon RCMP; and

(2) welcomes Staff Sergeant Jill McLaren as the Acting Detachment Commander for the Whitehorse detachment for Yukon RCMP.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of documents related to the Member for Lake Laberge's travel costs detailed in the *Report on Subsistence, Travel and Accommodation of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2023-24*, where the Member for Lake Laberge billed taxpayers \$23,174.93 for 203 trips, mainly between Lake Laberge and Whitehorse, including one trip for which taxpayers were billed \$1,283.86.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to abide by section 5(h) of the Yukon *Education Act* by tabling the 2023 annual report for the state of education in the Yukon, including reports from each school board, in the Legislative Assembly prior to the end of the current Sitting.

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates Arcel Siosan for completing his bachelor of management and bachelor of science as a three-time recipient of the prestigious Sir Graham Day scholarship, which supports students at the Dalhousie University Faculty of Management who want to enter family businesses or gain experience in trade and transportation or government.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Liberal government to rename the Big Creek bridge the "Bridge so Nice They Built it Twice".

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the federal government to reverse the cut to funding for Canada Day celebrations, which is currently resulting in groups, including the Royal Canadian Legion Whitehorse branch, losing about one-third of the funding they normally received from the Department of Canadian Heritage to organize Canada Day festivals.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the Yukon artists who have had their works chosen to be added to the Yukon permanent art collection.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Whitehorse Walk-in Clinic

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked an exciting day for the Yukon's health care system. Alongside health care partners and with the heartfelt blessing shared by

Elder Bessie Jackson, we celebrated the official opening of the Whitehorse Walk-in Clinic at Mah's Point at its permanent location. This marks a moment of celebration not just for those of us who were there but for all Yukoners.

On December 18, 2023, the walk-in clinic began offering services to Yukoners unattached to a primary health care provider from a temporary location on Quartz Road. As of April 29, 2024, the clinic moved to its permanent location where it will continue to offer a spectrum of essential health services ranging from treating minor illnesses and injuries to performing necessary medical procedures and writing prescriptions.

Client visiting hours at the new location have expanded to Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., allowing for greater accessibility and convenience for Yukoners seeking care. The telephone line is open from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This move to a more central and accessible location supports the broader goals of alleviating the pressure on the health system, including improving access to timely and compassionate care. By providing non-urgent care, the clinic will alleviate pressures on Whitehorse General Hospital's emergency department, enabling faster access for those in urgent need.

The clinic's dedicated team comprised of physicians, nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, medical office assistants, and social workers embodies our promise of high-quality care. Their tireless efforts have been instrumental in realizing this vision.

More than just a health care facility, this clinic symbolizes our dedication to enhancing primary care services and achieving the goals outlined in the 2020 *Putting People First* report.

I urge all Yukoners without a dedicated primary care provider to use this resource. Over 600 patients have already received care at the previous temporary location. Whether you are booking a same-day appointment or walking in, rest assured that this clinic is here to address your needs and ensure your health and well-being.

A big thank you to all those involved in making this significant day possible, from the health care staff to operate this clinic to our partners and the community members who supported this initiative.

As we cut the ribbon yesterday, we opened a new chapter in health care in the Yukon. This new chapter is one that contributes to a healthier, stronger Yukon community by bridging gaps in health care access.

Situated in a vibrant and easily accessible downtown Whitehorse location, the permanent clinic reflects the dedication of the many health care professionals who made it all possible.

Its presence highlights our government's commitment to making health care more accessible to all Yukoners. This is a proud moment. The Whitehorse Walk-in Clinic has already had a positive impact on our community and will continue for years to come.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, we are in favour of anything that will improve access to health care for Yukoners and reduce the long wait-lists for doctors that continue to grow under this Liberal government.

While the walk-in clinic is a positive step, there are still thousands of Yukoners without a family doctor, and if the recent survey of the YMA is any indication, that problem is going to get worse before it gets better.

As everyone in this House is aware, the opening of the walk-in clinic is due to the confidence and supply agreement with the NDP and the persistent advocacy of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. However, we have had concerns about how the Liberals will fulfill the rest of their CASA commitments since day one. As I have said before, this is a tired government, and the only new ideas that they have brought forward come from CASA; however, it seems now that even the Leader of the NDP is concerned about the pace that this Liberal government is checking the boxes on CASA.

Just yesterday in Question Period, she asked about a CASA commitment to provide financial support for Yukoners seeking fertility treatment and said — quote: “We have dutifully held up our end of the bargain so far, but have they?” In response, the Liberal health minister simply told the Leader of the NDP that Cabinet has more important priorities; the minister has had too many important meetings to deal with CASA. It was made pretty clear yesterday that the CASA was simply not a priority for the health minister or the Liberals.

It now seems confirmed that the Premier and his colleagues don't take the document that keeps them in power very seriously or they are willing to ignore parts of it altogether. This is no surprise to us, but it now seems more obvious to all. The Leader of the NDP noted that yesterday as well. During Question Period, she said — quote: “By my count, just 13 of the 29 commitments this Premier made to us are completed or are on track to be. What I fear is that this government isn't really honouring the agreement that they signed.” That's less than half, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that it is a coincidence that the majority of those unfulfilled commitments are on the desk of the minister of health.

So, as we wrap up the Spring Sitting, three years after the CASA was first signed, the reality is that the Liberals continue to ignore the CASA and their promises to Yukoners. The only question that remains is: When will enough be enough?

**Ms. Blake:** I had the honour of attending the opening for the walk-in clinic in its permanent location yesterday. The space is beautiful, so full of light, and it filled me with hope to see a space like this dedicated to the health and well-being of Yukoners. And I love the purple floors.

Yesterday's opening was emotional for my colleague the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and I, especially for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, who has been advocating for supports like this for over a decade. I was so grateful to Ta'an Kwäch'än Elder Bessie Jackson for grounding the opening in a prayer. For years, the Yukon NDP has talked about the importance of wraparound care and health care that goes beyond a doctor's office that involves nurses, social workers,

and other allied professionals. This is why this commitment in the confidence and supply agreement was so important to us.

As we see increasing wait times in the emergency room and Yukoners with no access to a family doctor, we know that services like the walk-in clinic are essential. To know that over 600 patients have already received care at the temporary location further speaks to how great the need is.

We heard over and over from Yukoners without a family doctor who had to go to the emergency room for simple, non-urgent things, like a prescription renewal or routine test. We heard the frustration and disappointment when the Liberals cancelled plans for a walk-in clinic in 2022. That is why I am so proud that the confidence and supply agreement could bring this change for Yukoners.

When I talk to Yukoners who have gone years without a family doctor and who were previously faced with waiting in the emergency room to renew a prescription, they tell me how relieved they are to finally have access to a walk-in clinic.

I am glad to see that, with the opening of this new space, the hours will be extended to five days a week, as committed to in the confidence and supply agreement. We hear from many Yukoners who have family doctors but face long wait times to see them, which often lands them waiting in the emergency room as well. This stress is so real that we have even heard from Yukoners who have considered giving up their family doctors so that they can utilize the walk-in clinic. We hope that this gap will be filled and that, in the future, this clinic will be able to serve these Yukoners as well.

I am so thankful to the staff who have taken on the challenge of making this space a reality and to the doctors, administrative workers, social workers, nurses, nurse practitioners, and other health care professionals who serve Yukoners in this space. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and I hear from Yukoners what a difference all of you have made to make this clinic feel like a welcoming space.

Mahsi' cho.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, thank you to the members opposite for their responses. Having a walk-in clinic in downtown Whitehorse is a significant step forward for our community. It offers Yukoners a new access point for primary care, decreases pressures on the hospital emergency room, and increases accessibility to essential health care services for Yukoners who are unattached to a primary health care provider. We recognize that too many Yukoners fall within this category, and that is why our government is working hard to attract and retain health care professionals to support our health and wellness. This includes many of the initiatives and the programs outlined in *Putting People First* and our *Health Human Resources Strategy*.

While the Official Opposition is focused on undermining the efforts of our hard-working staff at the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, I would like to use the opportunity here to focus on the progress that we are making alongside our partners.

In the Spring 2024 Sitting, there have been a number of significant developments for the health and well-being of

Yukoners. We have worked hard, alongside so many incredible partners, to move progress forward. The *Health Authority Act* embodies that.

Unfortunately, the Yukon Party did not support Yukoners in this venture, and Yukoners will remember that failing by their party. The community space in the Jim Smith Building, which saw a significant uptake over the past several months, embodies that opportunity as well — and, of course, the walk-in clinic also embodies and is evidence of the work being done to support Yukoners.

There was so much collaborative work that went into making all of those opportunities possible, including the walk-in clinic. I would like to take the opportunity to stress the impact of this development. The space in Mah's Point is truly incredible, as are the staff who bring it to life. As we continue to advance initiatives that attract and retain health care professionals, having a wonderful facility like this is just another way that we are supporting those efforts.

We will continue to remain positive, supportive, responsive, and grateful to everyone who pursues a career and supports our health and wellness. We will continue to celebrate positive steps forward as well as reflect on how we can always find room for improvement and continued growth.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Yukon New Democratic Party for being great partners in this journey as well. I firmly believe in sharing recognition when it is due, and this is no exception. We don't often do that enough, certainly not in this Legislative Assembly.

As part of budget 2024-25, our government is investing over \$1.4 million to support the operations of the walk-in clinic here in Whitehorse. I certainly hope that the Yukon Party will support these initiatives and the funds that are necessary to support these health care improvements for Yukoners. The walk-in clinic is already having such a positive impact in our community. I certainly look forward to following its success for years to come.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Health care system

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, a serious part of the Yukon's growing health care crisis is that health professionals feel ignored, unsupported, and disrespected by the minister of health.

Only seven percent of Yukon doctors feel that the current Liberal government supports and values physician contributions to the health care system. Nearly 40 nursing home attendants signed a letter to the minister stating: "The morale among all NHAs is at the lowest it has ever been right now. You treated us like we do not matter and are invisible." And the decision to provide bonuses to some nurses but not other health professionals resulted in grievances and a growing sense of anger among health care employees.

The government that ran on "Be Heard" isn't listening to Yukoners. When will the minister recognize that fixing the

health care crisis starts with listening to Yukon health professionals and supporting them?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to always take time to work hand-in-hand with our health care professionals. For many this week, they would have heard the president of the Yukon Medical Association come out and counter many of the claims made by the Member for Lake Laberge and really give a succinct set of answers about where they feel there needs to be support to doctors, what we see as trends across the country, and their support for the health act, which, of course, was something that was great to have validated.

I think it's important over the next number of months — I know there is a commitment from me and the minister. I want to take that time to hear from front-line staff. I want to hear in greater detail from doctors. I have had opportunities over the last while to meet with many in the profession. I think it's important as we transition to understand from hospital staff right through to many of the support staff; so, I look forward to those conversations.

Again, I think that I could agree that it's always important to hear from staff and understand where we could do better. We know there are challenges across the country, and I think it's important to hear from those staff — especially before we make some of the next transitional moves with a health authority.

**Mr. Cathers:** I will have to remind the Premier that only seven percent of doctors feel supported by his government.

The territory's health care crisis has affected every community across the territory. Vacancies in community nursing reached 47 percent, and last year saw a series of closures and reduced services at rural health care centres. Despite their promises, the Liberals have done nothing to build continuing care homes in rural communities, like Watson Lake. On top of this, the minister wouldn't go to Watson Lake for a meeting when she was asked and refused to attend a meeting with municipal leaders in Carmacks about health care while she was in Scotland vacationing after travelling there on the taxpayers' dime.

When will the minister recognize that fixing the health care crisis requires listening to rural communities in the Yukon to understand their needs and take the time to visit all Yukon communities and meet with people?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I am glad she didn't go to Lake Laberge, because it would have been a more expensive trip.

When we look back at this, that was a handful of rocks thrown around. We know that there are challenges across the country when it comes to making sure that we have nurses in place.

I have worked with my colleagues across the country around the fact that we are trying to reduce the reliance on agency nurses. It's great to hear a member from the House today — and the pride from that member — talking about their child going into the university for a nursing program. Many of us were there last week, and again, we were happy in this government to support having the college move to a university and the new nursing programs that they are looking at delivering.



I think that the health human resources work is second to none across the country, bringing organized labour, some of our HR specialists, as well as members from the hospital, Health and Social Services, and the university together to come up with solutions.

We know that the health authority is something that was very significant. Again, we are hearing from many in our community, still to this day, about how upset they are from the comments that came through from the Official Opposition and especially from the Member for Lake Laberge. Folks are saying that we really need to ensure that Yukoners really understand the position of the opposition on this, for those who have missed it.

I look forward to summoning the shots from the member opposite and I will look forward to getting back up.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, as the Premier knows, he spent \$170,000 on the trip to India and the minister spent \$13,000 on the Scotland trip with nothing to show for it while the territory's health crisis includes growing problems at Yukon hospitals.

Service reductions due to chronic underfunding resulted in delayed cancer screenings, MRIs, and other tests and cancelled surgeries. Whitehorse hospital is often overcapacity, resulting in surgery cancellations, ER wait times growing, and hallway medicine happening when they are over 100-percent capacity. A growing population, aging demographic, and thousands of people without a doctor are causing this, but the problems didn't happen overnight.

The Liberals were warned but, in seven and a half years, have not expanded bed capacity at WGH or upgraded the surgical services area, despite the Yukon Medical Association calling that an urgent need over three years ago.

When will the minister or the Premier recognize that fixing the health care crisis includes taking action to address the bed shortage and expand the operating room capacity at the Whitehorse hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the work that we did last fall — and we heard loud and clear from the business community on their continued work as we look toward business connections in Japan. We know that Health and Social Services right now is using the relationships that we made in India to recruit nurses and to partner with other universities here in the country. I look forward to seeing those nurses come to the Yukon.

Again, I think that it is important to note that the member opposite got up and said that seven percent of all doctors in the Yukon didn't support the work — or felt that the government didn't support it. That is actually factually incorrect — factually incorrect — if you look at the number of doctors who responded. It is factually incorrect. But again, a lot of what was said is factually incorrect. We talk about the work that has happened here. I think that we have heard endorsement from other members from the community. We have seen what has happened in our transition. We have seen the medical services that we actually have brought in over the last number of years.

The sad part is — the one thing that the Member for Lake Laberge has certainly been doing better than anybody is

cheering against Yukoners. He does it better than anybody here in the House and this is a time where folks have to come together. We all have to come together; there are health care challenges across this country. Working together will help us, but cheering against Yukoners will not.

#### **Question re: Education-related reports and recommendations**

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has had a difficult spring when it comes to managing stakeholder relations. The session started in early March with a letter from five education partners condemning the new educational assistant allocation process. After initially claiming that the change was administrative, the minister relented and pushed pause on that process. The Yukon Association of Education Professionals has also raised concerns with the lack of progress on a key CASA commitment to provide training for educational assistants and teachers on call.

What is the minister planning to do this summer to repair these strained relationships with key partners in education?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise to talk about all of the good work that is happening in education. I think that the member opposite is certainly aware that we are working very hard to reshape education in the Yukon. That includes absolutely working with all of our partners, stakeholders, and contributors to education.

I want to take a moment to really hold up the Department of Education for all of the hard work that they are doing. We have incredible public servants who are serving this territory each and every day, including all of the educators who have one of the most precious jobs I think in the whole territory. They get to help shape the minds and everything about our young people, which I hold them up for. I had an opportunity to talk to some of those folks at the AGM recently for the Yukon Association of Education Professionals. I reiterate what I said there, which was that they have one of the most important jobs in our territory and that we will continue to walk with them and provide the supports that they need.

I will absolutely continue to work in absolute collaboration with all of our partners.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, so there's lots of work for the minister this summer to repair those damaged relationships.

The minister has also had a tough time with individuals and organizations regarding the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School. There was no public consultation on the decision to choose the Takhini location in the first place. Calls for a school in the downtown area of Whitehorse have continued. The consultant's report on the building location has been embargoed, with no indication of when the public and media can see it.

Why is the minister only conducting targeted consultation on this report rather than full and open public consultation?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud that our government is investing in education infrastructure. We are just finishing off the Whistle Bend Elementary School, we are starting work on Kêts'ádañ Kù in Burwash Landing, and we are planning for a new replacement school in Whitehorse — the

École Whitehorse Elementary School. I'm very pleased with the progress on this project. On March 27, an information session was held with project partners and stakeholders to discuss the school placement options on the educational land reserve.

This was a well-attended meeting, but we have had several other meetings. On April 15, we had Education staff meet with École Whitehorse Elementary School Council to review the draft embargoed documents. On April 18, Education staff met with the project advisory committee; this was their eighth meeting since October 2022. As requested by the Takhini Neighbourhood Association, there was a meeting held on April 24 to share the draft site analysis and test fit report. This is a tremendous opportunity to enhance French immersion programming with a new modern learning environment.

We will continue to work with all of our partners, including the First Nation School Board, which said that they will work with us on the final decision when that happens.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, my question was about lifting the embargo and providing full public consultation on that report.

However, earlier this week, I asked the Minister of Education about policy work regarding students living with type 1 diabetes. The minister told this House — quote: “Over the last two years, as of the end of February, the Department of Education has met with the T1D Support Network seven times on how best to approach and support students living with type 1 diabetes in school settings.” The organization countered this with a social media post stating that in spite of those seven meetings and numerous others over the past six years, there are still no T1D policies in place.

Will the minister commit to having specific policies for students with type 1 diabetes in place before the House returns in October?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I think what I want to say first and foremost is that the health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our absolute first priority. We have an administration of medication to students policy which requires planned care and support for students with various medical conditions, including diabetes.

We will continue to work with my colleagues at the Department of Health and Social Services as we work on a Yukon-wide strategy that includes areas within education. We have met with T1D Support Network seven times on how to best approach supporting students living with type 1 diabetes in the school settings. We remain committed to ensuring that both staff and students are supported in schools and are taking the steps to do this properly, as I said, in collaboration with the T1D Support Network and the Department of Health and Social Services.

I know that the member opposite may just be extracting pieces of what I say in the Legislature to share with folks. That's part of the difficulty in how the Yukon Party continues to share information; it's out of context.

### **Question re: Confidence and supply agreement commitments**

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I raised some questions about this government's willingness to deliver on their confidence and supply agreement commitments. In that agreement, the NDP set out deliverables for health care, education, affordability, housing, reconciliation, Yukon's rural communities, and the environment. To date, less than half of those commitments have been honoured. While I don't have time today to go through every failing and every missed deadline, I am going to ask them questions about CASA commitments that the government could complete by the end of the summer if it got its act together.

I brought up the land lottery in the Energy, Mines and Resources debate because it's inherently unfair and we all know that the existing system isn't working. The minister agreed with me and he said that the system does not work the way it was intended and it needs to be fixed. In CASA, this government committed to reforming the land lottery system, beginning with public engagement. When will that engagement start?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I will go back and check my responses during Committee of the Whole, but I'm pretty sure that I said it was happening this summer — this spring. I talked about engagement that was going to be broad with respect to successor lands legislation, and I talked about engagement that was going to be focused — taking a closer look at the land lottery itself and having a focus. I think what I said was that this was happening this summer. I think that I am already on the record for that and I will just confirm with the department that this is what is happening. We are looking forward to that engagement.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I was there and I recall it a little bit differently.

The confidence and supply agreement also includes multiple education commitments. We have heard time and time again about this government's repeated failures to consult with education professionals and their union on issues like educational assistant allocations and training plans. This government made commitments to increase allocations of EAs and learning assistance teachers, to provide training for EAs and teachers on call, and to do so through collaboration and consultation with education professionals.

Education stakeholders were equally dismayed with how the government handled the addition of wellness specialists. Most recently, we hear that there appears to be a move away from wellness specialists in every school, and this was not what we agreed to.

So, why is this government actively alienating its education partners instead of including them in the delivery of these important CASA-driven changes for the benefit of all students?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely. I believe that the NDP shares the Yukon government's desire to improve the Yukon's education system just by how some of the questions are framed here — very committed to re-shaping

education in the Yukon. We have made a lot of progress. We have a lot more work to do.

Mr. Speaker, we take our commitments very seriously in the confidence and supply agreement. In 2023, we have hired 13 new educational assistants and 15 learning assistants, and we are working hard to fill the 12 positions under the wellness specialist positions that were allocated for 2023-24. We have seven of them in place now. We will continue to recruit and work with our two other authorities under the Francophone School Board and the First Nation School Board to ensure that these positions continue to be filled.

For 2024-25, we have 21 more FTEs, and then for 2025, we will have 20 more FTEs — that's 81 new supports to schools.

We will continue to work with our partners and the other two authorities to ensure that we are working collaboratively.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, just to clear up any confusion, I am both confident in the framing and the content of my questions.

So, affordability is top of mind for nearly everyone these days, and the CASA recognizes the pressures created by the rising cost of nearly everything. It's why we included four specific measures related to affordability, transportation, and social supports in that agreement.

Unfortunately, this government does not seem to realize that affordability is not just a catchy political phrase; it is a very real issue for many Yukoners. One of the multiple affordability measures in the CASA was a review of social assistance rates.

This government had a deadline of summer 2023 to begin a public engagement to review social assistance rates. We know that they did a targeted engagement, but that was not the agreement, and this government has now missed the deadline for public engagement by over a year.

So, can the minister tell us when the social assistance rates will be adjusted to meet today's lived reality?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, look, I think we debated in the House around social assistance rates, CS, and we did support that and, of course, that's why we agreed to it in the CASA. What we heard from the Leader of the NDP over the last two days is that about half of the items that were in the CASA are being worked on or completed, and we're halfway through the time period on the CASA. We speak almost weekly — our teams. We think there's a lot of really good items in the CASA, and I think the Leader of the Official Opposition must think there's a lot, because he speaks about the CASA more than probably me and the Leader of the NDP.

I do think we're committed to the work that's there, and we think there are many good items. Some of them, of course, have taken a little bit longer. There have been — we've moved a tremendous number of different policy items. I'm happy that, this week, we saw the opening of the walk-in clinic, and we're absolutely committed to the work that's there.

We know that the work of the NDP in opposition is to keep our feet to the fire; we appreciate that, but we're fully committed to the work in the CASA. We think it's good work, and we think that working together has made life better for Yukoners. We think that, as we know, the majority of Yukoners

want us to work together to make their lives better. We'll continue to work on affordability; we'll continue to work on improving the lives of Yukoners.

### **Question re: Rental housing policies and residential lot development**

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, we have now had three years of the Liberal government's experiment with rent control. In November 2023, a group of housing stakeholders came together following the launch of the consultation on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and created a report called "RLTA Solutions Lab". The first finding was that — and I'll quote: "In the Yukon, tenants face a shortage of residential rental units and increasing rent prices. For landlords, rising expenses and reduced control over rent to cover their costs are causing many to leave the market, which further reduces available rentals."

This observation is hardly new. Will the Liberal government finally admit that their experiment with rent control has made the housing crisis worse?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk about all the work we're doing on the housing file today, and specifically this afternoon, we're talking about the rents and rental market. I have committed in this House — and I'm currently working very diligently on a rewrite of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. That review is ongoing.

The member opposite has just referenced the cutting-edge consultation we did involving several groups of people involved in the rental market who met an incredible number of times in a very short period of time, and their commitment to this process was absolutely remarkable.

The feedback we got from that targeted consultation helped shape the resulting public consultation that we did throughout the territory on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. The Department of Community Services is working diligently on this piece of legislation and fast-tracking it so that we can get it back to the House in the spring of 2025.

I am happy to talk more about this into the future. I am very proud of the work of the department. It is still in its very preliminary stages, but we are working incredibly hard — not only to create the lots needed to have a robust rental market but also on the law.

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics released this year's population report. That document showed that, in the last five years, Yukon's population has grown by almost 4,000 people. However, in that same time, we haven't seen anywhere close to enough housing constructed.

Can the Liberals explain why housing construction has stalled while the population has grown so dramatically?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen yesterday's population statistics, but I know that — yes, it has been strong growth. We have seen strong growth in our economy; we have seen strong growth in population. As the member knows, that is a different tale from where we were in 2015, but what I can say is that I know that we looked back, and when we had our most robust growth of 12.1 percent here

in the Yukon, we had a growth of 12.9 percent in available units from the statistics branch. So, actually, the new units outstripped the growth in population. So, that would be counter to the claims being made by the member opposite today.

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, throughout this Sitting, we have heard from the Minister of Community Services that, since the last election, the Liberal government has released fewer than 250 lots. That means that, in order to meet their target of 1,000 lots by the end of this Monday, they will need to release over 750 lots in the next 18 months. Even if they could meet their target, which seems unlikely, it still won't be enough. Statistics Yukon projects that the Yukon's population will be around 48,000 by 2026.

Will the government be able to release enough lots to meet this growing demand?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, we have the opposition pushing incorrect information before the public. It's really kind of shocking and a little bit disappointing for me and I'm sure for others, and the Yukon public is beginning to catch on, too. The member opposite just mentioned 200 lots. That's just crazy talk. Actually, this year, we will have 680 lots created since 2021. That is a vast difference from the narrative that the members opposite are trying to portray.

We are working diligently on our lot development here in the territory and on our housing. I mentioned it in our budget document right before us now. We have \$50.3 million in housing. That's just a number, Mr. Speaker, but if you look at it, we're building affordable homes, community housing, and Housing First projects. We are spending \$6 million on the Safe at Home Society to develop supportive housing units in Whitehorse and \$5.5 million in loans for individuals. We have \$8.3 million for rental housing and \$2 million to renovate and rehabilitate units owned by the Yukon Housing Corporation. We are putting \$1.2 million into rental subsidies. We are building lots, and we also have 5<sup>th</sup> and Rogers, which, of that total I just gave, is just one lot, and yet it will be hundreds of housing units for Yukoners.

We are working with First Nations; we are working with communities; we are getting it done and we're proud of the work that we're doing.

#### **Question re: Whitehorse Emergency Shelter**

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, it has been about a year since a group of concerned businesses wrote to the Premier to express their concerns about the operation of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. In May of last year, several Yukon businesses came together and told the Premier — quote: "What is happening at the shelter is totally unacceptable and is out of control..." They went on to outline the verbal, physical, and sometimes sexual harassment that they, their staff, and their clients face on a near daily basis.

After a summer of inaction, last fall, the Premier finally stepped up and admitted that he should have taken action sooner and announced that he was taking over the file from the minister of health personally. Other than some aesthetic changes to the exterior of the building, can the Premier outline the actions that he has taken to address the concerns raised by

Yukon businesses with him a year ago? Does he think that they have been effective?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the downtown businesses, many of whom came to the Legislative Assembly with concerns and then reached out to me afterward and said: You know what? As Yukoners, we think it's really important that we step up and offer help as well. I think that's what we need to understand. The most vulnerable folks in our communities — we can point out from one side of the House, but I think we all know that, at the end of the day, it's going to take all Yukoners to come together to deal with generational challenges that individuals have. That's how we operate as Yukoners. We are not going to point; we are actually going to come together and help.

I think, when we look at the work we have been doing — we talked a bit about the mobile outreach that is being done with the Council of Yukon First Nations. I want to thank them. I had an opportunity to be out there in the van; it's helping those folks who have been around 405 Alexander. I am pleased to see the work being done by some of our partners.

This summer, again, you are seeing a big investment in land-based treatment. We are just waiting for the applications to come in. That's going to help a lot of really vulnerable folks in our community get back to the land, maybe out of an urban setting, and get the treatment they need, and they will do that with their own First Nations.

Okay, I will tell you what. There are so many things here that we have done that I look forward to questions 2 and 3 on this subject.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, well, Yukon businesses have been looking for change. As the Premier may recall, it wasn't just the surrounding businesses that wrote to complain about how the shelter was being run. A few weeks after that letter from businesses, the Mayor of Whitehorse wrote to the government. In that letter, she said that rarely a week goes by without complaints from residents and that some businesses have seen significant decreases in business, which they attribute to the situation. She then said — quote: "... this situation has been going on for years now, with little apparent improvement."

So, in the view of the Premier, has there been any apparent improvement since he personally took over this file?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I think that, when it comes to some of the challenges that we have seen with crime — as we said, it was actually the City of Whitehorse coming together with the Government of Yukon and the Kwanlin Dün, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the RCMP sitting together to talk about some of the strategies. It's not just about the Yukon government or my office. It's about, first of all, supporting the RCMP, which is key — so, hopefully we will see support today for the significant funds that are in this budget for the RCMP.

Today, again, there is a list of things the opposition wants to touch on. They have been against the *Health Act*, yet we have heard the doctors come out and say that we need the *Health Act*.

We hear from the Member for Copperbelt South that we don't work closely and engage with folks, yet we had First Nation leaders from across the Yukon standing here absolutely

dismayed by the actions of the opposition. Again, from the days of old, there's that same division and lack of respect for reconciliation.

When we talk about housing, the member opposite says we are not, but this is the most significant investment in affordable housing we've seen and the first time that the private sector is playing such a role — and with First Nation governments that are looking at hundreds of lots in Copper Ridge or even next to the area of Whistle Bend.

We hear the narratives, but they just do not hold water. We know that in all of these files we are leading like no government has done, and we will continue to do the good work.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised to hear the Premier dodge that question completely because the simple answer is that there hasn't been apparent change at that site and Yukon businesses are feeling let down by his commitment.

Last year, the Premier made it clear that he thought that the problems outside the shelter were one thing, but that the operation of the programming inside the shelter was just fine. In response to a question last fall, he said — quote: "The clients inside right now are getting good programming." And then — quote: "... we have a problem on the outside of the building ... I don't believe that we are failing the individuals who are inside."

Well, the recent coroner's inquest and yesterday's motion and the Liberals' support of it clearly show that the Premier was wrong. Now that he has taken over this file from the minister of health, what changes should we expect to see? Or will this be yet another summer of inaction like last summer?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, look, we talked about, first of all, on the outside of 405 and everywhere downtown, that it's important to support the RCMP, and that's why we have been making significant investments. But it's also important to work with the City of Whitehorse, and it's important to do other structural changes like decentralizing food services and making sure that there are outreach services. Again, all of the different pieces — making sure that we support the work at Safe at Home in their building. We know that the Official Opposition had five or six chances in this House to stand up and say they support it; they don't support it. But it's very important —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** No — again, they don't support it; thank you for confirming that, from the Member for Lake Laberge.

It's very important. But when it comes to what's happening on the inside of 405 or anywhere, we should always be open to look to improve our services. We should always be looking to better serve.

Like I said, in December, I spent time inside of 405; I think there were good things happening. I think that there have been over 40 people whose lives have been saved when there has been interaction with them during an overdose, but I also think that it's really important to always strive to improve services. It's not black and white; it's an ongoing measure that we all have to do. Whether it's the Official Opposition or it's the NDP who stand up and tell us that we can improve our work, we have

to say: Yes, you're right. There is always work to do. You have to do this with humility, and we will take the advice from across the floor and we'll do the work that we have to do to make sure that we're improving lives for Yukoners.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. Blake):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### Bill No. 213: *First Appropriation Act 2024-25* — continued

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

#### Department of Community Services — *continued*

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Madam Chair, I have with me again this afternoon Phil MacDonald and Matt King to help inform our discussion this afternoon. I thank them for being here again.

It is a pleasure to be fielding questions from the opposition on this budget document. I'm not going to waste any time because I know how precious time is; I'm going to let them get right at it.

**Mr. Hassard:** Madam Chair, I thank the officials for being here and I appreciate the minister wanting to move right along, so I too will not waste any time.

This afternoon in Question Period, the minister talked about — and correct me if I'm wrong on the number, but I believe he said 688 lots. I know that it was in excess of 600 anyway. I'm wondering if the minister could provide the

Legislature with a breakdown of where those 600-and-some-odd lots are since the last election.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question. It's great to be talking to my old friend across the way this afternoon again.

We have currently just under 600 in Whitehorse — just shy of 600 — and 80-plus in the communities. That includes lots that are going out this spring.

**Mr. Hassard:** So, have those lots not actually gone out yet?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The just shy of 600 — maybe one or two shy of 600 lots in Whitehorse are done. That includes 130 lots that have already gone out. The rural lots are just over 60 lots and they are coming in the next month or so — soon this spring.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess it's a little bit interesting that this minister in particular, who talks a lot about providing accurate information to the Legislature, can stand here now and tell us that, in fact, the information he provided in Question Period was inaccurate.

Anyway, I will move on. I had a question for the minister regarding the new gymnastics facility. We have heard from contractors that they feel that there could be an issue with the architectural design of the second floor. There is concern that, in order to do the mechanical and electrical work on the second floor, the floor structure of that second floor may not be suitable and may not even be suitable to hold the rolling bleachers and people, et cetera.

I am just curious if the minister has heard any of these concerns, and if so, is the department working on some ways to rectify these issues or if, in fact, it is not an issue at all.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Madam Chair, to think that I thought we were playing nice this afternoon — all right, I can say that, of course, I always take my obligation to provide accurate information to the House very, very seriously. As I said, I usually really enjoy the conversations that we have in this House among ourselves. What I will say to the little quip — the stinger — at the end of the member opposite's remarks — the preamble — is that CS has developed the rural lots. EMR is now working to get them out. I am letting the House know that we have 680 lots toward our goal of 1,000 — lots more to come. I am providing the answer in the most accurate way that I possibly can because I take it so seriously.

As far as the gymnastics facility goes, the short answer is that I really thank the member opposite for bringing the information to our attention. We have heard nothing yet, so I really do appreciate that. Our project managers are diligent and they work very, very well on projects and on solving problems that may arise in construction projects. That happens all the time, as the member opposite well knows. We will certainly look into it, but we have heard nothing at the moment, so I appreciate the heads-up on this. I will certainly look into it, as will my team.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate the minister getting the department to look into that, because certainly nobody would want anything to go wrong. If we are spending the money, we like to spend it in the best way possible.

The last question I have is with regard to a contract that Community Services had recently for the crushing of cars. It was brought to my attention that one company's bid was not accepted because they had, in fact, not been pre-qualified from, apparently, a qualification process that had taken place in 2021, I believe.

So, I am curious if the minister could let people know — if, in fact, you have to pre-qualify before you can crush cars, will there be another pre-qualification round at some point in time so that other companies could become qualified to bid on these tenders?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Madam Chair, I am informed that there have been numerous conversations within the department, which is always the proper way to go. There was a pre-qualification held. It was all within the procurement rules. There will be another opportunity for another pre-qualification for people in this business to have an opportunity in the next load. I think that the short answer to the question is yes, they will have another opportunity.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that, but can the minister provide us with some timelines as to when that pre-qualifying will take place?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can assure the member that the person in question has been in touch with departmental officials. Those synapses have been connected. They are in touch with those officials. We don't have information on when this might happen, but I know that the individual and the department are well aware of this issue and that information will flow when it is available to the individual.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line.

**Mr. Hassard:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

#### **Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried**

**Chair:** The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

**On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures**

**Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$106,780,000 agreed to**

**On Capital Expenditures**

**Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$99,269,000 agreed to**

**Total Expenditures in the amount of \$206,049,000 agreed to**

**Department of Community Services agreed to**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

### **Department of Highways and Public Works**

**Chair:** Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I am pleased to present the 2024-25 budget for the Department of Highways and Public Works and would like to take this opportunity to introduce my officials in support today. To my immediate right is Deputy Minister Catherine Harwood and, to her right, Assistant Deputy Minister Richard Gorczyca. Thank you for being here today.

Highways and Public Works is committed to building resilient infrastructure and safeguarding the accessibility of our transportation network and government infrastructure for the benefit of Yukon residents. The work that we do at Highways and Public Works means that Yukoners can safely fly from Old Crow to Whitehorse, stay connected with loved ones outside the territory, and get to work and school on clear, well-maintained roadways.

We have long-term goals in mind, and we strive to provide a wide range of programs and services that will have a lasting impact on our territory and its communities, all while ensuring a sustainable future.

The Department of Highways and Public Works is responsible for many essential aspects of Yukoners' lives. We are dedicated to making sure that anyone travelling through our territory can do so safely on our highways and in the air. We have the responsibility of maintaining the buildings and the communication infrastructure that are essential to serving Yukoners. In fact, across the Yukon, our crews work diligently to maintain the Yukon's existing infrastructure so that it continues to be there for Yukoners now and into the future.

We are also making historic investments in infrastructure that will contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future. A great example of this is the green infrastructure program that supports the installation of low-carbon energy systems in our buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We take pride in the great number of programs and services offered by our department benefiting both the public and other parts of government. The work done by the Department of Highways and Public Works affects all Yukoners. At its core, the department's role is to maintain and improve our transportation network and to support the services that our government provides to Yukoners. We do all this by

investing in our transportation infrastructure and providing building maintenance, information technology, government procurement, and our fleet vehicle program.

At Highways and Public Works, we are planning for the future by building our communities, growing our economy, and ensuring a clean, green, and sustainable future through strategic investments in our infrastructure. These projects span from designing and maintaining safe and effective transportation systems, like roads, bridges, and airports, to implementing new technologies that increase the efficiency and accessibility of government services. For example, through the work of our IT specialists, we are moving more and more services online so that Yukoners can access these services from the comfort of their home. This means that Yukoners can now renew their vehicle registration or apply for student financial assistance without needing to wait in line or drive to the government office in Whitehorse. I personally have certainly enjoyed the convenience of renewing vehicle registrations online.

Highways and Public Works is a big department. We are entrusted with the maintenance, improvement, and innovation of so many vital facets of Yukoners' daily lives that it is hard to describe them all, but I will do my best to give a short summary.

For starters, the department helps all Yukon government departments with procurement and facilitates this process in a fair, timely, and transparent manner. Procurement may sound slightly bureaucratic, but it is, of course, foundational to building a thriving and fair economy. It is how the Yukon government obtains goods and services that go toward supporting Yukoners every day.

Every year on average the government procures \$370 million in goods and services for Yukoners. This includes construction contracts on major infrastructure projects, like schools and bridges, building new equipment that keeps our roads clear, our airports functioning, our health care and education systems supported, and making sure our environment is protected and our justice system is working.

How government contracts are awarded and how government buys goods and services have a huge impact on the Yukon's economy and on the services that government provides, which is why our Procurement Support Centre exists. They are there to help guide other departments through the procurement process and are connecting Yukon businesses with government opportunities. The office is always looking to improve the way procurement happens in the Yukon. They work to bring social and ethical procurement to the forefront of government purchasing by integrating sustainability into our processes wherever possible, and they are committed to supporting greener and more efficient government operations.

Our Fleet Vehicle Agency is another great example of a service that leads by example in the transition to a greener economy. This agency provides vehicles for government use, such as vehicles for conservation and natural resource officers, wildland fire personnel, community nurses, and social workers. The Fleet Vehicle Agency is adding zero-emission vehicles to their fleet and promoting sustainable vehicle options whenever possible.

Over the past three years, they have added 48 hybrid or full-battery/electric vehicles to the fleet and have been using them across the territory in many ways. For example, mail and courier services are now using two electric cargo vans to deliver parcels and letters between the Yukon government and other agencies. We plan to continue to build our electric fleet in 2024, with the aim of electrifying approximately 10 percent of the fleet by 2025. Electric vehicles are the future, and I am pleased that we are taking steps to lead by example by electrifying our fleet.

Support for all Yukon government departments does not end there, however. The Supply Services branch manages government assets and ensures that they are used efficiently through practices like reducing, reusing, and recycling. The team at acquisitions services and planning helps with purchasing goods and some services, working closely with all departments to ensure a smooth process. This means that, when one department no longer needs something like office equipment, such as a desk or a chair, the Supply Services branch can direct that item to another program or department that is in need. This keeps government spending down and reduces waste.

They are also responsible for the successful GovDeals website. Since 2021, Yukoners have been able to get great deals on surplus government items, both in Whitehorse and in the communities, through this efficient and convenient auction system.

A new program that is soon to launch will provide a more efficient and simplified process for ordering common supplies for government programs. I am happy to say that this is also a paperless system, which will create huge efficiencies across our government. The Supply Services branch is moving all of government to be more efficient, effective, and more sustainable through constant improvements to how we buy and manage government assets.

I would be remiss at this point not to mention the mail and courier services team that provides reliable, confidential, and quick delivery of material between communities, our departments, and agencies.

Our travel services unit provides support across government and other agencies by making airline reservations, hotel, car, and rail bookings and providing transportation logistics. They also assist with medical air travel for Yukon residents. These are the folks who manage the air travel logistics for Yukoners who need medically necessary care that's not available in their community. For Yukoners in Old Crow, Dawson, and other communities, this office helps them access services in Whitehorse clinics or the Whitehorse General Hospital as well as services outside of the territory.

These services and the people who work hard to provide them help all Yukon government departments work efficiently. To fulfill our objective of offering services that benefit Yukoners right now and into the future, we are continually implementing and refining many new processes and policies. These enhancements are increasing economic opportunities for Yukon First Nations, communities, and businesses alike, all while guaranteeing value for money for Yukon taxpayers.

Our information and communications technology division, or ICT, develops and implements new technologies that make government services more efficient and accessible. ICT works with other departments to provide online services, like Yukon 511 road condition reports, camping permits, and business entity searches. As I said earlier, moving services online is making it easier, simpler, and more convenient for many Yukoners to access government services.

An important aspect of ICT is innovation and finding better ways to deliver these services. For example, their new online login service, called "MyYukon", is making it easier and more secure to access a wide range of government services. Through MyYukon, Yukoners can utilize a single login to access any online government service that is integrated with the platform, such as renewing — as I indicated previously — your vehicle registration. This means that Yukoners will not need several passwords and logins for accessing different government services. We all know how inconvenient that can be, which is why we are moving to a single login portal to access Yukon government services.

While we are not fully there yet, I'm happy to say that we are continually adding more services to this platform. Not only does ICT deliver services, they provide tools that allow the opportunity for remote work arrangements, where appropriate. This helps employees who live in our communities to securely access their desktop and connect with other employees when working remotely. It means that an employee living in Beaver Creek or Old Crow can participate in team meetings and access the same network and files as their colleagues who work in an office in Whitehorse.

The ICT division is also keeping all of government safe from hacks and cybersecurity threats. Every month, roughly one million spam, phishing, and malware e-mails are blocked, and, of course, they are helping the rest of government to do their work. Each year, ICT receives approximately 40,000 service requests from over 2,000 employees in 12 different departments.

We are also investing in resilient infrastructure across the territory to serve Yukoners now and into the future. For example, we are constructing new buildings, such as schools and health centres, to support the needs of Yukoners. I am so excited to see that the Whistle Bend school will be ready to welcome students this fall.

The new health centre in Old Crow will also be open for business in the coming months. We are also moving the territory toward a cleaner future by actively making public buildings more energy efficient and lowering their greenhouse gas emissions.

On this note, let me highlight two high-efficiency retrofits. One that was just in the news lately and has just been completed is the Elijah Smith school envelope, which reached substantial completion in March 2024 — this year. The project involved installing new exterior windows — I think the news release indicated something in the order of 122 or so windows — and new roof and wall insulation, new vapour barrier, and new exterior cladding. It was a very significant project. This project not only helped to protect the exterior of the school but has



improved the school's energy efficiency. Another project that we are working on is the Yukon University roof replacement, which is expected to be complete in 2026. These two projects will reduce an estimated 245 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, our government has successfully completed 31 building retrofits using the small communities fund since the launch of *Our Clean Future* in 2020, resulting in an estimated reduction of 225 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

Of course, I should also mention the highways part of Highways and Public Works. It has arguably taken me a little while to get there. The department is responsible for maintaining almost 5,000 kilometres of road. From my travels throughout the territory, I can attest to the dedication that it takes to keep these roads maintained in adverse weather conditions and discontinuous permafrost, sloughing, mudslides, and flooding. This includes plowing, grading, surfacing, painting — the list goes on. For example, in 2023, Highways and Public Works painted approximately 1,750 kilometres of lines on our roads. Much of our Yukon roadways are isolated and come with unique challenges that our crews handle admirably. On top of our roads, our crews inspect and maintain 136 bridges, 267 large structural culverts, and over 7,000 smaller drainage culverts. This work ensures that Yukoners and visitors can drive safely throughout the territory.

From Dawson City to Ross River to Watson Lake — where else can we go? — to Beaver Creek, the road to Haines, Alaska, the road to Skagway — travellers are using the highway network knowing that the bridges are safe and the roads are maintained.

Through our network of airports, aerodromes, and airstrips, we are also supporting the aviation industry. Aviation is a critical service for many small communities. Whether it be through the use of air ambulance, the transport of critical materials to a mining operation, or even for tourists coming in to go on a multi-week canoe trip, the aviation industry is there supporting the territory. Of course, the Yukon's sole fly-in community, Old Crow, relies exclusively on a functional aviation industry. A huge amount of work goes on at HPW throughout the year in order to ensure that our transportation network is there for Yukoners now and into the future.

Investing in the present and the future needs of Yukoners is important, but so is having an accountable and transparent government. The Department of Highways and Public Works is responsible for administering the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Under the act, our ATIPP office works with departments to balance privacy with access to information and transparency. In 2023, the ATIPP office processed 644 access-to-information requests. This work is particularly important when applied in a small jurisdiction like ours.

Finally, our Capital Planning Office leads the development of the government's five-year capital plan. They work closely with the Department of Finance and all other government departments to create a plan that provides certainty and promotes a strategic approach to the forecasting and timing of procurement. The five-year capital plan benefits Yukoners,

municipalities, the private sector, and First Nation governments by providing a forward-looking and transparent view into the Yukon government's infrastructure development plans. This means that, each year, businesses and contractors are provided with an updated timeline for projects. This helps them plan their business operations, knowing what major projects are forecasted and what opportunities will be available in different communities.

We are proud to take on the work required to provide this range of programs and services to Yukoners. We strive to do work that will ensure a sustainable and safe future for the entire territory, and through it all, we work to advance reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. Indeed, I know that this is a focus for the department and I am proud of the work that Highways and Public Works has done to advance reconciliation in our daily work, long-term projects, and department-wide policies and practices.

This year, our budget will help us deliver on key mandate items, such as continuing work on the Nisutlin Bay bridge replacement project, meeting our commitments under *Our Clean Future*, and making progress to the finish line, actually, on the Dempster fibre line providing redundant Internet fibre service for all of Canada's north — which, of course, is very exciting.

Let's take some time to discuss these and other budget items in depth; however, I sense that I am likely close to the end of my time and, of course, there is much more to speak about, which I might get an opportunity to do so. But at this time, I will end my introductory remarks and look forward to debate and answering questions this afternoon on the last day of the Sitting.

**MLA Tredger:** Thank you very much to the officials who are here, to the minister, and to all of the folks in the department.

I really only have two topics for questioning today. The first one I wanted to ask about is the situation with the roads in Old Crow right now. My colleague was up there very recently — last weekend, I believe — and told me that the roads are so icy that people literally can't walk to the store, can't walk to the health centre, kids can't walk to school, and people can't walk to their jobs because the roads are just so icy in the whole community right now.

What is the department doing to address that?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I do recall receiving a constituent's letter from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. That was just a few days ago.

The late-breaking news that I have — and I believe that the letter did ask about a connector or an impassability on the dump road at that time and also the observations that the Member for Whitehorse Centre is making with respect to the general treacherousness of the roads. First of all, I hope that it will be resolved by weather relatively soon, but I am not going to prejudge how things are going to warm up in Old Crow. The information that I have is that Highways and Public Works bladed the dump road in Old Crow earlier this week. I am just waiting for any additional information that exists with respect to the other roads. But certainly, I will take back the concerns

raised, and HPW will endeavour to provide service and our staff will work to remedy the most significant concerns that exist there. My recollection is that one of the main concerns was that the access to the dump road was completely non-navigable — you couldn't drive it at the time. That has been dealt with, but I certainly hear from the member opposite's concerns about the general road conditions in the community right now. I will certainly follow up with my officials to remedy any situations that truly pose safety concerns.

**MLA Tredger:** Thank you to the minister for that, and I appreciate the department being on that, because that is really critical for that community, so thank you.

The second topic that I want to ask about today is about YESAB assessments, particularly of the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. I asked about this in Question Period last week. At that time, the minister didn't have an answer, so I am wondering if he can tell us now why the Erik Nielsen airport upgrades didn't go through a YESAA process.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question from the member opposite. Yes, in the interim, I have received an update with respect to this major infrastructure project. The end total is somewhere in excess of a \$250-million project involving the rebuild of the parallel runway — which is now complete and operational — and during the course of the next two seasons, the reconstruction of the main runway and main runway lighting, the apron — which is now complete as well — and other airside improvements — so, certainly very excited by this project. I can provide more detail with respect to the project itself as time permits this afternoon.

As to the member opposite's specific question, during the initial planning phase, Highways and Public Works reviewed the project scope and determined that the planned activities did not require a water licence or to undergo the YESAA process. As part of this review, Highways and Public Works received advice from the Department of Justice that confirmed that YESAA was not required.

Most of the work associated with the main runway replacement project was categorized as falling under the — quote: “repair and maintenance of an aerodrome”. As such, the work fell outside the scope of projects requiring a YESAB assessment, as outlined in schedule 1 of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. After careful project assessment, it was also determined that there would be no interaction with or potential impacts to visible or identifiable water courses that would trigger a YESAB review or to apply for a water licence.

However, during preparatory construction work at the Baxter's Gulch area, an underground stream was encountered near where the existing north approach lighting towers were planned to be replaced. The department has removed the replacement of these lighting towers from the contract's current scope of work in order to assess the possible impact of this work on the underground stream. A YESAB submission is expected in the future for this specific work. In addition, once the stream was found, existing erosion and sediment controls were increased to avoid any deposit of silt or waste in the stream

during construction work. No work will happen in the area near the stream until a separate project has been planned and the YESAA process has been completed for it.

The main runway reconstruction project is underway and has the contractor's environmental management plan in place to mitigate environmental concerns. The EMP outlines the contractor's plans for sediment controls, monitoring requirements, and reporting requirements for all planned work on-site. Highways and Public Works and their consultant, Associated Engineering, regularly review the implementation of this plan and report any issues to the contractor.

The drainage work planned for the airport is simply replacement of existing drainage systems, some of which date back to the 1950s. These revised systems are intended to meet current Transport Canada best practices and do not increase the overall drainage footprint of the site.

I believe that is the pretty comprehensive answer as to the initial planning and YESAA process — or lack of YESAA process — at the beginning of this very major — like, right now, I think the biggest Yukon infrastructure project ever in the history of the Yukon. The bulk of the work was deemed to fall under the “repair and maintenance of an aerodrome” scope, but I do concede that, during the course of the work, an area has been identified as requiring a YESAB assessment.

**MLA Tredger:** I do have some follow-up questions about that. I am really surprised by this, because in fact, in 2006, there was a change to the runway sign that required a YESAB assessment, so if a change to a sign in 2006 required a YESAB assessment, I don't understand how this — as the minister has said — really, really large project doesn't.

I understand that there are general exemptions around maintenance of an aerodrome, but there are also specific triggers. My understanding is that projects are still subject to assessment if they hit a specific trigger regardless of general exemptions. Some of those specific triggers, one of them in particular, is the construction, installation, modification, or decommissioning of aircraft manoeuvring lights or navigation aids for aircraft, and I understand changes to lighting are part of this project.

So, can the minister explain why those specific triggers did not result in a YESAB assessment?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Madam Chair, I am not in a position to speak to the work that occurred in 2006, but I can certainly look back on that. I can advise or I can repeat what I said in my prior answer: that there was a careful review and the potential triggers that existed with the Justice department in advance of this, and I can certainly also get back to the member opposite with respect to their specific question with respect to the runway lights.

As indicated, of course, I am not an expert in aviation runway lights, and we will certainly get back to the member opposite. I am advised that there was careful project assessment with respect to this matter in relation to the entire scope of work, and I do concede that there was an unanticipated water source that was identified after work had already commenced. I will get back to the member opposite with respect to their specific question on the runway lights.

**MLA Tredger:** Did the department seek the advice of the YESAB office on whether to do an assessment?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** What I can say is that I will — as I indicated in my prior response — undertake to provide a fulsome response as to the project scope analysis which occurred, I am advised, quite a number of years ago from the department and get back to the member opposite with respect to the thinking as to what was required and what was not required, but I am advised that there was a certain level of complexity in the planning. I provided a very high-level assessment to the member opposite, but I will undertake to get back to the member opposite with respect to the project planning at the outset.

**MLA Tredger:** That would be great. I am wondering if the minister would agree, when he does that, to ideally here table the advice from Justice that a YESAB review wasn't needed so that we can really understand.

I think the minister can imagine how it kind of looks from the outside. There is this project which is being described as one of the biggest projects in Yukon history; it involves all kinds of things happening in a really sensitive area of Whitehorse, and typically big projects go through YESAB reviews. My best reading of the YESAA regulations — I am not an expert — suggests that it would be needed. I am eager to understand the reasoning of the Justice department that it wasn't needed.

Will he agree to table that advice from the Justice department?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I just wanted to emphasize for the record that the volume of work is not necessarily the determining factor; it is more the type of work.

Just to be clear, most of the work associated with the main runway replacement project was categorized as falling under the “repair and maintenance of an aerodrome”. So, as such, it was deemed that the work fell outside of the scope of projects requiring YESAB assessment and that there was a careful project assessment. It was also determined that there would be no interaction with or potential impacts to visible or identifiable water courses that would trigger a YESAB review — or to apply a water licence.

I can certainly receive advice with respect to the legal opinion that was provided a number of years ago — I suspect prior to my time in this position. I can certainly endeavour to receive instructions to provide the crux or the summary of the opinion to the member opposite.

**MLA Tredger:** I know that it's not the volume that matters, but we did find out that, in 2006, a change in an airport sign triggered a YESAB review — also not affecting waterways, one would assume. There are a lot of reasons that a YESAB review might be triggered, even if there is a general exemption that applies to most of the work.

I think a lot of people are wondering about this, and this is particularly important for me and my constituents and my neighbours because we live at the base of the clay cliffs. We know that the stability of the clay cliffs is very directly affected by the water that melts the snow accumulation and the groundcover at the top of the clay cliffs.

We know that the snow accumulation in particular is something that really affects the clay cliffs, and that is of great importance to me and my constituents who live underneath those clay cliffs as well as for anyone who would like to drive along, say, Robert Service Way. It's easy to imagine how this could have very significant impacts on the areas around it and very significant impacts on Yukoners. That is the point of a YESAB assessment: to understand if there are impacts and what they might be. That's why we have those assessments. It's not just to say no to projects. It's to say that, okay, actually, there are no concerns or, yes, there is a concern and this is how we can mitigate it. Those are really important assessments and I think it's pretty important that we get a detailed understanding of why the assessment wasn't done in the first place.

I do want to follow up on what the minister said about having discovered this waterway partway through the process. If I understood it correctly, that waterway does trigger a YESAB assessment. Does that mean that the work at the airport is paused until that YESAB assessment is done?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** No, just to be clear and once again on the record, during preparatory construction work in the Baxter's Gulch area, an underground stream was encountered near the existing north-approach lighting towers that were planned to be replaced — so, that discrete area. The department has removed the replacement of these lighting towers from the contract's current scope of work in order to address the possible impact of this work on the underground stream. A YESAB submission is expected in the future for this specific work.

In addition, once the stream was found, existing erosion and sediment controls were increased to avoid any deposit of silt or waste in the stream during construction work. No work will happen in the area near the stream until a separate project has been planned and the YESAA process has been completed for it. The answer to the member opposite is: Yes, that discrete area has been separated from the work plan.

**MLA Tredger:** I am wondering if the YESAB office was consulted in making that decision about which work needs to be paused until a YESAB assessment could be done and which work can proceed without the YESAB assessment.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I will provide that response as part of the entire response with respect to the questions related to YESAB, but my officials have the question.

**MLA Tredger:** One last thing that I want to ask since, of course, we are winding up the Sitting today is: When and how can I expect that response about these questions about YESAB and the airport?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I'm advised that the response can be provided within two weeks.

**MLA Tredger:** I would really appreciate that. That would be great.

Thank you to the officials who have made that happen today, and I'm going to turn it over to my colleague who could ask about the bridge that was so nice, they built it twice or perhaps the construction that was so troubled, they did it double. I'll let him take it away.

**Mr. Hassard:** I thank the Member for Whitehorse Centre for the humour.

I'm also going to start my questions today with a question about streets, only they are in Ross River and it's not ice; it's dust. I have written a letter to the minister. There is a lot of concern in the community about the intense dust. I had hoped that the minister could urge the department — or encourage or just flat out tell them — if they could make Ross River a priority to get those streets swept, because it is absolutely insane.

So, I'm wondering if the minister — he hasn't provided a response to the letter I don't believe, so if he could give us some insight today, that would be great.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I thank my assistant and I thank the officials at Highways and Public Works for trying to be as responsive as possible with the constituents — the MLA inquiries — and I know that we do try to get back to MLAs as soon as possible. But I do believe that this is a relatively recent letter.

In any event, with respect to the dust in Ross River, I'm advised by my officials that there is a plan to have Ross River swept by the end of this month. Certainly, I recognize the member opposite's advocacy with respect to that and his observation — or people having advised him — that it's currently quite a dusty situation in that community. That's my information — work to be completed by the end of this month.

**Mr. Hassard:** I already knew that the department planned to be there by the end of May, but that is still four weeks away. So, my question — or my hope — was that the minister would encourage or direct the department to maybe rejig their scheduling if they could, in fact, get there a little bit earlier. I am hoping that the minister would be a little more willing to heed those requests.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Yes, I understand that there is urgency. I can also see that there is a fair bit of May left, so I am not sure that I will be directing, but I will certainly be encouraging the department to move as quickly as possible on this request. They will make best efforts to sweep as soon as possible. The member opposite will know or will likely recollect that crews operate on a schedule, but they will do their best to have it swept as quickly as possible — and a shout-out to all Highways and Public Works road crews currently operating within the territory. As they go into the late spring/summer season, I know that this will be a very busy time of the year.

**Chair:** Introduction of visitors outside the usual time provided.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to briefly interrupt proceedings to introduce two special guests: My wife, Amanda Leslie, is with us as well as my son, Eli Kent. Eli — we met him 10 years ago when he was two and adopted him a year later. I can't be more proud of the young man he has grown into. He is 12 now and he is such a great kid.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** Madam Chair, I can attest that he's a pretty darn good kid too.

I guess I'm a little bit concerned with the answer from the minister, but I certainly hope that someone in the department will take this issue seriously and appreciate the fact that the citizens of Ross River would dearly love to have their streets swept — but I will move on and hope that something happens.

Just down the road from Ross River at kilometre 467 in the Drury Creek section, we had numerous discussions about the proposed new rest area. The YESAB submission — or the YESAB comments — did not bode well for Highways and Public Works. I'm just curious if the minister could provide us with some idea of what the next steps are or, you know, where we are headed with this particular project.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite.

I think where there is common ground is that there is a need for a new rest area between Carmacks and Faro. This is a high-priority service gap, as there are currently no outhouses between the two communities. The Drury Creek safety rest area and electric vehicle charging station installation project was proceeding through the YESAA process. The public comments phase closed on April 12, 2024. The public comments phase during the YESAA process is a valuable component where comments are not just reviewed but carefully considered before any projects move ahead.

Upon review of the comments received, it was determined that a more detailed assessment of options is required at this location before proceeding further. On April 15, department officials conducted a site visit to better understand the area, given the feedback that we received during the "seeking views and information" phase of the YESAA process. On April 19, Highways and Public Works requested that the submission be withdrawn from the assessment process pending more planning and assessment work.

Madam Chair, we remain committed to working with all partners and stakeholders to ensure that a consistent set of services, such as rest areas and electric vehicle charging stations, are available along Yukon roads. Highways and Public Works is committed to ensuring that our operations meet the highest standards for environmental and socio-economic responsibility. HPW will submit an alternate proposal to YESAB.

To sum up, Highways and Public Works has done the appropriate consultation and is doing the right thing for the proposed Drury Creek rest area project, and based on feedback we received from Yukoners, we are reviewing the entire project to see how it could be best delivered.

That's where it is at, and I do recall the discussions that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I had in the supplementary budget debate for Highways and Public Works. At that time, the YESAA process had just closed — or was just about to close — so now I am able to provide the up-to-date information with respect what's called the "seeking views and information" phase of the YESAA process.

It appears now that there is more work to be done. HPW is still committed to identifying an appropriate rest area between Carmacks and Faro.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am happy to hear that the minister agrees that there is more work to be done. He talked about an alternate site. I am wondering if the minister could provide the Legislature with where that alternate site may be, and will that alternate site be taken to the public and actually do some consultation before we get into the same mess, I guess you might want to call it, that we were just in?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I am just scanning my notes, and I don't believe that I indicated that HPW was committing to an alternate site. Of course, it's possible, but we will work with Yukoners and locals as we go forward. My advice from my officials is that there isn't a chosen alternate site yet, and HPW staff will continue to have an open line of communication with the Town of Faro.

So, yes, there will be consultation, but as I indicated in my prior response, there is a commitment to identify a site that checks enough boxes that we hope we can reach consensus.

As I indicated, I don't believe, in my prior response, that I indicated that there was — yes, so sorry. What was said was that we will resubmit an alternative proposal, but there has been no pre-judgment with respect to what that — it's an alternative proposal; it's not necessarily an alternative site. That sounds like you're splitting hairs — but perhaps not. In any event, that's the information I have so far, but I think I am answering the member opposite's question in the affirmative that ongoing consultation with stakeholders will continue.

**Mr. Hassard:** The minister and I probably shouldn't have too many conversations about hairs anyway, so we'll leave that one alone.

Moving on to a little closer to home for me, I know that I have asked in the past about an "Avoid use of engine brake" sign near the Fox Point subdivision, so I'm wondering if the minister can provide me with any update today as to whether that's something that my constituents will see, hopefully sooner than later, as the ground thaws. Maybe — if the sign crew is going out, will we, in fact, get an "Avoid use of engine brake" sign posted near the Fox Point subdivision just north of Teslin?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I have some recollection of this letter, and I am advised that it may have been a little while ago, but I have received a similar inquiry from the Member for Lake Laberge. I guess the short answer for the member opposite is that, yes, there is a commitment to placing signs in the next few weeks, and the signs would read something like: "Residential area, avoid using engine brakes". It is important to note that, as it is currently in place, there is no regulation to enforce the use of engine brakes in the territory, but as the member opposite well knows, the department is currently working to modernize the *Motor Vehicles Act* and will explore provisions to restrict the use of engine brakes in residential areas. Certainly, I heard the member opposite loud and clear — whenever that letter was, I think a while ago — and certainly acknowledge that engine brakes, of course, are very loud and can interrupt a person's use and enjoyment of their property.

The bottom line is that there is a commitment to putting signs in strategic areas around the Fox Point subdivision as you come into Teslin.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that commitment from the minister.

Since we are talking about signs, I am wondering if the minister can provide us with a bit of an update or some ideas on when Highways and Public Works will be doing some sign repairs. We know that one of the large signs down by Watson Lake is lying on the ground. There is one just south of Whitehorse here as you are coming into Whitehorse that is down on the ground. There are some up on the north Klondike. I am just wondering if there are any plans or when we may see those signs getting repaired. Tourist season is about to be upon us, and so, we hope that those signs would be back in order so that tourists can, in fact, see where certain businesses are, where attractions are, and things like that.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Of course, the sign crews do yeo individual's work during the course of the summer, and I am advised that the schedule is being developed. If the member opposite wishes to identify — the member opposite has identified some of the areas of concern in the House today, but in conjunction with his colleagues, if he wishes to provide a list of areas where you're of the view that they require some TLC, then I certainly can receive that and can encourage the sign crews to consider that in their schedule.

I don't disagree with the member opposite. I know that the Member for Porter Creek North is a strong advocate in the tourism file, and, of course, we want to put our best face forward in a lot of different access points and entry points to the Yukon.

I know that all MLAs in the Assembly would likely agree with that assertion, and if the members opposite wish to point out areas of specific and/or significant concern, I would certainly receive those favourably and make best efforts to ensure that the areas of most significant concern — and signs that would enhance the "Welcome to the Yukon" — should absolutely be addressed.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm happy to provide the minister with some particular locations, but I have complete faith in the competent staff at Highways and Public Works that they probably know a lot more of them than I do, so it may be best just to leave it to them, because I know that they know it.

I have a question regarding a contract — contract number C00073224. It was a direct-award contract for the relocation of sanitary sewer line and manhole in Teslin. This contract was a direct award for \$576,000, so it's, you know, out of the scope of normal, we would probably say. I'm curious if the minister can provide some information or some reasoning behind why that contract was a direct award rather than put out for tender.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I can certainly undertake to get back to the member opposite as soon as possible. I can put a timeline on it. Yes, I undertake to get back to the member opposite within two weeks with that information.

**Mr. Hassard:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate that commitment from the minister as well.

I have a couple of questions regarding — we'll call it the "Big Creek bridge" for now. I'm wondering — we know that there were three companies that qualified, so I'm wondering if there are any updates on when we may see an award for a tender

for those upgrades or re-replacement or whatever you might want to call it.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** In 2023, we worked with a project engineer to perform a full assessment of the Big Creek bridge. The assessment provides details of what additional work is required to allow the bridge to be open for public use. As the member opposite has heard, the Government of Yukon is planning to complete the Big Creek bridge project this summer and into fall. To procure a contract to repair the bridge's concrete deck and to complete the outstanding bridge work, a request for qualifications closed on March 25. The next step is the request for bids. Roadwork will also be conducted this summer and will include excavation, ditching, construction of the sub-base, base coarse aggregates, supply and installation of a structural plate, corrugated steel pipe, paving, supply and installation of guardrails, and demolition of the existing bridge.

We anticipate that the work on the bridge will start in June and be completed before the end of the construction season. As the member opposite has indicated, we are still in the process of tendering and cannot give an estimate of the cost, but as far as the question, I am advised that the tender is out right now, and the estimate is that it will close in approximately four weeks. As the member opposite well knows, the bids will be assessed and awarded if appropriate. The time estimate is early June.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that information as well.

I had one more question in the Faro/Ross River area that I forgot, so I will just jump back there for a minute.

In the budget, there is money for work to be done on the highway between Faro and Ross River. I am wondering how much money they plan on spending there and when that work will be tendered.

The other question regarding that work is: In the briefing, we were told that the work would be tendered, but when I talked to the minister about it earlier in the session, the minister had talked about negotiations with the Ross River Dena Council. I am just wondering if we could get the air cleared on that as to whether that work is going to be direct-awarded to Ross River Dena Council or if it, in fact, will be tendered and how much of that work will happen.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you for the opportunity to clarify, and I will be fairly brief on this, but the total amount budgeted is \$3.1 million, and what is required is that the government will continue to work with the Ross River Dena Council to implement the project agreement and determine the next steps on this project together. It is not a direct award; it is in the nature of the agreement that existed with Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation on the Carmacks bypass, and the agreement — I know that they are not all called — some are called “community development agreements” and some are called “project agreements”, but the principle is similar. I am sure that my officials are frowning right now because I am sure that there is a difference — the agreements that are in place now with respect to Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün and the agreements in place in the member opposite's home community

of Teslin with the Teslin Tlingit Council with respect to the Nisutlin Bay bridge.

That is a condition precedent of proceeding, and I certainly hope that those discussions bear fruit. It was indicated that we were relatively close, but I leave that to my officials to conclude those discussions. The aim is to tender work to advance the construction of this four-kilometre component this year. So, \$3.1 million, ongoing discussions to complete the project agreement with Ross River Dena Council, and no direct tender.

**Mr. Hassard:** I thank the minister for that. I've heard from vendors who are bidding on supplying goods to Highways and Public Works, as there have been concerns with the tenders being very specific. I know that we went through this issue a number of years ago when we were in government, and it appears that it's kind of starting to come back stronger than ever. The question or the problem is that the government puts out a tender, say, for a binder. Anybody can supply a binder, but when they say that the binder has to be black and the binder has to have exactly these dimensions, suddenly it doesn't allow for a fair and competitive process.

I'm wondering if the minister has heard any of these concerns and if, in fact, they are working on ways to resolve these issues so that taxpayers' dollars are spent in I guess a more fair, open, and competitive nature.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I will endeavour to get an answer. If I can't get an answer to what sounds like a relatively high-level concern — I don't disagree with the member opposite that, of course, there always has to be a value proposition in procurements and that it be accountable, transparent, and fair. If there was a general perception by persons contracting with YG or in the Yukon Contractors Association that there was too much specificity creeping into requirements, I certainly look forward to hearing that. I look forward to meeting with the Yukon Contractors Association and others this summer, because we certainly are always striving for continuous improvement.

I won't be too long here, but Yukoners would be interested with respect to how busy it has been in the Yukon in the last — well, this is the last year basically, but it has been busy for a few years.

The Yukon government has spent \$552.5 million during the 2023-24 fiscal year, between April 1, 2023 and January 31, 2024 — fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. Between those dates — April 1, 2023 and January 31, 2024 — the Yukon government issued 11,744 contracts, of which 6,387 were for goods, 4,578 were for services, and 731 were construction contracts. Compared to previous years, this is a significant increase in spending. The average expenditure per year over the past four fiscal years is approximately \$371.2 million on contracts. In fiscal 2022-23, it was \$382.5 million. In 2021-22, it was \$491.6 million. In 2020-21, it was \$251.4 million. In 2019-20, it was \$177.9 million. This would appear to be skewed by virtue of the fact that we have so many large and significant infrastructure projects which are occurring at the same time.

In the fiscal year 2022-23: 752 tenders were published; 569 were requests for bids, price-driven; 122 were requests for

proposals, value-driven; and 661 were market research or pre-qualification processes.

The 2023-24 fiscal year has seen 623 tenders published between that period — which was April 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024 — including: 479 requests for bids, price driven; 90 requests for proposals, value driven; 46 procurements for market research or pre-qualification processes; and eight advance contract award notices.

Suppliers currently registered in Yukon Bids and Tenders number 9,503, and over 125 Yukon First Nation businesses are verified and listed on the Yukon First Nation business registry. Between April 1, 2023 and January 31, 2024: 490 tenders have closed that included bid value reduction measures; 178 tenders have closed with bid value reductions applied; and — I think that I provided this answer either in supplementary budget debate or in Question Period — approximately \$30.2 million was awarded through contracts to Yukon First Nation businesses — so still a pretty small percentage of the total amount of the procurement. I think the ratio is between \$30.2 million and \$552.5 million.

So, it's an extremely busy time across the Yukon for procurement and for economic activity, but as with all continuous improvement, we are certainly — the officials in procurement at HPW are certainly open to receiving any concerns raised, and if there is a trend, as the member opposite indicated, that there is perhaps increasing — perhaps the member opposite would say an unnecessary specificity creeping into contract requirements — I know that the team will receive those concerns and analyze and review and, once again — I'm repeating myself, but in the spirit of continuous improvement — certainly look at always delivering the best possible product to Yukon businesses and individuals on the procurement front.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think the words that the minister used to describe it are very suitable. I certainly hope that the department does look into it, because I know that it is a concern for many suppliers. Some of those items that Highways and Public Works procures are — well, all departments really but Highways and Public Works in particular — somewhere in the half-a-million-dollar range, so it's an opportunity for the government to possibly save a lot of money if they were just a little more flexible in their procurement.

Anyway, I will move on. Just a few weeks ago, the government made the announcement about the funding coming from the American government with regard to the Shakwak. Of course, this is something that everyone has been cheering for, hoping for, and pushing for, for many years since the Shakwak funding first came into being back when I was a kid working on the highways. We have seen the Alaskan government talk about providing \$31.125 million USD starting in 2025 and continuing until the end of 2027.

I am curious if the minister could provide the Legislature with some information as to how this funding will flow. Will it come from the federal government in the United States directly to the Yukon? Will it go to Alaska and to the Yukon, or will it go from federal government to federal government and then to the Yukon? Will the Yukon government fund the project and

then be reimbursed from the American government? I am just looking for some information as to how this is going to work.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Indeed, this is great news, and I know that there was a funding stream — I will review my notes — some of the funding stream went back to 1976, and unfortunately, the funding stream did dry up in 2015. That was, of course, unfortunate, but I know that — and, of course, I have heard loud and clear from the Member for Kluane over the course of the last three years with respect to advocating and establishing a relationship with and lobbying but at least establishing a strong working relationship with the Governor of Alaska and his commissioners and, in this instance, specifically Transportation Commissioner Ryan Anderson.

I will provide a bit of background, and then hopefully, I would have — I would say that it is still somewhat early days with respect to the logistics — the logistics of the flowing of the funding — but in any event, for Yukoners and others who may be listening today, this is absolutely a great news story.

The north Alaska Highway from the Alaska border at Beaver Creek to Haines Junction and the Haines Road from Haines Junction to Haines, Alaska is the stretch that we often call “Shakwak”. The north Alaska Highway is essential for connecting mainland Alaska to southeast Alaska and to the Lower 48.

Maintaining this highway bolsters security, facilitates trade, promotes tourism, and supports other indispensable facets of daily life in the north. These sections of highway have not benefited from significant capital investments since 2015, when stable, predictable funding under the US/Canada Shakwak agreement ended, until now.

Alaska's governor and commissioner dedicated time to visit the Yukon on February 8, 2024 to discuss highway funding for the Shakwak corridor. In February 2024, a memorandum of understanding between Alaska and the Government of Yukon was signed to create an official partnership with Alaska's Department of Transportation to develop a project description that was included in the state-wide transportation improvement program — also known as STIP — application. STIP is a comprehensive infrastructure program funded by the US Department of Transportation to the State of Alaska. In April, Highways and Public Works officials were informed that the State of Alaska confirmed that this funding was, in fact, approved.

The State of Alaska will provide the Government of Yukon with \$31.25 million USD in funding through the STIP to allow the much-needed work on the north Alaska Highway to begin. Funding for this important work will be spread out over three years, commencing in 2025, so that will be fiscal year 2025-26. As the memorandum of understanding states, the Yukon government and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities will collaborate on specific workplans and financial agreements for the project term.

We have a strong working relationship with our transportation counterparts in Alaska and look forward to working closely with them over the coming months as we refine the details of the funding transfer.

With funding being secure, project planning can begin in earnest. Rehabilitation work on an existing highway within the right-of-way does not normally require a YESAB assessment. Department officials, however, will conduct a fulsome review of project requirements to determine if there are assessable activities that will prompt a submission to YESAB. I can advise that I had a Zoom meeting with Commissioner Anderson and both state and federal officials when this was being announced. Certainly, I expressed Yukon's gratitude for their advocacy.

They hear from their constituents as well that both Alaskan citizens and men and women in uniform — there are a lot of military personnel, as we know — in Alaska utilize that highway at all times of the year for assignment transfers. We heard from Commissioner Anderson and from Governor Dunleavy and others pretty loud and clear that they would certainly like to have the Alaska Highway portion from Burwash Landing to Beaver Creek improved.

A relatively quick shout-out to HPW, however, because there was actually significant work that was done on portions of that, and an above-average amount of the Highways and Public Works road transportation improvement budget was utilized last year. Of course, it's a Herculean battle because a lot of the roadbed between Burwash and Beaver Creek — as the Member for Kluane and other members of the Assembly well know — has to be raised so that it's not contacting the discontinuous permafrost. Otherwise, sometimes you are literally throwing money at the problem.

I am just looking here with respect to the actual logistics. Officials met with Alaska and US federal staff in April to start talking about the details. HPW has requested a meeting with the senior member of the state government to happen as soon as possible. We will share information with Yukoners as this important partnership continues.

Yes, it's very promising. I think that, when I spoke to Commissioner Anderson in our Zoom call, he knew as well that the Army Corps of Engineers punched through the Alaska Highway in 1942 from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks in whatever it was — nine or 10 months — and, of course, we colloquially say that we and our Alaskan friends have spent the next 80 years rehabilitating that road.

Another shout-out, I would say, that the road from Haines Junction to Burwash, in my three trips to that area — which is an absolutely stunning part of the territory — was in very good shape last summer.

**Mr. Hassard:** We didn't, in fact, get an answer to that question, but I will try a couple of others kind of along that line, and hopefully, the minister can provide us with some information.

First off, who will actually be doing the procurement?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I will keep this short, but once again, I will also emphasize that there are still details to be worked out, but I understand — from hearing from my officials right now — that the flow is that the funding will go from the US federal government to the State of Alaska and then to the Yukon. The information provided to me today is that Yukon will procure.

**Mr. Hassard:** Will that money come from the Alaska government before the projects take place, or will the Yukon government fund the projects and then be reimbursed from the Alaska government?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Madam Chair, what I have received from my officials is that the institutional memory with respect to the operation of the prior agreement is that there was a recovery process, but as I indicated, it is too early for me to absolutely confirm that, but it is possible that resources may have to be expended and then recovered.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that, Madam Chair. Now, we know that the United States, when they are doing projects, they have a Buy America and a Buy American program that they use when procuring. So, I'm wondering how that is going to play into the procurement here in the Yukon. Will there be any, I guess, glitches — or how will that affect this money coming from the United States government?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite. I just wanted to emphasize first of all that the discussions with respect to the logistics are still in the relatively early stages. We do have some time because the first work isn't going to occur until fiscal 2025-26. But once again, from my officials and the institutional memory of Highways and Public Works as it pertains to Shakwak funding, which expired in 2015, there was no expectation at that time that there would be a Buy America component. As I said, we want to continue the very positive conversations that we are having with Alaska, and we will certainly keep the member opposite and this House briefed on how those are going. We certainly anticipate being in a position to provide the Assembly more information with respect to the operationalization of this new funding source in the fall of 2024.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that commitment from the minister, because something as simple as culverts, for example — there will be a significant dollar-value worth of culverts on the projects that might be coming down the chute. But it will be a major blow to a local company like Kilrich Industries if those culverts need to be procured from the United States.

It is certainly important that the highways minister keeps these things in mind when he is doing those negotiations with the Alaskan government, understanding, of course, that they are giving us the \$30 million USD, so we don't want to bite the hand that feeds us, so to speak, but at the same time ensuring that we are doing as much as we can for local businesses.

Further to that, I am wondering: Can the minister confirm or let us know — or maybe it is something else that they are working on as well — how the First Nation procurement policy will fit into this work?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** As it is now currently part of our policy framework, it is highly likely that a Yukon First Nation procurement policy would apply. Once again, there are still some discussions and I would think that negotiations between Yukon officials and Alaskan officials have to occur, but barring any unforeseen circumstances, one would anticipate that the Yukon First Nation procurement policy would apply.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that information from the minister as well.



I know that obviously, as the minister said, this Shakwak funding began back in the 1970s, so there has been a lot of projects over the years and there are several in the queue, so to speak. I am wondering: Do we have projects that are shovel-ready and ready to go? Do we have projects for which the engineering is done and the YESAA process is underway — or those types of preliminary works are already underway — so that when this money starts to flow, we don't suddenly — well, we just have to come up with the engineering work before we can do the project or these types of things?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Just a quick clarifying question: Specifically with respect to Shakwak work?

**Mr. Hassard:** Madam Chair, yes, I am still talking about this funding from the Alaska government.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I am just waiting for a specific answer with respect to scoping the work, doing the appropriate engineering, and getting it, as the minister indicated, shovel-ready.

The lion's share of the funds are not planned to flow until fiscal 2026-27, so we have the slightly over \$3 million USD in 2025-26, and then, in 2026-27 and 2027-28, it's in the range of \$28 million USD. So, there's some time to plan, but I would just say for the record that until funding begins flowing in 2025, the Department of Highways and Public Works will continue to inspect and maintain segments of the north Alaska Highway. Each spring and fall, inspections take place to prioritize where maintenance is required. Some sections of the road have been converted from bituminous surface treatment — BST — to gravel to mitigate the impacts of shifting permafrost.

In 2023, the department rehabilitated 45 kilometres of BST, 27 kilometres of gravel road, and completed more than seven kilometres of gravel patching work on the north Alaska Highway. Highways and Public Works Transportation Maintenance branch operates two camps that service the north Alaska Highway exclusively. One is in Destruction Bay and one is in Beaver Creek. The Haines Junction maintenance camp also serves part of the north Alaska Highway as well as part of the Haines Road, while the Blanchard camp exclusively serves the Haines Road.

While I'm on my feet, a shout-out to the Blanchard camp this last year, as we know that there were a lot of challenges, both hurricane-force winds and at times significant snow buildup, which made it challenging in the pass between Haines Junction and Haines, Alaska.

Operation and maintenance expenses for the Shakwak portion of the highway vary from year to year, but capital expenditures for the north Alaska Highway are estimated to be nearly \$3.4 million for the 2023-24 fiscal year — which I was advised in a briefing is a significantly more per-kilometre amount than the rest of the Yukon.

What else do I have here? As we all know, the thawing permafrost causes severe distortions of the road surface and significant cracking along the road shoulders, creating issues for highway users. Highway maintenance costs in permafrost areas can be up to six times higher per kilometre than in non-permafrost areas. Inspections carried out in July 2020

confirmed significant distortions from permafrost degradations in the northern segments of the Alaska Highway.

In 2020-21, HPW completed the installation of thermosyphons at Dry Creek, located at kilometre 1841 of the Alaska Highway near Beaver Creek. The thermosyphons will help to cool the underlying permafrost foundation and stabilize the highway. That thermosyphon project was partially funded by Transport Canada under the Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative. The Department of Highways and Public Works is planning to present the findings from this project at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Permafrost, which will be held in Whitehorse from June 16 to June 24, 2024. The branch will jointly present a paper with Christopher Stevens, who is the principal consultant of Northern Permafrost Consulting, Eagle River, Alaska.

In the fall of 2020-21, HPW reverted several sections along the highway to gravel. This was done to help to mitigate the severe permafrost damage impacting the road surface and to make the road easier to maintain. I'm just going to check whether I have any information with respect to the engineering work that has to be done in advance or identifying likely locations.

As the members opposite have heard me in the House over the last three years, in furtherance of the RAISE application, there was a fair degree of specificity with respect to the areas impacted that would likely require the lion's share of work, so I am advised that HPW does have a list of sections in the plan. HPW is in a position to produce gravel this year, and I am advised that there is not a great deal of design work; it's primarily rehabilitation.

I am advised that HPW will be in a position, subject to the ongoing discussions with our friends from Alaska, to tender this fall. The project will target a portion of the north Alaska Highway spanning approximately 222.5 kilometres from Destruction Bay to the Canada-US border. The section faces a range of road maintenance and safety challenges due to thawing permafrost. Restoration efforts will involve resurfacing, repairing the road underneath the surface, and culverts. It will also include improvements to the drainage to make sure the road can be used safely at its intended speed.

The Government of Yukon is pleased to work with Alaska on shared priorities that improve the prosperity, stability, and well-being of both Alaskans and Yukoners.

That's where it is at, so I think the high-level answer to the question is that it will be — and the members opposite have also heard from me previously and they will likely know from their previous time in office that the estimates for full rehabilitation of that 222.5 kilometres is in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

I can never be sure of anything, but I have a high degree of confidence that the appropriate areas of rehabilitation — first of all, they are in the process of being identified and can be identified prior to the summer of 2025 and certainly, in any event, when the lion's share of the work is going to occur, which is in fiscal 2026-27 and fiscal 2027-28.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am curious: Can the minister explain to us a little bit as to why there would only be \$3 million USD

spent in 2025-26 fiscal? I guess my reason behind that is that, in 2026-27 and 2027-28, we have \$28 million USD being spent. Would it not seem to be better spent or more bang for our buck if that money was spread out a little more evenly over those three years? Why is it that there's only \$3 million in 2025-26?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I would just like to loop back and indicate that, first of all, I would like to express — where do I start? I would say that I want to acknowledge that it was somewhat groundbreaking and certainly a fantastic development that the Premier of the Yukon was able to reach out to Governor Dunleavy and his commissioners through an in-person meeting and then phone calls and then ultimately having that in-person meeting in February.

That was the first — well, I think that I have said this in supplementary budget debate or in Question Period. Governor Dunleavy shared that he had lived in Alaska since 1983 and he had never been to the Yukon. Perhaps that is not a common experience, but it is sort of emblematic of the fact that there is potential out there that is probably unrealized. We share a significant land boundary with our friends in Alaska — the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian of longitude. In any event, kudos to the Premier for breaking the ice and making that occur.

The Member for Kluane has certainly brought it to my attention on a number of occasions. I think that this is our seventh Sitting in the 35<sup>th</sup>, and he has, in his work as a constituent MLA for Kluane, certainly brought it to my attention that although we have made best efforts to bring the prior RAISE applications, they had not met with success. I started connecting with Commissioner Anderson over the course of the last 18 months both by Zoom and in person, and his department or his officials offered their assistance on strategy, on how to make the RAISE application stronger, and to also potentially identify the state-wide transportation infrastructure program funding as well.

That has now borne fruit and, once again, thank you. Hopefully, that is the beginning both for this Yukon Liberal Party government and future Yukon territorial governments — that this positive relationship continues — because they are our biggest and most significant neighbour, and there are some similarities that they share with us. This is hopefully the beginning of that relationship.

I will receive information in the spring and the summer as to what the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has been asking about with respect to the profiling. Of course, my officials looked at it and asked the same question, which was the profiling, but it was presented to us in this profiling nature. We certainly expressed gratitude that we are receiving this assistance. I believe that the Yukon officials and the Alaskan officials will engage in fruitful discussions with respect to that. It's an obvious issue and I haven't been briefed by Alaska as to whether there is a certain pot of money. In 2025-26, that \$3-point-something million was available and then there is a pot of funds to be available in 2026-27.

There are more details to come, but the underlying message or theme is that this relationship has been improved through the original outreach from the former Premier, the MLA for Klondike, and from the current Premier. It is a good

news story. I appreciate the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin doing his due diligence to ask the good questions with respect to the operationalization, but that is where it is. I have a high degree of confidence that we will have more to report in the fall on this exciting project and exciting development of the relationship between the Yukon and the great State of Alaska.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly look forward to seeing that updated information as it comes forward.

I will move on from Shakwak to the question that I have asked every year for the last few years, which is about work on the approach of the Lewes River bridge or the Yukon River bridge south of Whitehorse. I know that it has been discussed many times here in the Legislature, so I'm wondering if there have been any updates to where we are with the proposed or planned work.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** The Department of Highways and Public Works identified opportunities to improve the safety of travellers on the Alaska Highway near the Lewes River bridge. The bridge is located approximately 40 kilometres south of Whitehorse close to the Marsh Lake dam. The department is aiming to implement a project in fiscal 2026-27 that will focus on highway alignment improvements, particularly where there are limited lines of sight for traffic on the bridge and traffic approaching on the Lewes Sawmill Road.

On the west side of the bridge, planned work will include lowering the grade of the hill, adjusting the road alignment, relocating the Lewes Sawmill Road access to a safer location with proper sight distances, widening the shoulder, and installing new bridge-approach guardrails.

On the east side of the bridge, planned work will include relocating the pullout access to a safer location with proper sight distances, adding a right-turn lane into the pullout, and reducing the grade of the hill to improve sight lines. Along with improving the safety of the approaches to the bridge, the department published an RFP in January for engineering services specific to the bridge itself. The request for proposal is seeking a detailed site inspection of the central pier, followed by the creation of an in-depth repair strategy and, if needed, corresponding design drawings supplemented with strategic recommendations.

Yes, we — one moment, please. I'm advised that HPW is starting the permitting process this year. I certainly recognize, for persons listening, that this is a priority matter, but this is part of the capital plan, and I will certainly go back to officials and see whether there is any possibility of this being expedited perhaps by one year. There is meaningful planning work that is occurring. I know that there was, of course, a tragic accident that occurred on the access to the Lewes bridge in 2020. I know that all members of the Assembly have provided their condolences, because that was an awful, awful accident, and the safety of all Yukon drivers is, of course, paramount.

**Mr. Hassard:** As we move closer to the 5:00 hour, I may not get another chance to stand again, so while I'm on my feet asking my last couple of questions, I will thank the officials for being here. I look forward to seeing them back in the fall.

In the budget, there is \$1.4 million for improvements to the Alaska Highway and the Whitehorse corridor, so I am

wondering if the minister can provide us with some information on what that project entails and when it will be tendered. As well, I am curious: Is any more work anticipated on the north Klondike for this year other than the Stewart Crossing to Moose Creek job? I know that is a large project. I am just curious: Is there any other work anticipated for that piece of road this season?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you, Madam Chair, for the questions from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and the Member for Whitehorse Centre this afternoon. It was a good opportunity to highlight the great work that the Department of Highways and Public Works is doing in many, many different areas across the territory.

With respect to the \$1.4 million, \$150,000 is — Centennial Street to Azure Road — so, part of the multi-year program to improve safety and capacity through key segments of the Alaska Highway corridor through Whitehorse. The scope of this project includes improvements to intersections, including Centennial Street, Lodgepole Lane, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Birch Street as well as Wann Road and MacDonald. Roadway improvements will reduce the potential for collisions and increase overall safety, reliability, and efficiency.

\$600,000 is construction repair for a thaw slump at kilometre 1456; \$300,000 is for Robert Service/Hamilton Boulevard for some work that is being done there; safety improvements for the Alaska Highway at Sawmill Road is \$300,000; and \$50,000, the Two Mile Hill, Forestry, and Bethany Tabernacle — and I can certainly provide more details to the member opposite.

With respect to the north Klondike, other than the section that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has referenced, there is some ongoing work on McCabe Creek. I know that one contract on the north Klondike is just under \$30 million, so it is significant.

Highways and Public Works is in many ways the backbone of our government. It is the department that builds and maintains the government buildings that the public service uses. It keeps IT going, allowing us to work in a modern world, and provides core essential government services that span across all departments. In the past few years, we have reconstructed the parallel runway, built a bypass around Carmacks, reconstructed major sections of the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse, and reconstructed 57 kilometres of the north Klondike Highway.

You have heard me talk about these projects for several years, but I am so excited to let Yukoners know that this is the year that we will be completing major projects like the Whistle Bend Elementary School that will welcome students this fall, the Dempster fibre line that will provide a backup telecommunications line for all of the Yukon, making sure that we have Internet redundancy, and the Old Crow health and wellness centre and tenplex, which just opened. This year, we will also be making significant progress on the new Nisutlin Bay bridge, the main runway, and the new school in Burwash Landing, Kêts'ádañ Kù — all of which are expected to be complete within the next few years.

Just last week, we had some discussion and I was pleased to announce that \$31.25 million USD coming from the State of Alaska to allow the much-needed work on the north Alaska Highway to begin. It is an exciting year to be a Yukoner.

There is money in the operation and maintenance budget. This is going to local contractors for upgrades to infrastructure, into communities for new facilities, and to make sure that the services on which Yukoners depend are reliably there when needed. This means our 4,831 kilometres of maintained roads being cleared and available through the year despite avalanches, storms, washouts, record snowfalls, and emergencies. To improve our road network, since 2019, we have brushed 2,387 kilometres and mowed 1,104 kilometres of vegetation. The last two construction seasons alone included the rehabilitation of 13 bridges, the replacement of two bridges, with a third in progress, and the construction of one new bridge.

The departmental budget also means government services being available online for easy and convenient access, whether it is renewing your vehicle registration or getting a fishing licence. It means building new schools as well as maintaining the 32 existing schools. It means maintaining 550 owned and leased buildings, making sure that they are clean and safe for use.

Yukoners can look around for what was happening a decade ago —

**Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger):** Order, please.

### Termination of Sitting as per Standing Order 76(1)

**Deputy Chair:** The time has reached 5:00 p.m. on this, the 32<sup>nd</sup> sitting day of the 2024 Spring Sitting.

Standing Order 76(1) states, “On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, if the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole at the time, shall interrupt proceedings at 5:00 p.m. and, with respect to each appropriation bill before Committee that the Government House Leader directs to be called, shall:

“(a) put the question on any amendment then before the Committee;

“(b) put the question, without debate or amendment, on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill, including all clauses, schedules, title and preamble, be deemed to be read and carried;

“(c) put the question on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill be reported to the Assembly; and

“(d) when all bills have been dealt with, recall the Speaker to the Chair to report on the proceedings of the Committee.”

Pursuant to Standing Order 76, it is the duty of the Chair to now conduct the business of Committee of the Whole in the manner directed by Standing Order 76(1). The Chair will now ask the Government House Leader to indicate whether the appropriation bill now before Committee of the Whole should be called.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The government directs that Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be called at this time.

**Bill No. 213: *First Appropriation Act 2024-25* — continued**

**Deputy Chair:** The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

The Chair will now recognize the Member for Klondike for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that all clauses, schedules, the preamble, and the title of Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be deemed to be read and carried.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that all clauses, schedules, the preamble, and the title of Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be deemed to be read and carried.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question.

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Count.

**Count**

**Deputy Chair:** A count has been called. The Chair will ring the bells and conduct a count.

*Bells*

**Deputy Chair:** Order.

All members in favour of the motion, please rise.

*Members rise*

**Deputy Chair:** All members opposed to the motion, please rise.

*Members rise*

**Deputy Chair:** The results are nine yea, eight nay.

I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to*

*On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures*

*Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,595,437,000 agreed to*

*On Capital Expenditures*

*Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$483,993,000 agreed to*

*Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,079,430,000 agreed to*

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to*

*Schedules A and B agreed to*

*Preamble agreed to*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, without amendment.

**Deputy Chair:** It has moved by the Member for Klondike that the Chair report Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, without amendment.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Count.

**Count**

**Deputy Chair:** A count has been called. The Chair will ring the bells and conduct a count.

*Bells*

**Deputy Chair:** All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

*Members rise*

**Deputy Chair:** All members opposed to the motion, please rise.

*Members rise*

**Deputy Chair:** The results are nine yea, eight nay.

I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to*

**Deputy Chair:** As the appropriation bill identified by the Government House Leader has now been decided upon, it is my duty to rise and report to the House.

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Termination of Sitting as per Standing Order 76(2)**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

**Chair's report**

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

**Speaker:** You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

Standing Order 76(2)(d) states, "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Speaker of the Assembly, when recalled to the Chair after the House has been in the Committee of the Whole, shall:

"(d) with respect to each appropriation bill standing on the Order Paper for Third Reading and designated to be called by the Government House Leader,

"(i) receive a motion for Third Reading and passage of the bill, and

"(ii) put the question, without debate or amendment, on the motion."

I shall therefore ask the Government House Leader to indicate whether the appropriation bill now standing on the Order Paper for third reading should be called.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, the government directs that Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be called for third reading at this time.

**Bill No. 213: First Appropriation Act 2024-25 — Third Reading**

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 213, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 213, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2024-25*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question to the House.

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

**Division**

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

*Bells*

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Mr. Dixon:** Disagree.

**Mr. Kent:** Disagree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Disagree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Disagree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Disagree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Disagree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Disagree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**MLA Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, eight nays.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 213 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 213 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to the bill which has passed this House.

*Commissioner Webber enters the Chamber accompanied by her Aide-de-Camp*

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

**Commissioner:** Please be seated.

**Speaker:** Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed a certain bill to which, in the name

and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

**Clerk:** *First Appropriation Act 2024-25.*

**Commissioner:** I hereby assent to the bill as enumerated by the Clerk.

Good afternoon, everyone. I have hay fever of all things. I went to Vancouver and enjoyed the beautiful flowers and things, but they're all setting off their pollen now, so I paid the price.

Anyway, I'm very happy to be here today with you at the closing of the 2024 Spring Sitting of the 35<sup>th</sup> Yukon Legislative Assembly. I was born on these lands, and it is a territory of my husband's ancestors. I will continue to be a thoughtful steward and do my part to ensure that these lands are protected for the people of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and future generations.

Before the session closes, I would like to invite you to attend the Commissioner's Ball in Dawson City on June 1. Instead of having the Commissioner's tea, I'm creating another tradition that I feel would be more inclusive, and that is the Commissioner's family barbecue. It's a free event and everyone is welcome.

My first year as Commissioner of Yukon is just around the corner, and I have enjoyed my time very much to this point. I have met so many Yukoners and hope to meet many more when I visit the communities over the summer and in the fall. I would like to thank you all for all of your hard work in this session and the work that you do every day for your constituents. I know that it is not an easy job and it comes with many challenges.

I wish you all a very good summer. It's well-earned time off to spend with your family and friends. Enjoy your summer, and thank you very much.

Günilschish.

*Commissioner leaves the Chamber*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

Before I adjourn this Spring Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, I have a few brief comments.

I would like to extend thanks on behalf of myself as Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole, and on behalf of all Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to the Clerk, Dan Cable; Acting Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees Allison Lloyd; and special thanks to Chris Tyrell, who has been our highly skilled Table Clerk for the Spring Sitting, who came to us from the Ontario Legislature while one of our permanent Clerks was away; the director of Administration, Finance and Systems, Justin Gorczyca; operations manager, Warren Pearson; finance and operations clerk, Lyndsey Amundson; as well as Sergeant-at-Arms Karina Watson; and Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Joe Mewett, all of whom provided invaluable support to all MLAs and their staff in order for us to continue to do the important work that we are sent here to do on behalf of all Yukoners.

As well, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the skilled team at Hansard for their timely and accurate service

and all the background staff and contractors who keep the Legislative Assembly operating.

I would also like to thank Chris Rodgers and his team, who are our camera operators for the Assembly.

I would also commend the hard-working civil servants who deliver service to Yukoners and support to all of us as members in our work.

I wish Members of the Legislative Assembly all the best for the coming summer. I hope that all of us can look forward to outdoor adventures with family and friends in the great Yukon outdoors. Thank you very much.

As the House has, pursuant to Standing Order 75(4), reached the maximum numbers of sitting days permitted for this Spring Sitting and the House has completed consideration of the designated legislation, it is the duty of the Chair to declare that this House now stands adjourned.

*The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.*

**The following legislative returns were tabled May 2, 2024:**

35-1-134

Response to Written Question No. 47 re: Managed alcohol program (McPhee)

35-1-135

Response to Written Question No. 43 re: Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy (McPhee)

35-1-136

Response to Written Question No. 46 re: Health Transformation Advisory Committee (McPhee)

35-1-137

Response to Written Question No. 44 re: Safe supply program (McPhee)

35-1-138

Response to Written Question No. 45 re: *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* (McPhee)

35-1-139

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. Blake related to general debate on Vote 8, Justice, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — Gladue report and Whitehorse Correctional Centre (McPhee)

35-1-140

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 2, Executive Council Office, in Bill No. 212, *Third Appropriation Act 2023-24* — *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (Pillai)

35-1-141

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 212, *Third Appropriation Act 2023-24* — mechanical services contracts (Clarke, N.)

35-1-142

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with MLA Tredger related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 212, *Third Appropriation Act 2023-24* — greenhouse gas emissions (Clarke, N.)

35-1-143

Response to oral question from Mr. Kent re: *Our Clean Future* implementation (Streicker)

**The following documents were filed May 2, 2024:**

35-1-255

May 1 motion re: Connective Support Society, correspondence re (dated April 30, 2024 to May 1, 2024) between Annie Blake, Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Chief Dylan Loblaw, Ross River Dena Council (Blake)

35-1-256

*Fleet Vehicle Agency Business Plan 2024 to 2027* (Clarke, N.)

35-1-257

*2023 Annual Report Yukon Minerals Advisory Board* (Streicker)

**The following written questions were tabled May 2, 2024:**

Written Question No. 50

Re: Yukon grant (Kent)

Written Question No. 51

Re: registered childcare spaces (Kent)

Written Question No. 52

Re: registered and licensed early childcare educators (Kent)

Written Question No. 53

Re: gasoline prices (Istchenko)

Written Question No. 54

Re: electricity rates (Istchenko)

Written Question No. 55

Re: carbon tax (Istchenko)

Written Question No. 56

Re: food prices (Istchenko)