



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 129

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, December 19, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

Elizabeth Hanson	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
---------------------	---------------------------------------

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, December 19, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Whitehorse Food Bank

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today to ask my colleagues in this house to join me in recognizing the Whitehorse Food Bank, its board of directors, all the volunteers who faithfully assist in the centre, all the groups and the organizations who support the Food Bank financially, the students who participate in the annual food drive and all those people who donate to the cause. In the four years since it opened, the food bank has served a broad cross-section of families and individuals, including seniors, students and immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, we are indeed fortunate that so many Yukoners stand ready and willing to help those who need additional support. Yukon government provided the society with \$50,000 start-up money in 2008-09 and \$5,000 in both 2010-11 and 2011-12. That being said, the greatest support comes from individual organizations, businesses and individuals.

The Whitehorse Food Bank is a community effort in the best sense. Today, I am pleased to announce a more lasting government contribution. The government will provide the food bank with \$750,000 to help them purchase the building that they currently occupy, which will allow them to continue operating out of a space that is secure, safe and accessible in downtown Whitehorse.

The society will renovate and then rent out space to other non-government organizations, thereby creating a community-type centre and ensuring the financial stability of the food bank.

Mr. Speaker, all the participants deserve the recognition that we give them here in the House today. There are some people here I would like to recognize from l'AFY — who are the current owners of the building — and also from the food bank and from Health and Social Services. Maybe if you want to just rise: Isabelle Salesse, Father Claude Gosselin, Sophie Delaigue, Stu Mackay, Stephen Dunbar-Edge, Sherri Wright and Birgitte Hunter.

I'd like to encourage all members of this House to acknowledge them here today.

Applause

In recognition of civil society

Ms. Hanson: That is indeed great news. I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay

tribute to civil society, to the individuals and the groups in our community, in our country and around the world who believe deeply in democracy. Civil society is rooted in the notion of community and that, in a free and democratic society, we are all considered to be equal and that our voices have validity and have a right to be heard. Civil society is you, it is me, it is us together in voluntary association, speaking and acting in support of an open and accountable democracy.

Civil society often takes the form of grassroots citizen action groups. In Yukon we have a strong history of individuals and groups who have come together in common cause.

We have seen the benefits of these civil society movements. I think of the civic transit system, which evolved from a civil society group that was all women — women who were isolated in this spread-out city — or the Yukon Conservation Society, which was formed over 45 years ago to pursue ecosystem well-being throughout the Yukon, or, as we heard today, the Whitehorse Food Bank, which was started in 2007 by a group of concerned citizens who saw the need, as part of a caring community, to provide emergency food to the hungry while supporting the greater effort to alleviate poverty.

This past year we saw the rise of the Idle No More movement, a civil society transition that runs deep into and across many sectors of civil society. Suddenly, ordinary Canadians realized they had a common cause with First Nation citizens who reached out to say: "This is our land, this is our democracy, we have a voice, and we will be heard."

Some people fear that civil society is being eroded. I believe the evidence is to the contrary. In reality, civil society is finding new means of expression. Where we once thought that community gatherings, public meetings, formation of NGOs, demonstrations or protests were the main means of expression of common interest, we now see an increased use of social media and other electronic means to garner, not just local or community support for issues of critical importance, but national and even international support.

What was once local quickly becomes global. Whether it is Tahrir Square or the Peel River, within microseconds, shared messages and shared action have become possible.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this past January, there was a significant focus on the future role of civil society. It was noted that across the world, there are examples of civil society exhibiting an energetic voice in promoting the principles of fair and equitable economic development, gender equality and human rights.

Civil society roles have been identified as including that of the advocate, raising awareness of societal issues and challenges and advocating change. We see that in the Yukon with Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition or nationally with Democracy Watch. Civil society roles also include service providers delivering services to meet the needs of societal needs, such as we've talked about today — the food bank. Watchdogs holding institutions to account, promoting transparency and accountability — an example would be Yukoners Concerned About Oil & Gas Exploration/Development — experts bringing unique

knowledge and experience to shape policy and strategy and identifying and building solutions. An example could be the Yukon Childcare Association or the Yukon Science Institute.

A representative role for civil society also exists, which gives power to the voice of the marginalized or underrepresented — for example, the Second Opinion Society. Yukon, despite — or maybe because of — our small population, has a vital civil society. One role of civil society that is not often mentioned is that of bearing witness — the simple act of being present when deliberations that affect citizens occur, showing by their presence that they believe that democracy is a truth that must be respected.

In this Legislative Assembly, we have seen a small dedicated group of individuals — members of civil society of our community — who have taken seriously the challenge of holding all of us as legislators to account by bearing witness to what we do, what we say each day in this Assembly. We offer them our thanks.

In closing, I offer the reflection of one of the speakers at the Davos forum. He said, and I quote: “It is a shame to see some governments quietly gagging their civil society actors; I strongly believe that governments and their citizens have so much to gain from strong and dynamic civil society organizations.”

I trust that we in this Legislative Assembly share that sentiment.

In recognition of Yukon holiday season workers

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of this Legislature to pay tribute to the many workers across our territory who will be working over the holidays to keep all Yukoners safe and warm. We are aware of these people year-round, but over the holidays when we gather with family and friends, I give special thanks to these individuals who give of their time, often away from their families and friends.

There are the obvious ones — police, ambulance workers, nurses, doctors, community nurses, volunteer fire department members, medevac crews and our road crews in our communities and across the territory. I would be remiss not to mention private sector workers throughout the Yukon who are there for our last-minute shopping, to welcome our guests into our hotels or operate the gas stations along the highway as we try to get home for the holidays.

There is also another group of workers: the on-call social workers, the group home staff, food bank volunteers, soup kitchen volunteers, staff at emergency shelters and those who operate the Outreach van. Those people try to ensure that the more vulnerable in our communities have a safe Christmas too.

We often get caught up in the rush and the bustle of the holiday season, decorating, cooking, shopping and entertaining. We sometimes forget to thank those or to lend a hand to others who might need it and to be sure that no one is left out this time of the year. I’ve not named all the workers and volunteers in all of our communities who deserve our thanks, but I do want to thank them — all of them — for being there for all of us. I encourage everyone here to take the

time over these holidays to remember to thank those members too.

In recognition of legislative staff

Speaker: On behalf of all the members of this House, I would like to thank the Hansard staff for the fine job of accurately recording our proceedings; the pages — of which we only have two here today, but eight in total — who have served us faithfully this session and we hope to have them come back and join us again for the spring sitting; also the Clerks-at-the-Table — Floyd, Linda and Allison; along with Helen and Dawn, our legislative staff, who have advised us and guided us throughout the year. Last but not least are the Sergeant-at-Arms, Rudy Couture, and the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, Doris McLean, whom we’d like to thank for their dedication to duty and service.

Thank you all — a heartfelt thanks from all the members of the House and a very merry Christmas.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I’d like to ask the indulgence of the House to recognize some people who are here with us today: Grand Chief Ruth Massie and Carl Sidney, who’s the chief of the Teslin Tlingit Council. I also want to recognize Brian Kitchen from Health and Social Services, who was involved with the group I had mentioned earlier, in terms of working out the details to see that the government came forward with some money for the Food Bank to help them purchase not only the building, but the lot they are now occupying.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Kent: I’d like to welcome two friends of mine, members of the Yukon business community. First, owner of Small’s Expediting and a former Yukon Chamber of Mines director, John Small, has joined us here, as well as Cole Hodinski who is the owner of Horizon Helicopters here in Whitehorse. I would ask members to help me welcome both of them.

Applause

Ms. White: I ask all members to join me in welcoming a great number of people to the gallery. Constituents and friends of mine, Bonnie Dalziel, Carol Ann Gingras and Jody Overduin, as well as Sylvie and Jean Francois DesLauriers. We have Gill Cracknell. We have Karen Baltgailis and many others. So thank you for coming.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I would also like to acknowledge from Council of Yukon First Nations, Mr. James MacDonald. Thanks for joining us today in the gallery.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I would also like to welcome just a few constituents of mine: Werner Rhein and Rob and Mary Anne Lewis.

Applause

Speaker: I would like to thank Davina Harker for joining us once again. She has been here and stays long after Question Period. I would encourage all the members to thank her for that, but if you have the opportunity, talk to her and see how you have played out in her eyes.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I have for tabling today the crime prevention and victim services trust fund annual report, 2012-13.

Mr. Elias: I have for tabling a news release from the Leader of the Official Opposition that is dated Tuesday July 9, 2013, and its entitled *Time to put an end to floor-crossing: Yukon NDP leader to hold a public meeting in Old Crow*.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have for tabling two documents. The first is the Yukon Liquor Corporation annual report for the year beginning 2012 and finishing on March 31, 2013, and the Yukon Housing Corporation annual report for the year ended March 31, 2013.

Speaker: 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

Mr. Elias: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Leader of the Official Opposition to publicly apologize to Yukoners and especially the citizens of Old Crow for:

(1) failing to fulfill her promise to table legislation during the fall 2013 sitting of the Legislative Assembly that will prevent elected members from changing their party affiliation during their mandate; and

(2) the public display of divide-and-conquer politics exhibited in Old Crow on July 23, 2013.

Mr. Tredger: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the temporary withdrawal of subsurface mineral rights in the Peel watershed until the implementation of the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Land Use Plan*.

Mr. Silver: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that, as identified in the recently released needs assessment for the Watson Lake and Dawson City hospitals:

(1) a needs assessment is a beneficial tool for the planning of capital projects;

(2) a territorial mental health strategy should be implemented;

(3) both facilities should have been constructed to provide a permanent home for both the Canada prenatal nutrition program and the Child Development Centre; and

(4) implementing a collaborative care model is a prudent decision.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to respond to consultations on midwifery by regulating the industry to ensure safe and readily available midwifery services exist in the Yukon.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*

Ms. Hanson: When the Yukon government appealed the Ross River Dena decision in the Supreme Court of Canada, they argued that if the appeal court judgment stood, it would, in quotes, “put at risk the free-entry regime of Yukon”. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the Court of Appeal’s decision, yet when Yukon First Nations assert that Bill No. 66’s amendments to the quartz and placer mining acts trigger Yukon’s obligations under the devolution transfer agreement to develop modern resource legislation, the minister says the amendments are minor and do not trigger the DTA.

The government cannot have it both ways. If they stand before the highest court in the land and say that the Ross River decision changes the entire basis of the mining legislation, how can they turn around and say that the required amendments are so minor that they do not trigger Yukon’s obligations to work with Yukon First Nations to develop successor mining legislation?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have spoken to this issue a number of times during this sitting of the Legislative Assembly with respect to the Court of Appeal decision — the one that we have amendments before the floor of this House — Bill No. 66, *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, deals with notification and consultation with relation to class 1 activities.

As I’ve said previously, we have over the past number of years made amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act* with respect to adjusting the royalties, for instance, that we don’t believe were necessary to trigger the successor resource legislation. That’s our feeling with these amendments that are before the House.

When it comes to our relationship with First Nations, I've mentioned a number of times that there are many opportunities and many things that we succeed in, many things that we work together on across all departments of government, but often there are times when we disagree. When it comes to relationships, there is give and take on both sides, and it's important that even though we may disagree on some items, we can continue to work together. I think that was evidenced this week with the signing of the MOU with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and all the opportunities that exist to advance economic development in the Southern Lakes region of this territory.

Ms. Hanson: The government's assertions that Bill No. 66 only applies to the Ross River Dena is not supported by the facts. First the government argued that the Court of Appeal's ruling would put the entire free-entry system at risk. Second, the government will be creating special operating areas and special operating conditions under Bill No. 66 that will operate territory-wide. These special operating areas and conditions would apply — and I quote from the government's discussion paper: "... settlement land, land set aside for the purposes of furthering settlement of aboriginal land claims," and "regional land use planning and zone designation."

Will the minister explain how such far-reaching legislation — that not only addresses aboriginal rights of title, but also applies to land use planning, does not trigger the Yukon government's obligation under the devolution transfer agreement?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I've mentioned before, we don't believe that these amendments trigger the successor resource legislation. There have been instances with respect to successor resource legislation, such as forestry and lands, that were agreed to by both parties as priority areas to move through. Developing successor forestry legislation in the territory, I believe, took five years. Obviously those are major rewrites of legislation.

When it comes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*, those are long-standing statutes that provide a well-understood framework for mineral exploration, development and production in the Yukon. When it comes to the free-entry system, we don't think that it's incompatible with either First Nation final agreements or Yukon's legal obligations to consult with First Nations.

I've mentioned before that it's our view that there's a fundamental role for the individual and entrepreneurship in our society, especially when it comes to discovering hidden mineral wealth by following up on hunches, ideas or simply pursuing a dream.

We certainly recognize the importance of the mining industry to this territory and how important it is to further the private sector economy here and provide jobs and opportunities for all of those Yukoners who are engaged in that industry.

Ms. Hanson: Five years for forestry — they've had 10 years since devolution. The minister has introduced a new idea called special operating areas and conditions. He has called them just another tool. These special operating areas

and conditions are to be determined solely by the chief mining officer who will, apparently, also determine the environmental and ecological impacts. First Nation governments and the mining sector were given a ridiculously short time to comment on the actual wording of Bill No. 66. There are no regulations for discussion on these special operating areas and conditions. In fact, the minister has said that some regulations are needed for December 27, but others can happen after.

So, Mr. Speaker, how can the minister stand here today and tell First Nation governments and the mining sector that everything is just fine when he has hurried the process, blocked First Nations' call for real consultation and cannot even tell this House how he knows which regulations need to be passed, when.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Once again, I think it is important for us to correct the record. Perhaps the member opposite wasn't listening during debate on Bill No. 66, which was conducted this week.

Special operating areas are determined by Cabinet, in consultation with our First Nation partners. Special operating conditions are the responsibility of the chief of mining land use, again in consultation with the appropriate government partners and stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, for some reason, the Leader of Official Opposition feels that the December 27 deadline is a false deadline. It is not a false deadline — it is a court-ordered deadline. It is a time imposed by the Yukon Court of Appeal for the declarations of the court to come into effect. There were two declarations made by the Yukon Court of Appeal. One that we decided not to appeal — initial contact with First Nations on that with respect to amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* — happened in March. There was a 60-day consultation period in June and July with First Nation governments, as well as our industry stakeholders. We did receive feedback from the general public as well.

Work on the amendments and the regulations happened throughout the fall and up until debate even in the House this week on Bill No. 66.

Again, I'm not sure why the members opposite feel that these are false deadlines that we're working to. We're working to a court-imposed deadline of December 27.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Ms. White: The land use planning process for the Peel watershed engaged an unprecedented number of Yukoners. The result of this collective effort is the final recommended plan for the Peel watershed, a balanced plan that sees 55 percent of the pristine watershed protected. In developing the final recommended plan, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission heard from First Nation people and their governments, from the mining and tourism industries, from hunters and trappers, from youth and seniors, and from many, many other Yukoners.

The commission was successful in its efforts to ensure that the Peel planning process was thorough, open, respectful

and inclusive. It is something that all Yukoners can be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, will the government recognize the enthusiasm, the commitment and the good faith of all those who participated in the Peel land use planning process and accept the final recommended Peel plan as it was written?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Our position on this particular issue hasn't changed. We have previously indicated that the approach we think is in the best interest of all Yukoners is to modify the final recommended plan submitted by the commission. We've suggested that modifications that allow for the use of the highest level of protection in some areas, including the creation of parks or protected areas, is important and also new tools to manage the footprint of any potential activity, including natural resource exploration, are appropriate for other areas. That is the preferred approach that we are taking.

We have been working very hard to meet our consultation obligations as outlined in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* with the affected First Nations, and we want to exhaust every possible opportunity to come up with a land use plan for the entire watershed region that is supported by all parties of the process. Our intention is to have a land use plan in place before the staking withdrawal expires later this month. If we are not able to accomplish that, one of the tools that we have is to extend that withdrawal. That is, of course, something we will consider at the appropriate time.

As we have indicated previously, we want to arrive at a land use plan that is balanced, that balances the need for special protection of key areas in the Peel watershed region, but also allows for reasonable, responsible and sustainable development of our natural resources. It allows those folks in various industries who could be doing work up there to conduct their business and do it in a responsible manner that respects the environment.

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Ms. White: Yukoners young and old continue to raise their voices in defence of the Peel watershed and the final recommended plan. More than nine years into the planning processes, widespread concern for the Peel watershed has not faltered. We are privileged to be the stewards of this magnificent watershed, but I fear that this privilege has been taken from the Yukon public by a government that just won't listen.

At this eleventh hour, the fate of the Peel watershed is known only to this government. Mr. Speaker, out of respect for the four affected First Nations and all Yukoners, will the minister assure this House that the Yukon Party government will not release their final plan for the Peel watershed during the holiday season?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As mentioned by my colleague, the Minister of Environment, in his initial response. We are looking to bring a modified plan that not only respects the environmental and ecological integrity of the Peel watershed as well as the traditional uses, but also respects those individuals who earn their living working in the resource industry.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are number of Yukoners who gathered here today to voice their concerns about the Peel watershed and are in support of the final recommended plan. I can assure this House that I talk to individuals on a daily basis in this community and throughout the Yukon who earn a living from the resource-extraction industry, and they would like to see opportunities for them to continue to earn a living here in the Yukon and continue to raise their families here.

These aren't nameless, faceless corporations. They are our friends. They are our families. They are the individuals we know from the hockey rinks, the coffee shops and the grocery stores. These are real Yukoners who are looking to ensure that they have opportunities to continue to provide food for their families and continue to live in the Yukon and raise their families here.

Ms. White: The final recommended plan allows for development in 45 percent of the Peel watershed. The moratorium on new mineral, oil and gas claims in the Peel watershed will expire in 12 days, on December 31. Until today, I've been repeatedly told that it would be premature to announce any decision to extend the moratorium under the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*.

The four affected First Nations, the citizens here the gallery and everyone who participated in the Peel planning process for the last nine years want to know, will the government commit today to an extension of the interim staking withdrawal in the Peel watershed until the final recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* is put in place?

Hon. Mr. Kent: What we want to do is exhaust every opportunity to come up with the land use plan for the entire Peel watershed area that is supported by all of the parties to the process. Our intention is to have a land use plan in place before the staking withdrawal expires. If we are not able to accomplish that, one of the tools we have is to extend that withdrawal, and that is something that we would consider at the appropriate time.

I know the Member for Riverdale South did a tribute today to people who work over the holidays, and thankfully the Minister of Environment and I are two of those individuals who will be working through the Christmas holidays.

Question re: Home-schooling

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Education. The government has implemented a new program this year where parents who homeschool their children are able to have some of their expenses reimbursed by the Government of Yukon. I believe it's up to \$1,200 per student. The first deadline for submitting receipts was November 30. Several parents I've spoken to have missed this deadline. The department has admitted that there was confusion around that date. In the end, parents were given two weeks' notice that receipts had to be submitted, for example.

This is a new initiative so parents recognize that there will be bumps along the way. However, I believe two weeks is not sufficient notice. The result is that many parents are out-

of-pocket and they will have to wait until the spring, possibly until May, to be reimbursed.

Has there been any consideration to extend that November 30 deadline so that parents who missed it are not left holding on to these receipts for several more months?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd like to thank the member opposite for his important question on home-schooling. In fact, it's this government that recognizes the importance of home-schooling as another education option for parents to subscribe to. The Government of Yukon has launched a new Aurora Virtual School, which is available for that very fact.

We recognize that this is really the first year of its kind in implementation. We have draft guidelines underway right now, and we recognize that there are going to be some glitches along the way. I've had an initial meeting with some of the constituents whom the member opposite has referred to and have raised those with the Department of Education. That review is underway and we do not wish to see any hardship on any parent or family of home-schoolers and we will continue to seek the diligence of the department.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the minister's answer and I do know there is a meeting tonight about the virtual school system and there's also one scheduled for January in Dawson.

As I mentioned before, I've heard several concerns about the process for submitting receipts, and I hope that process will be improved by the next deadline.

I also have been hearing several concerns coming forward to me about parents who have sent in some claims already. For example, many parents were told earlier on in the process that fees for individual music lessons would be something that they could submit. Somewhere along the line, though, that was changed and parents have been told that these costs will no longer be covered. In many cases, parents made financial commitments based upon the fact that they were told by the government that they would not be out-of-pocket. I would urge the minister to look at what is covered in other jurisdictions. There are very few restrictions in other jurisdictions and this could be a model.

Why did the government agree to this and then change its mind after parents had already made the financial commitments?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I mentioned, the Government of Yukon is very pleased to be able to work with the home-schooling community, not just within the community of Dawson — the Klondike region — but also here in Whitehorse and surrounding areas.

We continue to work with our partners to provide home-schoolers with access to resources to help ensure the success of home-schooled students. To be sure, that is to be made available through the Aurora Virtual School, which is actually providing funding, coordination and distance learning options for those who choose to educate their children at home.

That is currently underway, as are the draft guidelines that were also launched by the department earlier this year. We certainly recognize that these are draft guidelines and that there is discussion left to be had. The member opposite did raise mention of the meeting in January, which I am very

familiar with. Our officials will be engaging with those home-schooler families and we will be looking for further clarity.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the minister. For the record, the case that I spoke about with the music lessons was a case here in Whitehorse.

Here's another one from Whitehorse. I recognize that with this new initiative, parents are going to see some hiccups, but there are a few issues that we need some better communication with. Another commitment the department made earlier in the process was to help out with the rental of facilities for home-school students to use. This has happened at least on a few occasions, but again, it is my understanding that the government is now backing away from the commitment.

The question for the minister is, will the government continue to help with fees for the rental of facilities?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What I'm not going to do is pre-empt the outcome of those discussions with our partners — the home-schoolers and the families who subscribe to this very important option when it comes to education.

What this government will continue to do is continue to work with our many partners. As I mentioned, there has been a series of meetings already held and there will be other meetings as well. We recognize that there are some gaps and we will continue to work with our partners.

We are very pleased that we do have draft guidelines in place. It is a place to start. We recognize that there has been financial assistance made available to home-schoolers and to their families in support of home-schooling as an option. It was a platform commitment, and it's one that this government remains very much committed to.

We will continue to work with the parents and the families. We recognize the very importance of this issue. We want to ensure that the educational outcomes of all Yukon students are the highest and we will continue to work in support of those educational outcomes.

Question re: Patient safety reviews

Ms. Stick: On May 6, 2013, two recommendations were issued by the coroner following the investigation of Mary Johnny's death. The first was that steps should be taken to address the incomplete documentation. The second was that the Yukon Hospital Corporation should develop an integrated approach to reviewing deaths.

The coroner's findings of a misdiagnosis did not trigger the Yukon Hospital Corporation to conduct a patient safety review. Mary Johnny died 16 months ago. The coroner's judgment of inquiry into her death was issued seven months ago.

Can the minister tell us why the Yukon Hospital Corporation did not conduct a patient safety review of Mary Johnny's death in the 16 months since her death or in the seven months after the coroner issued her recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As was reported by the Yukon Hospital Corporation in a news conference yesterday, a patient safety review was not conducted into the death of Mary Johnny because of the fact that the coroner had called an

inquest. Now I admit that there seems to be a time lag here, but from what I understand, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has determined that until the coroner's inquest into the two deaths has been completed, a patient safety review would not be conducted.

Ms. Stick: It was 15 months then that it took for an inquest to be called, but it still doesn't answer the question of the patient safety review. We've had one now on the death of Teresa Scheunert and I believe that, given the recommendations from the coroner, there should also be a patient safety review into the death of Mary Johnny. I don't see how one should stop the other from happening. The inquest will go on. It is to look at the cause of her death. A patient safety review looks at the systems of the hospital and what happened around that death. It's an integral part of what should be happening here.

Can the minister responsible explain why in one death — the one of Teresa Ann Scheunert — we had a patient safety review and in this one, we have not?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, the hospital has the ability to determine when patient safety reviews are to be conducted and when they will not be conducted. The Hospital Corporation — the people involved with the determination of when a patient safety review will be called — has determined in this instance that it was in the best interests of the system not to call a patient safety review at this time, and that the coroner's review — the inquest into the death of Mary Johnny — should go ahead. At that time, it will be determined if an internal review through the patient safety review would be called.

I'm not going to pre-judge what the hospital and their medical personnel decide to do. I'm not an expert and I will trust those people to make the correct decision.

Ms. Stick: I find that answer confusing. We had a coroner's judgment of inquiry that pointed out system flaws — a misdiagnosis — that resulted in a person's death in one of our Yukon hospitals. How that does not trigger a patient safety review baffles me. The minister suggested that the hospital has their means of determining when this happens, but we haven't seen anything in terms of procedures or rules about when those decisions are made.

It is not clear, Mr. Speaker. One case, it happened; the other — different — but again pointed out by the coroner that there were causes of death that didn't need to happen.

Can the minister tell this House, when there is an unexpected death, what is the Yukon Hospital Corporation using to make their decisions on patient reviews?

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Hospital Corporation undertakes patient safety reviews when the committee at the Hospital Corporation determine such a patient safety review is in the best interests of the hospital because of lapses in the system.

In this case, the Hospital Corporation has decided that a patient safety review is not warranted until the inquest is over. One of the responsibilities of an inquest is to determine the

facts surrounding the death and make recommendations to prevent future occurrences, which is basically the same system that a patient safety review takes into consideration.

For me to stand here and prejudge what the hospital should be doing in medical matters is simply ridiculous. I'm not in a position to do that. I've contacted the Hospital Corporation. They've assured me that this is not unusual. Maybe the member opposite considers herself an expert in this area and she should provide that experience to the Hospital Corporation. At this time, they will be waiting until such time as the inquest has taken place.

Question re: *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, a year ago, we saw the release of the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Like studies and reports from across the country, Yukon data also confirms that income is outcome — that is to say, people living in poverty, including children, have worse health outcomes. Typically one-off, short-term programs do not make an impact on issues that have deep systemic roots.

The strategy includes a commitment to measure and report progress, and I quote: "The government will establish a system for regularly measuring progress and reporting results as a key component of the initial implementation of the strategy."

Can the minister tell this House if there is a system in place to measure progress and outcomes of its *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The poverty reduction social inclusion strategy, which was begun by this government some time ago, has not yet shown great results. We expect that in the coming year we will be able to produce some statistics about the success of the strategy. Meanwhile, the Department of Health and Social Services maintains a presence during discussions through the deputy ministers committee and tries to look at all projects or services that are brought forward through the deputy ministers committee — they look at it through a social policy lens.

From that point of view, we are implementing the policy, but it's too soon to determine whether or not there are positive results. We expect they will be.

Mr. Tredger: The *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* lists indicators. These indicators show whether systems we have put in place to address issues are showing improved results. Included within health indicators are both patterns of alcohol use and the related emergency care for drug- and alcohol-related health issues.

The findings of the health and health-related behaviours among young people in the Yukon study show a gap between rural Yukon and Whitehorse.

Can the minister responsible tell this House if patterns of alcohol use are being monitored in rural Yukon and what emergency care services are available for drug- and alcohol-related issues in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will make one thing clear up front: the social inclusion assessment tool is due to be

introduced in March of 2014, so the assessment tool isn't really in place yet.

One of the reasons that we undertake the health-related behaviours among young people study is to give us a base from which we should move forward. We know from the base that young people in the Yukon have a number of difficulties — chief among them is substance abuse. We also know that there have been some positive things.

It is really unfortunate that members opposite have determined to focus only on the negative. There are some very positive things happening across the territory and we found that, in many cases, our young people in the school system are leading the country in certain areas. We are aware about substance abuse in the smaller communities and we are doing everything we can to reverse that tide, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: According to the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*, disparities in Yukon's labour force are also apparent. Among the aboriginal labour force, the unemployment rate for males is 26.8 percent. This is 15-percent higher than the rate for all Yukon males. Barriers to employment have been identified. These are deep and systemic too. Lower literacy and education, health issues and access to childcare have all been identified as barriers to employment.

We do not pretend these are simple things to fix. We know that many complex factors contribute to chronic exclusion and poverty, but that is why the indicators are important. These large, systemic issues need to be broken down into steps we take together, one by one.

How is the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* addressing these barriers to employment and is progress being measured?

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Obviously the member opposite wasn't listening when I answered the very first question.

Health and Social Services maintains a strong presence on the Deputy Ministers Review Committee. As well, I attempt to do the same at our Cabinet table — that is to consider every issue brought forward before the deputy ministers and brought forward before this Cabinet through a social inclusion lens.

The member opposite talked about responsibilities and about five different departments in his last question. What I attempt to do — and what my deputy minister and other staff attempt to do throughout the government — is to bring to the attention of the various ministers, deputy ministers and people throughout the government what some of these difficulties are that have been identified through the social inclusion policy. Everything that we do in government is taken through that lens so that, when we look at a new policy, we can say, "What is this going to do for the disadvantaged folks in our society?"

That's the responsibility of our department. We can't implement all of those things. We hope Education, Justice and Economic Development will do that.

To date they've been proven very successful and I appreciate my colleague's work. One of the obvious things

was the recent \$750,000 contribution to the food bank. That was done through the cooperation among all departments here today.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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. McLeod): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will take a 15-minute break.

Recess

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

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services in Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure to rise again today to continue debate on the Department of Community Services. I'd like to begin by talking a little bit about some of the investments we have made in drinking water and providing some context for members about this important area.

The responsibility for and the provision of safe drinking water is an important issue for governments at all levels. The Yukon government works collaboratively with Yukon municipalities and Yukon First Nations in addressing the needs of Yukon citizens. As well, of course, through services in certain unincorporated communities and the investments in the rural well program, we have taken steps to help Yukoners individually address the need for safe, affordable, accessible and clean drinking water.

The experiences of other Canadian jurisdictions — the Walkerton tragedy that occurred in 2000, for example — highlight the importance of governments' collective actions to ensure safe drinking water supplies and prevent the negative

impact that contaminated drinking water can have on peoples' lives and on public health.

Yukon government departments have remained committed to working collaboratively to address a range of water-related issues and we have made a number of strides in the past number of years.

The ways in which Yukoners access drinking water can vary significantly, depending on where they live. In larger Yukon communities, water may be accessed through municipal water supply and piped distribution system. By contrast, Yukoners living in rural areas may access drinking water through a truck water-delivery system, private wells or personal haul from community wells, creeks or rivers.

Managing drinking water in the Yukon is at a cooperative level among all levels of government, industry and stakeholders, and also includes individual Yukoners.

Within the Government of Yukon, a number of departments play a role in the overall management of drinking water systems.

Community Services currently manages drinking water supplies in unincorporated communities, oversees water delivery in certain unincorporated communities, and provides access to loans for water-well drilling on private land for qualified rural Yukoners through the rural well program, which I mentioned earlier. It is, I might note, something that was implemented in 2004 as a result of hearing feedback from rural Yukoners, particularly from constituents in my riding who had brought forward a proposal that government provide a program similar to the rural electrification program that would provide Yukoners with the ability to put in their drinking water systems and, as done through the rural electrical and telephone program, provide government and the taxpayers with security that that money would be repaid. The fundamental structure of both of those programs provides people with the ability to pay for those infrastructure costs over a longer period of time at a Bank of Canada prime rate for interest while recovering the money through a local improvement charge.

The Department of Health and Social Services monitors and regulates drinking water quality in Yukon in accordance with the Yukon *Public Health and Safety Act* and its regulations. The Department of Environment administers water-related policies, regulations and programs under the *Waters Act*.

Highways and Public Works and the Yukon Housing Corporation develop and operate water systems for government-owned facilities in communities throughout the Yukon.

The other levels of government can vary in each community but, generally speaking, they include municipalities, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada — because of its role in providing funding and advisor role to First Nation communities to ensure and supply safe drinking water. Most First Nations, both self-governing and non-self-governing, manage all or part of their of the water supply and distribution — including trucked and private wells — to their citizens and, in some cases, also provide

public drinking water access points or self-haul and trucked water services for other rural Yukoners.

Municipalities manage the water supply and distribution within municipal boundaries and, in some cases, also provide public drinking water access points for self-haul and trucked water delivery services for rural Yukoners. Private citizens have an important role to play as it is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 private wells in the Yukon. Private systems may include wells or water holding tanks, and homeowners are personally responsible for their operation and maintenance, testing and treatment of their individual systems.

The Department of Environment is taking the lead in collaborating with various departments and with stakeholders and the public to develop a Yukon water strategy. The objective is to account for all interest and values related to water in the Yukon and take a holistic approach to managing those values as well as providing government and others with more baseline data and information about Yukon water and the things that might affect its supply.

Since 1968, Health Canada has published the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality to ensure that Canadians have access to safe drinking water. The guidelines undergo regular review and have been revised over time to reflect data on contaminants in drinking water. Drinking water guidelines were developed by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee on Drinking Water and have been adopted by all jurisdictions in Canada as the basis for establishing drinking water quality requirements.

A significant impact for Yukon has come from changes to those federal guidelines in 2006 that reduced the allowable minimum level of naturally occurring arsenic in public drinking water supplies.

Again, that change to the arsenic standard was based on health information that came to light nationally and recommendations that led to a lowering of the maximum acceptable level of arsenic because of the concern of cumulative lifetime accumulation of drinking water that had a higher arsenic content than that level.

Additionally in 2007, following the public consultation process in the Yukon, new drinking water regulations were added to the Yukon *Public Health and Safety Act* for large public drinking water systems and bulk water delivery to meet the criteria set out in the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*.

Yukon water systems are subject to those higher standards that were set out in recent regulations for large public drinking water systems and bulk water delivery. These new regulations address all segments of water use from source to tap, and they represent an integral piece of the government's commitment to ensure safe drinking water throughout the Yukon.

When the regulations came into place in 2007, there were 16 large public drinking water systems throughout Yukon, including municipal and unincorporated supplies. In the same year, to plan for necessary infrastructure improvements, the Department of Community Services set out to ensure that safe

and affordable drinking water was accessible throughout Yukon.

I might add that, in recent years and as members may know, there have been significant investments in a number of Yukon communities in developing or enhancing the public drinking water supply points, including significant financial investments, primarily under Building Canada, to upgrade those systems. That includes both systems that the Yukon government manages directly as well as municipal systems in municipalities that the Yukon government financially assisted in order to upgrade their drinking water systems.

Today, Yukon government operates and maintains public drinking water wells in seven communities with new water systems in a number of these areas, as well as investments to others that are in place.

First Nations have worked on improvements to their public drinking water supply points since 2003, when the First Nation water management strategy was first implemented by the federal government. Work has continued with funding out of the gas tax fund, municipal rural infrastructure fund and Building Canada fund. Maintaining Yukon's public drinking water supply is of great importance and a lot of work and investment has gone into ensuring that our infrastructure meets or exceeds the standards under the drinking water guidelines as well as Yukon's regulations.

As I mentioned through the rural domestic water well program that was introduced in 2004, steps have also been taken to help improve and provide access to drinking water on private land. The program was designed to give rural Yukoners access to low-interest funding to develop wells on their property. Funding is 100-percent recoverable through the imposition of local improvement charges, which are payable on an annual basis over five, 10 or 15 years. This investment in helping rural Yukoners develop wells on private property has generated economic activity, improved water supply and helps improve and continue the quality of life for rural Yukoners. The program continues to be offered and has so far provided 175 homes in unincorporated areas with access to private drinking water sources through the construction and insulation of private wells.

In 2012-13, 39 projects occurred and the long-term loan program continues to be a success, with loans being recouped through annual local improvement charges. The model for this is the same basic one that was established and has been very successful through the rural electrification and rural telephone program.

Madam Chair, a concerted effort has been made to invest in drinking water, but as well, the Yukon government has also stepped forward in assisting with waste-water facilities for municipalities. This is the result of priorities that were established for the expenditures of the Building Canada fund in the Building Canada 1 agreement.

A few of the investments that have occurred under various funds, including Building Canada as well as municipal rural infrastructure funding and the gas tax fund, include: under MRIF, drinking water improvements in Watson Lake that involved rehabilitation of the pump house and a potable

water distribution facility; drinking water infrastructure upgrades for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; a new drinking water fill system for the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to improve the community's access to a reliable source of drinking water; and improvements to the drinking water system in Haines Junction — an expanded water pump capacity and improve the water treatment system to keep pace with changes in the national drinking water guidelines.

I had the opportunity, along with my colleague, the Member for Kluane, to tour this facility with staff of the municipality this fall and see the investments that have occurred in this facility.

The gas tax fund has also been accessed for key drinking water projects, which include funding to the Selkirk First Nation of \$233,820 to continue construction of a small-diameter piped water system to provide clean drinking water to residents. The Kluane First Nation received \$81,000 to relocate a house in order to protect the wellhead for the community well, which is their main water source.

They also received approximately \$120,000 for the retrofit of community housing units and 10 community units with arctic entries. Other investments include the Liard First Nation receiving \$87,000 to evaluate landfill sites at its Albert Creek subdivision and train Liard First Nation citizens in water quality monitoring.

Madam Chair, the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation received \$331,408 to build a shed to house their water truck. Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation received \$535,000 to install a geothermal heating system and central water supply components for their new government house, with phase two of that project seeing an additional \$491,000. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation received \$487,000 to purchase a new water truck and sewer truck to provide essential services for sewer and water delivery for Old Crow and the City of Whitehorse accessed \$3.4 million to develop new groundwater wells in Riverdale's part of the Selkirk well development to meet drinking water regulations.

As well, \$1.8 million was approved to construct a backup well — a new well — in southeast Riverdale, as well as \$7.4 million, which was invested in replacing the water station building chlorination facility and decommissioning the old Selkirk pump house.

I believe you are indicating to me that my current time is running out, so I look forward to providing further information after hearing questions from members opposite.

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank the officials from the department for their time here today and wish them happy holidays coming up.

I'm going to start with a conflict of interest question, Madam Chair. A municipal affairs contract for sewer and water in Watson Lake worth approximately \$6 million was signed off in August 2012. It was awarded to Sidhu Trucking. Midway through the contract, officials in the department were moved off of the project. The employees had some say over the change orders of that project.

My question is why? Was there a conflict of interest for example?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Chair: Mr. Elias, on a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Elias: With your indulgence, I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Ms. Selena Pye to the House gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, as the Member for Klondike knows, I've been responsible for this portfolio since August and I will have to check into the question he asked. I'm not able to provide an answer at this point in time.

Mr. Silver: I would appreciate a response to that question as soon as possible.

Let's move to the Lakeview water sewer lines in Watson Lake. The Government of Yukon conducted work on behalf of the Town of Watson Lake on Lakeview for replacement for some water/sewer lines. The town was supposed to pay for the work and, in turn, the government was to administer the project and pay the contractor. After completion of that project, it was to be turned over to the town. The town was to pay roughly \$1 million for Lakeview. Funds were to be obtained from a variety of sources including internal reserves. I have been told the agreement with the town was never signed and it remains unsigned to this day. Madam Chair, accordingly, the government spent \$1 million of taxpayers' dollars without any authority to do so.

Was the agreement signed and could the minister provide a copy of it for us?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Community Services is working with the Town of Watson Lake to replace much of the community's aging water and sewer infrastructure. Over \$7 million of Building Canada funds have been identified to improve the town's water and sewer system, including installing seven new fire hydrants; installing 830 metres of new water main extensions and some spot repairs of existing mains; installing a total of 3,140 metres of sewer piping; replacing 54 sewer manholes; repairing leaking water service connections to homes and institutions, where encountered; and addressing sanitary pipe-slope issues. As you will be aware, there were some issues with sanitary sewers that previously flowed in the reverse direction.

The latest project — Lakeview — is, I believe, at this point now substantially complete. There were some issues during the construction phase in February 2013. The Town of Watson Lake reported that the water main on Lakeview Avenue was frozen. The line was later thawed and the system was restored. An engineering report was undertaken to determine the cause of the freeze-up. The engineer stated that the reason was most likely that a valve was closed, completely restricting flow. Another possibility was that the engineers made a mistake in flow calculations and that the flow had been reduced to the extent that the line froze. To remedy this issue, Community Services has instructed Watson Lake to

leave all valves fully open in the winter. This is part of regular maintenance.

Community Services also installed temperature probes so the town can monitor the temperature around the lines and when it is very cold they use the probe for temperatures when deciding to proactively bleed more waters into the line to prevent freezing.

Another potential solution that will be looked into is whether the new Lakeview Apartments should be added to the lines to increase the flow. My understanding is that is currently being reviewed.

For the rest of the member's question, I'll have to undertake to check into it.

Mr. Silver: Once again, it would be great if the minister could familiarize himself with this situation because, once again, it's looking like the government did spend a million dollars of taxpayers' money without the authority to do so. We want to know if there was an agreement signed and we would love to have a copy of that, if so.

Moving on to gas tax and the Town of Watson Lake, the Government of Yukon informed the Town of Watson Lake that the gas tax committee, composed of Government of Yukon personnel, approved a gas tax application for the Lakeview water and sewer program the minister was speaking about. The approval was for \$544,398. Given this approval, by way of a letter by YG to the town, the town began the project and was then informed, after the fact, that the federal government had audited YG and the gas tax committee decision was rescinded.

The Yukon may have mistakenly calculated the stacking provision in their evaluation process. I was wondering if I could have a copy of that audit.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: With reference to the member's last question, I understand that the project has been completed successfully. Staff had advised me of some issues that occurred as a result of a change in what Canada had indicated the eligibility was. Initially they had indicated the project would be eligible and then, upon looking at it again, they changed their interpretation, which resulted in the change that the member referred to.

With reference to the Lakeview project, the member is incorrect. In fact, all spending authorities that were required were in place, including budget authority. There is a memorandum of agreement related to that project that has not yet been signed by the Town of Watson Lake, but it is with them. My understanding is that they have indicated at the official level that they are going to conclude that paperwork.

The member is correct that that memorandum of agreement should have been signed at an earlier date. However, while that error should not have occurred, the member is incorrect in asserting that this means that the proper financial approvals were not in place because the appropriate spending authorities were indeed in place at that time.

Mr. Silver: I don't know where exactly I'm supposedly misunderstanding this. The government went to the town for replacement of these monies and was told no. They were

going to pay for an error that belongs solely to the Yukon — that is my understanding. The work was already completed by the time that this happened. A former minister finally admitted to the error and offered to pay the town an additional plus-or-minus \$140,000 for that error — the amount that the town stood to lose because of the error.

Did this payment occur? Does the minister think that this represents good financial management on behalf of the government?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member has a portion of his facts correct and he is incorrect on others. The first part of the project was done by the Town of Watson Lake. That project had some issues with it and, in fact, they asked the Yukon government to step in and help rectify those issues.

My understanding is that the first part of the project was done under MRIF funding and that the additional contributions from the Yukon government were to assist them with correcting errors. They were not the result of Yukon government errors. They were related to errors made during the project by the town when they were initially constructing it.

MRIF, of course, is a structure that required payments of one-third/one-third/one-third cost-sharing at federal, territorial and municipal levels.

Mr. Silver: For the record, if the minister can clarify — because a former minister did admit that errors did occur and did offer to pay the town an additional plus-or-minus \$140,000 for that error. Is the minister now telling us that the error was on the part of the municipality of Watson Lake? Does that not counter the former minister's findings?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I, first of all, will not rely on the member's assertion of what my predecessor said. As the member knows, he has an unfortunate habit in the House of getting his facts wrong. I will confer with her, as well as review the record to see what in fact was stated previously. I provided to the member the information I have in front of me.

I'm not intimately familiar with the specific details of the history of this project as I was minister responsible for other portfolios during that specific period in time that the member is referring to. Actually I will have to check which year he is referring to — and what I was responsible for at that point in time — but I was certainly not Minister of Community Services.

I will check on that, but my understanding is that errors were made by the municipality in the project. There were challenges. They asked Yukon government to step in.

We have funding in the supplementary estimates here in the amount of \$317,000 to support the Town of Watson Lake on their Lakeview Avenue water and sewer project that was completed in March 2012-13.

My understanding is that the \$142,000 that the member is referring to is related to assisting the Town of Watson Lake in paying back what their portion of the MRIF funding would have been. That is the information I have for the member.

As I noted, because of the timeline in which this project occurred, I am not specifically familiar with every step of the history, but my understanding is that the member is mistaken

in his assertion and in trying to paint a picture that is not in fact correct.

Mr. Silver: I would urge the minister to get familiar with this particular file because, by his answers today in the House, not only is he assuming that I wrote these questions myself and that these aren't coming to us from officials who are in the know, but he also countered his predecessor's facts as well. I would suggest that he does get familiar with this file. We will be looking forward to finding out if this payment actually did occur or not.

Moving on to another issue, the Government of Yukon undertook to coordinate a contract on behalf of the municipalities for the drilling —

Chair: Order please.

Mr. Pasloski, on a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like the House to recognize Darren Parsons, known, I believe, by everybody in this House. He has joined us today.

Applause

Mr. Silver: The Government of Yukon undertook to coordinate a contract on behalf of the municipalities for drilling, testing and monitoring of wells at the Watson Lake landfill to see if there was contamination. The municipality asked to see the bids and the amount it would cost the town, prior to committing to that undertaking. No documents have ever been supplied to them, nor did the town agree to the costs, as they didn't know what they would be.

Now the government is asking the town to pay a bill, and I believe that amount is \$85,000, for which there is no agreement. Can the minister table that agreement?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I can look into the member's specific question. I would point out that there are a number of areas involving staff within Community Services, as well as other government departments involved in supporting municipalities and work with them on an ongoing basis. The specific details of some of the busier files are ones that I'd have to get an update on to make sure that we're current with the information.

We have had ongoing discussions with the municipality of Watson Lake with regard to working with them in the area of waste management and on that file, those discussions are continuing. I met personally with the Mayor and Council of Watson Lake this fall during my tour of Yukon communities. I had a tour the dump from their manager of — I can't recall his proper title, but I believe it is public works manager — and we discussed issues around the dump. The specific issue to which the member is referring was not something raised with me by the mayor, the council or the public works manager. As I noted in meeting with the mayor and council, we did in fact discuss a number of issues related to the landfill. I should also note that the Member for Watson Lake was also present at that meeting, and of course was involved in working with them in representing her constituents at that time.

The specific issues of our support to municipalities around solid waste are areas in which those discussions are ongoing. On this specific issue of assistance for Watson Lake in the area of water well testing around their landfill, I'm going to have to get some additional detail before reporting to the member on the current status of it. I note that that specific detail is not one that has come to my attention or been brought to my attention by the mayor or council in my discussions with them.

I should also note that in the area of water, in addition to the investments I mentioned, the Yukon has invested approximately \$265 million in eligible costs. Of this, \$182.9 million was contributed by Canada, \$60 million by Yukon and \$28 million from other sources. Those investments include drinking water, waste water, local roads, solid waste and green energy infrastructure initiatives. The specific prioritization of these issues was a result of extensive public consultation that involved municipalities, unincorporated communities and First Nation communities and resulted in Yukon government developing a multi-year Yukon infrastructure plan to identify infrastructure gaps and priorities for communities and First Nations.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Silver, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: I'm calling a point of order on 19(b)(i), the minister speaks to matters other than the question other than the question under discussion, my question — and I'm sorry if I wasn't clear — was just can the minister table an agreement?

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I think the member doesn't understand the Standing Orders, because I'm speaking to the Department of Community Services.

Chair's ruling

Chair: We are in general debate right now on the Department of Community Services. The minister responsible, as does any person speaking in general debate, has 20 minutes to speak on the Department of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I would note that it's unfortunate that the member isn't interested in the \$265-million investment in areas including solid waste, waste water, drinking water, local roads and green energy initiatives. I won't go on at length in this section, but I do think those investments are relevant and it is important that the member understands that the infrastructure projects and the investments in the economy do come from somewhere and that they have a positive effect in communities.

I see the Member for Klondike appears to consider that a laughable matter, but Madam Chair, we will continue to invest in Yukon communities and we will continue to work with them in addressing their priorities, their challenges and their needs. I would point out specifically with the relationship with the Town of Watson Lake around investing in infrastructure and in dealing with issues around their solid-waste system —

in fact, a couple of things the member should be aware of are, first of all, that the Town of Watson Lake have themselves been grappling with the challenge and question of how to manage their waste facility.

One of the reasons that this is an active file is that, in addition to the changes that we've had to make to what the Department of Community Services is doing to operate our solid-waste system — as a result of the change that was made to move dumps away from burning solid waste to becoming no-burn facilities — the steps that have been taken on increasing waste diversion and recycling efforts also have an impact on operations. Those same challenges are affecting municipalities — including the Town of Watson Lake — and have led to situations where the municipality is specifically engaged in ongoing discussions with the Department of Community Services with regard to our collaborative relationship, as well as considering where there may be needs for additional investments or changes in the future.

As I mentioned earlier in the House, I had the opportunity this fall — or made the opportunity, more accurately — to go out to all of Yukon's incorporated communities and meet with mayors and councils, as well as with First Nations, subject to availability, in those areas to discuss a number of issues and their priorities and their challenges. Solid waste is one of the issues that was on the minds of the municipality of Watson Lake. That is something that we discussed at some length, along with the Member for Watson Lake, who was present at that time.

There are active, ongoing discussions between the Department of Community Services and the Town of Watson Lake in this area. I'm not updated on the minute-to-minute discussions that go on, but when there are matters of significance, staff bring them to my attention, and of course the Town of Watson Lake mayor and council, as with all mayors and councils, are well aware of the fact that they are quite free to contact me at any point. I am happy to discuss with them any matters of mutual concern and collaboration on any areas that need work, discussion or simple opportunities to update each other on where steps are being taken to address the interest of our citizens.

Mr. Silver: I do apologize for laughing, but I did find it quite amusing when the minister responsible says there are a couple of things that I should be aware of, yet I've just asked several questions on items that the minister responsible for Community Services should be aware of.

I will move on, but I will reiterate that I would appreciate if the minister could table that agreement.

Madam Chair, the Government of the Yukon undertook work at the Town of Watson Lake water treatment plant. This involved the drilling of a well. The contractor needed to heat his equipment during the winter and used a diesel tank of fuel. His generators were in very close proximity to those wells. This is in violation of the town's water permit, which does not allow diesel or other hydrocarbons to be near a community's potable water supply.

A diesel spill ensued directly adjacent to the community's water wells, about three metres away, and it is estimated that

the spill was three metres by three metres. Will the minister confirm that this spill occurred and whether or not an investigation was conducted?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Could the member be a little bit more specific about when he claims this occurred?

Mr. Silver: I believe that this occurred last winter — the contract was over last winter, I believe.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Staff has advised me that they have not been made aware of any such situation occurring, so I am not in a position to confirm or deny alleged incidents that we have no knowledge of. I would point out that, in such a situation — if someone was to have a fuel spill, particularly near a drinking water supply — they would be expected to make a report, both to the Department of Environment, as well as to Environmental Health within the Department of Health and Social Services.

If it was in regard to municipal assets, we would have expected a report to be made to the relevant municipality or, if the municipality were responsible for that, we would expect that they would not only fulfill their legal obligations to report that spill to the appropriate regulatory agencies, but they would probably give Community Services that information, as a courtesy to us.

My understanding is that they are not actually legally obligated to provide us with that information, but we can certainly check into whether there is any record with the two regulators of such an incident occurring. It is unlikely that such a situation was reported, because such matters that were reported to the duly responsible regulators — Environmental Health Services and the Department of Environment — would again likely, by those departments, be passed on to Community Services — community operations branch — as a courtesy heads-up. Although those projects and municipal infrastructure are not ones that we have a legal responsibility for — they are the legal responsibility of the incorporated municipality — but where such a situation would occur, I would certainly hope that staff of municipalities and municipal councils would take the appropriate action by, (a) fulfilling their legal obligation to report such an incident to Environmental Health and to the Department of Environment; (b) undertaking any required cleanup action to mitigate environmental effects and, of course, any potential risk to public health and safety; and (c), that they would give Community Services — community operations — a courtesy heads-up that an incident occurred, although that is not a legal requirement that they do so, because municipalities are responsible for their facilities.

Mr. Silver: I apologize if I wasn't clear, but the spill at the water treatment plant was under the Government of Yukon working conditions — not the municipality. The Government of Yukon undertook work at the Town of Watson Lake water treatment plant and it was during that time that this spill occurred. So I totally agree with the minister that the responsible government should go through this process.

I'm not sure if the minister's aware of this particular incident. I will endeavour to make sure that I have the right winter — that it did occur actually last winter — but my

question will remain — if the minister will confirm this spill. Was an investigation conducted? I concur 100 percent with the minister that there is an obligation here to report these spills. Will the minister provide a copy of the investigation if there was one?

Another question is, why was this information about this spill not passed on to the municipality? Were the proper authorities contacted after the spill occurred? Finally on that issue, was Environmental Health informed or contacted, and what about YESAB?

I will leave the minister to endeavour to answer those questions on a timely basis.

Madam Chair, South Yukon Forest Corporation leased lands from Yukon government for the operation of a mill. I understand that the company does not have any assets, nor has it had any assets for many years. A lease between Yukon government and South Yukon Forest Corporation contained a clause whereby South Yukon Forest Corporation was obligated to pay property taxes on the land or the lease would be forfeited. South Yukon Forest Corporation never paid their lease, and total outstanding taxes owed to the town accumulated to over \$125,000, which the municipality wrote off in 2012.

The Yukon government has a responsibility to protect the town by taking action on this lease. Why did the government not do that?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, with regard to the member's assertions about an incident near Watson Lake's water supply, I would note to the member that some of his questions obviously were written for him by someone else, and he didn't recognize that I had, in fact, answered them previously.

Staff of Community Services have assured me that they are not aware of such an incident occurring. If it was done by a contractor — I have been advised that at one point there was a contract that Community Services, at the behest of the Town of Watson Lake, had contracted with someone to do certain work related to wells in the Town of Watson Lake. That contractor would have an obligation under the contract to report it to Community Services. Based on what staff have advised me, they did not do so. If indeed there was an incident that they were responsible for, the contractor also has a legal obligation — as does anyone who has violated the *Environment Act* or environmental health act — to inform the appropriate regulatory authorities and to take such action as they direct, pursuant to their lawful authority to protect the environment and public health.

Whoever is providing this information to the member should also be made aware of the fact that if they are aware of someone doing something that breaches the environmental health regulations or the drinking water regulations or the *Environment Act*, they should contact the appropriate regulatory authorities rather than simply providing the information to someone to bring up and ask in the House. Of course, everyone is free to talk to their MLAs, and MLAs are free to ask such questions as they see fit in this Assembly. Again, I want to reiterate the fact that anyone — particularly

someone in a position of authority or responsibility — who is aware of a breach of the environmental health regulations or a breach of the *Environment Act* should look very carefully at what their legal obligations are under Yukon law and should understand that they probably have a legal duty to report such an incident.

Even if they don't have a legal duty, I would contend that a citizen who was aware of an action, such as a spill of diesel fuel, that the person believes could potentially pose a threat to drinking water has a moral duty to contact the appropriate regulatory authorities and advise them of this risk so they can ensure appropriate action is taken.

On the specific incident that the member alleges has occurred, staff has assured me they have no knowledge of such a fuel spill occurring. I am not aware of something occurring. I cannot confirm or deny the existence of actions or incidents of which I have no knowledge.

In conclusion, I would encourage the member to tell whoever brought him this information that their first step upon becoming aware of this situation should have been to pick up the phone or send an e-mail to both Environmental Health and to the Department of Environment so they could be made aware of this situation which, based on the member's description, poses some potential for threatening the safety of a water supply.

As far as the South Yukon Forest Products question, as the member may be aware, there's a matter that has been before the courts. I'm not quite clear of the status of which matters are in front of the courts, so the member will understand that I follow a long-standing ministerial practice of not responding to matters that are in front of the courts at this point in time. If there is additional information that we can provide the member that is not part of those matters related to ongoing legal action, then we'll do so at a later date.

I'm going to check what is legally appropriate for me to get into before I respond specifically to the member's question or make a commitment to share matters that may not be appropriate for a minister to do.

Mr. Silver: I understand that if something is before the court, we can't speak about it here, but there are lots of questions on this particular issue.

The territorial government had set the same land aside for use by the town for expansion of its landfill, but the town had been evaluating this as being contaminated, as articulated on its own correspondence. There are more questions of that — why would the government offer this land if it knew it was contaminated? I would regress if the minister is not allowed to speak to this.

I find it interesting that the minister is surprised that I have a writing team. He keeps on saying that I am a team of one. I wonder which one — anyway. We'll just let that go.

I will say that these concerns did come to me from the Town of Watson Lake, and these questions are from concerned citizens — even if the Minister for Environment wants to heckle that, then that's fine. He can bring up those questions and those heckles to the good people of the Town of Watson Lake who are bringing forth these concerns.

When we talk about stewards of the environment, I would assume that in a situation where the lead on the particular work project is that of the territorial government, there should be some responsibility there within to make sure that things are done properly.

I'm going to move on to water bleeding. For more than three years now, Property Management in Watson Lake has continued to bleed its water lines in the visitor information centre for six months a year. They have been advised that this is against town bylaw and they have further been advised that responsibility of this service line — up to the town mains — rests with the property owner. The town believes that the line does not have a heat trace, thus the requirement to bleed in the winter, but that is actually immaterial to this argument. The town bylaw says, "don't bleed," so don't bleed.

The government informed the town that they were prepared to contest the town's bylaw in court. The Government of Yukon has spent in excess of \$1.6 million, as the minister relayed earlier, on replacing the water and sewer lines in Watson Lake. We expect they will spend an additional \$4 million to \$5 million on water treatment plants perhaps as soon as next year.

The contradiction lies with the government, which is wasting an estimated 9,000 to 12,000 cubic centimetres of water a month with this process of bleeding when they are told by the municipal bylaws that they should not, for such an extended period of time.

Madam Chair, why is the government ignoring this municipal bylaw?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It was interesting to hear — the Member for Klondike appears to be indicating in his remarks that these questions are coming from the Town of Watson Lake. If indeed they are coming from the municipality, from the mayor, from council, from administrators —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Mr. Silver: Madam Chair, the member opposite — "19(g) imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." I would encourage him to listen to what I'm saying. I did not say that this was coming from the municipality of Watson Lake; I said this was coming from concerned citizens of Watson Lake. He can make his own assessments.

Chairs ruling

Chair: There is no point of order. Members are expressing their own opinions.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you Madam Chair. I wasn't attempting to put words in the Member for Klondike's mouth; that is what I had understood from the way he had phrased his remarks previously.

Again, specifically if any of these concerns come from town council, the mayor or staff, they are certainly of course welcome to — and have the right — to talk to the Member for Klondike if they wish to do so. But if they actually want to

work together collaboratively and resolve situations, then I would encourage and welcome them to pick up the phone and contact me, or write me a letter if there is a matter that they wish to discuss. My door is open, and I am more than willing to discuss their situations. It is much easier to have governments working together collaboratively if they contact each other regarding their issues, rather than passing those issues through others who may or may not understand the issues and short-circuit the communication.

With regard to the specific situation the member just raised about the visitor information centre, my understanding is that it's not a Community Services building, so the member might want to actually raise the issue with the building owner.

My understanding is that it may be something that the Minister of Highways and Public Works might have information about. I believe that building is likely managed by Property Management and the member could certainly ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works that question in debate on Highways and Public Works if he actually would expedite debate, rather than bringing forward rumour and innuendo to the House and rather than proceeding in a more constructive manner.

Mr. Barr: I would at this time maybe go back to the issue of the Ross River bridge. Understanding that the peer review has been completed, I would request a copy of the review from the minister opposite. Would that be possible?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I don't have a copy of it for tabling here that I can provide for the member immediately, but we have shared the peer review with the community. I believe we've made it available to the media. I've just been advised by one of my staff here with me today that in fact that peer review is on the Department of Community Services website as of course are the videos from the inspection of the towers. The member could view that on-line. If he would like us to additionally provide him with a paper copy of that peer review done by Dr. Ellis of Stantec, we would be more than happy to do so. I'm assuming that the member will be satisfied with checking out the website. Again, if he would like a paper copy, I'd be more than happy to send him one.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I would receive a paper copy and I'll look on-line.

I would also like to ask about the water supply system in Old Crow that was completed. Have there been local people trained now who are in place? When I was there in the fall, there hadn't been local people trained to operate the system and I'd just like an update on that.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will answer the member's last question first. As far as the water treatment centre in Old Crow, we're currently arranging training. I believe some has already occurred. Steps are being taken to train people in the community to operate the plant. As the member I think would probably be aware, one of the challenges currently occurring is as a result of the increased standards around the operation of water treatment plants. We have increased requirement for training and certification that also makes it harder to find people who are able to run it and requires us to support training of people as well.

The commissioning period of Old Crow's new water treatment plant was successfully completed on February 21, 2013. A list of minor seasonal deficiencies is now complete. Initial training was provided during the commission period by Yukon College's water systems instructor for two operatives who live in Old Crow. Yukon College sent an instructor for a second week training session scheduled in mid-March.

There were issues at that point, as far as getting people certified and passing the exam. As I noted to the member, steps are being taken to provide training for community residents able to run the program.

I'm sorry, Madam Chair — the member asked another question and, in checking with officials on the other one he asked, I missed what the member's question was.

Mr. Barr: I'll pose another question. The other question wasn't a question; it was a statement. We would be happy to also receive a hard copy of the peer review.

I would ask the minister opposite, what is happening in the interim to operate the water treatment supply system in Old Crow?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: My understanding is that the requirement for new treatment was related to the arsenic standard change, and that currently it is bypassing the new filters until there is somebody who is capable of operating it. The history at Old Crow is, if memory serves, that on a seasonal basis, Old Crow was, during certain months, exceeding the cumulative arsenic standard but was not exceeding the cumulative standard most of the time. My understanding is that it's still deemed safe to drink, but we are treating it as a priority to ensure that people are trained to operate the water treatment facility in a fully functional manner in the community of Old Crow.

It's my understanding that it is meeting all testing standards. It's being chlorinated currently, and the water is safe to drink there. There are no current issues but, again, it was related to the periodic issues on a seasonal basis where the arsenic standard was being exceeded that we felt it necessary to construct the new treatment portion of the plant.

I hope that has addressed the member's question.

Mr. Tredger: I welcome the officials back to the Legislature and I wish them an enjoyable afternoon.

I have a couple of questions for the minister about Keno and specifically about Dr. Hanley's — the chief medical officer of health — impact assessment. In it, he says that the health impact assessment identifies gaps in knowledge and provides the Yukon government with recommendations to address resident concerns and reduce the occurrence of potential for future adverse health impacts.

I was pleased to hear the minister's interest in water and providing clean and safe drinking water to Yukon citizens and the amount of investment that we as Yukoners have made in that. I think that is indeed something that Yukon can be proud of.

Dr. Hanley did have a recommendation for the Yukon government: "...in consultation with the Keno community should continue to develop a comprehensive water management strategy that will: identify a single source of

water for the community and one backup source; provide for active monitoring of any well sources with public reporting of both the data and descriptive interpretation of results occurring at a minimum of once every three months throughout the duration of underground mining at Onek occurring at a minimum of once every three months or when there is surface disruption in the immediate vicinity of Keno City; actively discourage use of any other well, public or private, in the community; and discourage the use of collected surface water for watering gardens or for human use.”

Has the minister instructed the Department of Community Services to conduct such a water strategy process and has that been reported to the people of Keno? Could I get a copy of the water management strategy?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I think the member is aware that most of the issues to which he is referring are the responsibilities of either Health and Social Services or — in the case of environmental health matters — Dr. Hanley as chief medical officer, which is a Cabinet appointment. He replaced Dr. Larke, and I believe he has been in that role since about 2007, if memory serves.

I know I was Health and Social Services Minister when he was appointed to that role, and we certainly appreciate his work in that area and his advice.

In that situation, as far as the Keno community, first of all, contextually it’s important to note that a number of the potential issues in the area relate to historic mining activities conducted primarily by United Keno Hill mine. One of the benefits that the community has seen from Alexco’s operations — I know they’ve had concerns with them — but one of the benefits seen by the community of Keno from having an active company in that area is that issues and environmental liabilities of a historical nature — from the over 100 years of mining in the Keno area — had previously been simply sitting there and nobody was doing that much to look at them. As the result of the unique arrangement that company fulfills, as a result of their requirement to do remediation work of previous environmental liabilities — under contract to the federal government for that work — both from that work and from testing and baseline data gathering — which has been required to help them in permitting new mining activities in the area — it has provided significantly more baseline data about water, including the historical issues potentially related to the Onek adit, and there have been monitoring wells around the area that are being sampled.

My understanding is that there have not been any issues found and that monitoring is continuing, as required under the water licence. Certainly if issues are discovered, they will be addressed. Competent staff will take appropriate action and make me aware any issues that require my attention.

I would note as well that, as far as the water services in Keno, the population of Keno is typically approximately 20 individuals and the per capita operating cost to provide them with water delivery is indeed quite high — higher per capita than in any other Yukon community.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer. All the more reason to develop a water strategy, as Dr. Hanley suggested.

My question was, is there a water strategy in place? Is Community Services a part of that? And has that been communicated to the residents of Keno so that they can be assured, in writing, that there is a plan, there is a strategy and that there is a way of communicating to them that the water they’re drinking — now and in the future — is and will be safe?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I think the Member for Mayo-Tatchun is confusing the territorial water strategy work that is being done and led by the Department of Environment, with the involvement of the Department of Community Services and others. That is related primarily to an initiative that recognizes the importance of water for various purposes, including environmental health and public health, as well as drinking water.

Community Services’ role primarily relates to when issues going on in the environment generally could potentially pose a negative effect on drinking water supply. We of course will continue to be engaged in that work, being led by the good work of my colleague, the Minister of Environment, and his department.

As far as the issues related specifically to Keno, I believe without having looked at Dr. Hanley’s recommendations for awhile, I believe those related primarily to the management of any water that might potentially be contaminated within the area, and anything that could potentially pose a source of contamination for any drinking water supplies in Keno.

The Onek adit was a potential source for contamination and that was a historic liability left by United Keno Hill Mines. There are steps that Alexco has been required to take in, accordance with their water licence and as a result of the input from various stakeholders and government agencies during their permitting through the YESAB process.

I don’t have in front of me the details on the number of monitoring wells that were in place or when they are being tested. That is information that is something that is important and we do have some details on that. I believe I have previously shared some of those details with the members in the House. We will continue to recognize the importance of ensuring that government is taking steps to manage its facilities appropriately, but the reclamation and remediation responsibilities, as well as some of the responsibilities related to the treatment of potentially contaminated water from the historic mining liabilities in the area of Keno, are ones that Alexco has some specific responsibilities related to. While Community Services would not be directly involved in that, it would be the Department of Environment and Compliance Monitoring and Inspections the new name of the branch within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — whose competent staff are tasked with ensuring that mines comply with the terms of both their quartz mining licences and their water licence.

Mr. Tredger: I was speaking of domestic water use and drinking water. The minister’s answer leads me to

understand a little bit better the concerns and the frustration of rural residents. When they come into Whitehorse and they go to one department, they're sent to another, they're sent to another; when they're talking about water, they're sent to Environment. We're seeing the same thing in the Legislature here when we ask a question. One minister either says, that was before his time, or you should ask another minister — oh, I'm sorry, we have passed that in the debate.

The concern — and I believe the Yukon Party government has claimed to be addressing it — is that we tend to get into silos where there is no cross-reference. I was of the understanding that there was an interdepartmental working group that included all of the relevant ministers. I'm sure it would include the Minister of Community Services and that interdepartmental working group was looking at Keno as a whole. It's very frustrating for residents to be sent from one place to another when they come to town.

I was talking about drinking water. I'll leave it at that. I would encourage the minister, from the top down, to try not to put everything into a silo or into a particular department. People would like to be able to work with the government in a wholesome and full manner, rather than be sent into little boxes.

Another recommendation had to do with medical responses and emergency responses. Dr. Hanley — and I'll quote: "It is essential for Alexco and other regional mining operators to establish and maintain updated emergency and disaster response plans that are coordinated with local emergency responders."

I believe that the Minister of Community Services is responsible for local emergency responders, so I assume this would be in his department although I could be told that I'm wrong again. Could the minister inform me and the residents of Keno whether in fact there are emergency and disaster response plans? Who is coordinating it and who are they to turn to for a copy of those plans?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Especially in keeping with the Christmas season, I don't wish to get into too much of an argument with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, but I would point out that it was interesting hearing the member urge us not to have things in silos and to have responsibility in one place. I would remind the members that they were critical of steps we've taken to streamline government responsibilities to ensure that the approach of things, including one mine and one inspector, which is intended, contrary to what the members seem to believe, to make it clear who is responsible for all aspects pertaining to ensuring that a mine complies with their requirements under both the *Quartz Mining Act* and the water licence.

This is rather than risking a situation where two different inspectors in two different agencies don't communicate as well as they potentially should, or they give contrary direction, which in the end potentially result in a gap in the system where everyone points the finger at someone else. We've move to a one mine and one inspector approach, which is aimed at improving that clarity of who maintains responsibility and what they need to do, so that they are

responsible for ensuring that full compliance is achieved in all areas. As well, I would remind the member that yesterday we saw the unfortunate situation where the member was taking issue with an initiative that was aimed at reducing red tape.

Through the good work of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, we have seen a streamlining of the red tape that citizens would face with an issue that's been — for my constituents and other rural Yukoners who have to apply for rezoning, government took proactive action, recognizing that rather than having Cabinet review every single rezoning application, that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is perfectly capable of dealing with that without requiring an order-in-council to be drafted in both official languages by Justice and reviewed through Executive Council Office and so on and so forth. This had resulted in a situation that for many years, including under governments of both NDP and Liberal stripes, it typically took a year and a half for a citizen applying for a simple rezoning, even if they had the full support of all of their neighbours for their application, to get through that process.

We've taken a step where all of those minor rezoning amendments now will go simply to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and are expected to be dealt within four months, rather than 17 months after public review, which had previously occurred. In the past, it had in fact been worse than a year and a half. So again, when we take proactive steps to improve services to Yukon citizens, the members unfortunately take issue with them and try to paint them as being somehow negative. I certainly do not envy the NDP their world view, because it is a very negative one that never seems to see the sunshine.

Madam Chair, moving to Keno specifically, no, there is not a ministerial working group that relates to it. There is, I believe, an interdepartmental working group that shares information between government departments related to the health and safety of the Keno area. Again, the primary responsibilities related to testing and monitoring are not the responsibility of the Department of Community Services, so I do not have all of that information at my fingertips. As I reminded the member, I have in fact previously shared specific information with him in this House when I was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, including about ongoing testing related to ensuring the protection of water for the people of Keno and the testing of the previous environmental liabilities that were inherited by Alexco from United Keno Hill. In fact, that information is something that is not at my fingertips at this point in time.

Questions about that, the member may wish to direct to the Minister of Mines Energy and Resources or the Minister of Environment by way of letter. I am sure they would be happy to share any pertinent information with him to address concerns of his constituents.

The member is referring to not setting up things in little boxes. I point out to members that we do have a number of government departments that have responsibilities that in some cases overlap. In other cases, in specific situations, while the member might view that a specific responsibility

should be housed within a different department, government doesn't deal with each issue by deciding to restructure government. When and if changes are made to government structures, they are done with careful thought and on the basis of having it deemed that a service can be improved, while recognizing the effect that such changes can have on the flow of service delivery.

The departments work together and we work together as ministers, but when something is primarily the responsibility of another minister, I am going to refer those questions to those other ministers.

As far as the emergency preparedness question the member asked is concerned, the Protective Services division in Community Services includes the Emergency Measures Organization; Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal's Office, Wildland Fire Management, building safety and standards and the animal protection officer.

The Emergency Measures Organization manages the Yukon government emergency coordination plan, a living document that sets out the coordinated actions and responsibilities of Yukon government departments and agencies in preparing for and responding to disasters or emergency events throughout the territory.

While Yukoners are well-served by those measures — including the private sector, which is able to provide essential goods and services in times of need — it should always be remembered that personal emergency preparedness is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility. That's why all Yukoners should know their household and work site risks, have a family emergency plan and be prepared to be self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours.

Madam Chair, I would note with regard to the community of Keno, we certainly do appreciate — as we do with every Yukoner, wherever they live — the importance of those citizens and taking reasonable steps to address their needs. The member should also be aware — as those citizens should be — that there are not going to be the same level of services in tiny rural communities as there are within the City of Whitehorse or within larger municipalities. There is simply a factor of resources. In rural areas, we do have challenges, as well, with the availability of volunteers and, in some cases, in specific roles, government departments can face challenges with even hiring staff, such as social workers, which has been a challenge at some point in the past in certain rural communities.

The reality is — and I say this as someone who lives outside a municipality and has spent — well, I guess, actually, with the exception of a handful of months, all of my life living outside a municipality. Being 45 minutes, roughly speaking, away from Whitehorse, those services that are available to rural Yukon communities and to those of us who live outside communities are simply not going to be to the same standard as they are in downtown Whitehorse or if you're five minutes away from the ambulance station. That is simply a reality that all of us face in choosing where we live in the Yukon.

Those of us who choose to live in remote locations are going to find that it does, sometimes, take longer for

emergency responders to arrive. In the case of emergency events and coordination, government agencies, no matter how hard they work and no matter how hard other partners — such as the RCMP, Search and Rescue and so on — work, it will take more time to address the issues of those citizens.

As I would point out, as the member may recall with events, such as flooding incidents — most notably the Marsh Lake flooding in 2007 — the Yukon government stepped in and, including cases such as that and flooding in Liard, as well as Ross River and Rock Creek, that staff of Wildland Fire Management have stepped into areas that government is not legally responsible for but, because our belief that, if there are government agencies that are available to assist Yukoners in a time of crisis, we should respond in an appropriate, commonsense manner to help them with responding to those emergencies. That's what we've done and that's what we will continue to do.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer. There is no doubt that the residents of Keno are independent and self-sufficient and are used to living on their own. There is also no doubt that there is a need for a disaster and emergency plan. My question was, has an emergency and a disaster response plan been updated and coordinated with emergency responders for the City of Keno? Has that plan been transmitted or developed in conjunction with the residents, and has it been made transparent? Is there access to it and can I get a copy so that I can share with the residents next time I'm there?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I don't believe such a specific plan does exist. I can look into that but, again, as I would point out to the member, one of the challenges that we face, even when planning work is done in rural communities, is that for those areas that are most remote, the availability of staff and the availability of volunteers will affect the response plan. A lot of time and effort can be invested in something that can be changed by a relatively small changeover in the population in the area and in the availability of volunteers. In responding to disasters, emergency events, search and rescue situations and so on, the RCMP is also an important partner to us in dealing with those responses.

I don't mean to be unappreciative of concerns that the member may have heard from the residents of Keno, but there is the simple reality that small, remote communities are more challenging to serve. They are further away from the agencies and organizations set up to serve them. Even when planning work occurs, they are much more susceptible to a changeover in availability of residents and availability of staff in the area. They are much more susceptible to the plans having to be thrown out and starting at square one to address an event.

Much as events like Operation Nanook provide us with a very useful context to be able to understand how to respond to those types of incidents, one of the most important things they do is they help staff and various partner agencies understand and think about and have practice how to respond together to unexpected events. Emergencies — by their nature — are often unexpected and unpredictable. So while planning can be done, there can also be a massive amount of government

resources and time by others spent in preparing large reams of documents that are of very little use during an emergency situation. We have to determine where planning is useful and what level of planning is useful.

I can tell the member that our priorities are — we are going to place higher on our priority list than in preparing specific plans and documents, like the member refers to — we are going to continue to invest in equipment, training and in infrastructure. We are going to continue to focus on integration and coordination among the territory's emergency response agencies to bolster their preventive and response capacities.

One of things I've done, as I said earlier in this House, is that this fall, after my first opportunity to meet with the supervisors of our rural emergency medical units, was to direct staff to increase what we were doing to make training available for our rural ambulance volunteers. I recognize the important role they play.

We have, as I have mentioned in this House, significantly invested in expanding the supports through the Fire Marshal's Office, an increase of \$1.9 million annually to the budget for protective services as well as a \$750,000 mobile fire training unit, which staff have had out in most if not all Yukon communities at this point to help train both our volunteer firefighters as well as those employed by municipalities or who are volunteers from municipalities.

We are going to continue to focus on that training. The member may not like the answer, but I can tell the member that when it comes down to choosing whether our focus will be training for our volunteers and equipment for our volunteers, or hiring consultants, we are going to spend the money on our volunteers, on their equipment and on their training.

Mr. Tredger: Keno is a small, remote community, as the minister said. It's also a small, remote community with a major industrial complex on their doorstep — a complex and an industry that all of Yukon is benefitting from. The fact that a plan should be in place was not my suggestion.

It was made by the chief medical officer as a suggestion to the Government of Yukon as he was asked to go in and point out gaps in the delivery of service. He suggested that a plan be put in place.

I'll go on to my next question and it may lead into one of the reasons why the minister is having difficulty there.

Although a number of stressors can be mitigated or minimized through collaboration among industry, the Yukon government and Keno residents, the lack of a governance structure or organized representation within the community poses significant challenges in terms of developing a strategy that responds to a unified community vision. When I raised this issue in Question Period, the minister responded: "Certainly, citizens across the territory in any community who wish to form a local advisory council, if the community is of sufficient size, have the ability to make an application pursuant to the *Municipal Act* through the form of a petition and it will be considered once we have received it."

My concern with the minister's answer is, first of all, I'm not sure and nor did I suggest that a local advisory council was the solution. What I do point out is that the lack of an organized governance structure to speak for and with the citizens of a community leaves a void so that when we are trying to develop plans, when we are trying to communicate and work with the community there's an absence of that.

My question for the minister is this: has the minister directed his staff to work with the residents of Keno to come up with workable options that would indeed give them a governance structure or organized representation within the community so that various departments and personnel, including the industry, can work with them?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the member's impassioned representation of the community of Keno, but I do have to remind the member that we are talking about a community that is roughly 20 people. They are not going to have the same level of services as in other areas.

I would also point out that the member is getting quite irate about areas that he sees as the Yukon government's responsibility but that, in fact, primarily relate to responsibilities of Alexco in the area related to managing a safe work site and ensuring that they have the appropriate systems in place as required under Occupational Health and Safety regulations to address those potential industrial accidents — this seems to be the member's focus.

I know the member is quite angry — that he thinks the Yukon government should have done more in this situation — but the member is referring to specific responsibilities that primarily are those of a company and not that of Community Services or the Yukon government.

I would point out to the member that the details of Alexco's requirements under Occupational Health and Safety, the details of their plans for addressing potential workplace accidents, are set out under Occupational Health and Safety, and the Yukon Workers Health and Safety Board and their staff are the ones who oversee the enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety regulations. There are first aid regulations under Occupational Health and Safety regulations that also relate to the legal requirement for large, industrial employers like Alexco to have certain medical personnel and people with appropriate training to be on hand, and those regulations as well as the orders set out by Occupational Health and Safety staff are the ones that specify what needs to be in place for emergency response.

If the member would refer to the regulations that are on-line, the member will see that, under the first aid regulations, it gets into specific details about the type of training and the type of certification that is required for specific types of sites, especially remote sites, which it makes specific recognition of.

The member can again be angry all he wants at the Yukon government in this area, but I would direct him to the Occupational Health and Safety regulations, the details of what is available about company response plans — those would be filed with Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. I'm not sure to what extent those would be publicly available or considered protected information of a

company under ATIPP, but I would encourage the member to direct his inquiry to the appropriate place, which is with the agency that would have those documents filed with them. It is not the Department of Community Services.

There are specific types of training, specific hazard training and equipment that are required by large employers. Those are intended — by virtue of the regulations and instructions from Occupational Health and Safety staff — to ensure safe workplaces and ensure that the appropriate first-aid personnel are available for any potential incidents that are likely to occur on a workplace of that specific type.

The work that is done by Protective Services provides an important service to Yukon and to Yukon communities. Since 2008, all Yukon emergency management and first-response agencies have been integrated into the Protective Services division of the Department of Community Services. They include Emergency Measures Organization, Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Marshal's Office and Wildland Fire Management.

In spring 2013, oversight of the Building Safety branch and the Animal Welfare program were also transferred to this branch and into the Fire Marshal's Office.

Protective Services' operation and maintenance budget for 2013-14 is \$26.4 million and the current capital budget is \$6.8 million. The Yukon government's priority is safer, less vulnerable communities while sustaining key government programs and services.

As I have noted to the member before, rural communities and rural residents, including myself as a rural resident, do not have as quick access to emergency services, including ambulance services, and it is simply not realistic to expect that the Yukon government or volunteers will be able to be everywhere, all the time, no matter how remote the area. Our staff do their very best to ensure their availability. The volunteers on whom we depend for their services in rural communities include both Emergency Medical Services' staff, the ambulance crews and the volunteer firefighters. We depend on these people and very much appreciate the service that they provide to Yukon and to their communities.

The Yukon government continues to work with various partners and citizens to provide these supports for Yukon residents by ensuring that emergency management life safety and first-response programs are always in a state of readiness. Protective Services delivers its emergency response programs through a combination of highly experienced, permanent and seasonal staff as well as through committed and skilled volunteer emergency responders, particularly in rural communities.

Besides Wildland Fire Management, Protective Services' emergency response capability in rural Yukon relies mainly on volunteers.

Across the Yukon, there are approximately 155 Emergency Medical Services volunteers in 15 rural communities, 225 active volunteer firefighters overseen by 16 district fire chiefs in rural Yukon, and 130 ground search and rescue volunteers in seven communities.

It is important to note that emergency response is a shared responsibility. While Protective Services provides emergency response volunteers with training and equipment to help them respond safely and effectively, the communities they serve are responsible for recruiting and supporting them. I would point out that particularly in areas such as search and rescue, there is a multi-agency response that is involved and those responsibilities are shared with the RCMP and with municipalities.

In addition to supporting Yukon's emergency first-response organizations, Protective Services also coordinates resources to support initiatives such as this summer's emergency management exercise known as Operation Nanook. In August 2013, Protective Services successfully led the Yukon government's involvement in Operation Nanook 13, which is the largest Canadian Armed Forces exercise in the North, which occurs on an annual basis.

The government also worked closely with local, national and international partners to test a whole of government emergency response coordination through live, simulated emergency exercises, including a large-scale wildfire, mock-casualty events and a mock bio-hazard.

The Yukon exercise involved approximately 550 members of the military, five Yukon government departments, the City of Whitehorse, Whitehorse General Hospital, Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board — because as I just finished pointing out to the member, they have responsibilities around safe work sites. As well, Public Safety Canada was involved and other federal government representatives as well as the State of Alaska, and the Province of Alberta also participated in the Operation Nanook exercise.

The scenario underlining the multi-partner operations was a wildfire that started south of Whitehorse and quickly overwhelmed Yukon resources, much like the event that occurred in Slave Lake, Alberta, in 2011. The scenario provided an opportunity for the military, as part of its overall training objectives and in response to a Yukon government request, to test its capacity to provide assistance to disaster-relief operations in the territory.

Again, I would point out to members that in the event of a serious emergency event, or a large-scale one, the Yukon would likely call on multi-agency support, which could include the Canadian military in certain situations. It would also — in the case of things such as a wildfire — certainly involve us invoking our mutual aid agreements with other provinces, territories and U.S. states.

I would point out to members as well that Wildland Fire Management, on an annual basis — typically we're either receiving support from one of our partners in our mutual aid agreement, providing support or, in some years, doing both. This year, I believe we invoked mutual aid agreements that received support from provinces and then later, at the end of our fire season, staff were deployed to, I believe, Idaho to provide them with support in responding to a wildfire situation in that state.

So, again, this is something that is done not only by territories and certainly not only by the Yukon, but is done by states and provinces because we all have limited financial resources and limited staff resources, and we can easily, due to emergency events, face situations where we call on partners.

Those mutual aid agreements have served the test of time as being a very valuable tool for territories, provinces and states in responding to wildfire situations and supporting each other in dealing with those challenges.

Participating in Operation Nanook 13 was an invaluable experience and we now have the opportunity to analyze and learn from the experience, which will help strengthen Yukon's emergency response capacity and response. Operation Nanook and other opportunities to prepare for natural- and human-caused disasters are very important.

Yukon is committed to constant and continuous improvement in emergency management. Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization, commonly known as EMO, is empowered to draw together the resources and expertise required, whether it is in the Yukon from other Canadian areas or in the United States, so that emergency incident management teams can respond effectively to emergency events.

EMO focusses on the four key emergency management components: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. In 2013, the O&M budget for EMO was \$625,000 and the capital budget was \$13,000. EMO is responsible for ensuring the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and for providing a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government's area of responsibility. EMO leads emergency preparedness planning for Yukon government. Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own plans and progress is being made on the rest.

EMO has been engaged in a multi-year initiative through the Land Claims and Implementation Secretariat's implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness planning by First Nation governments and communities. EMO is responsible for supporting Yukon's ground and inland water search and rescue teams, so they have both the training and equipment to respond to a search with the RCMP.

The RCMP is the agency responsible for actually tasking and ordering ground searches.

In 2011, EMO launched a \$492,000 three-year review of the territory's ground search and rescue program — federal agency funding to update the program's capacity and capability by means of updated and new safety and standard operating procedures; an incident management program to better track personnel, their training and assigned equipment; a dedicated ground search and rescue volunteer website that provides information for current and new volunteers; and also providing reduced administrative burdens for volunteers.

One of the things that I've enjoyed since taking on the responsibilities as Minister of Community Services is sitting down with our volunteers and others in partner agencies to talk about their perspective on things. I had the opportunity, as

I mentioned, to visit all of Yukon's incorporated communities and a number of the unincorporated ones to view equipment, including firefighting equipment and ambulance equipment and to talk to them — by "them," I mean the volunteers and of course, fire chiefs and ambulance supervisors, as well as mayors and council members — about their needs, their challenges and their perspective on priorities for working together to improve the services we're providing to Yukon citizens in Yukon communities.

I'm disappointed the member actually hasn't asked about — considering he's the Member for Mayo-Tatchun — the investments we've done to support the Village of Mayo and to address the flooding situation there.

Emergency medical organizations, as well as the Infrastructure branch, have been involved in mitigation work in Mayo in response to serious winter ice flooding and EMO has managed funds to protect the community of Mayo from the winter threat.

As well, this year, we took steps in recognition that the rise in water was something that was becoming an annual event. We made the case to the Water Board and to Fisheries and Oceans that we needed to open up the diversion channels in the Mayo River earlier than has occurred before. In the past, it has been treated purely as an emergency response and, while it was previously treated as an unanticipated event, this year we assumed it would occur again and have taken the steps to get the approval to open up those channels early.

The resources are in place and there have been some challenges, including ice jams within the diversion channels, which has been typical of what's happened in previous years. We believe that in taking the proactive step to open up those diversion channels earlier rather than once the problem is already occurring, we would reduce some of the risk that occurs — potential issues are around getting equipment at sometimes very cold temperatures operating right in and on the edge of a river to remove the barricades in the diversion channels. We felt that it would be more appropriate to remove those rocks and open the diversion channels earlier when it was not as cold and there was less risk of a potential incident related to freezing or other challenges around working in the water during extremely cold weather.

As the member may or may not be aware, one of the technical challenges that can come into place with heavy equipment at extremely cold temperatures is that hoses, seals and other things that are made of rubber and plastic are more likely to break during extremely cold weather than they are at plus 20 degrees or even at temperatures just below freezing. That is why that we felt that that would be a prudent step to reduce the risk of incidents occurring in the winter while opening up those channels. Steps have been taken and steps are currently underway. This is the fourth year Community Services has taken action to deal with flooding in Mayo. A little more than \$200,000 per year has typically been spent on our flood response, with most of that money going to local contractors. This year Community Services — I believe that the opening of the diversion channel would likely result in less flooding.

We have had some challenges this year that include the Stewart River. It seems to be higher than it has been in previous years. Groundwater is being experienced in places that were not seen until close to the end of the season in previous years. So staff is taking steps, and we are in the process right now of acquiring additional baseline data information to help us understand the behaviour of the river and what steps we need to take to achieve a permanent solution.

We also have to thank the Minister of Environment and his staff. The Yukon government's senior hydrologist has also been of extremely valuable assistance to us in addressing the situation in Mayo.

Madam Chair, I hope that information is of interest to the member. I'm surprised he didn't ask about this important issue affecting one of the communities he represents.

Mr. Tredger: I hesitate to ask another question. I thank the minister for his answers to my questions on Keno.

When I look at the health impact assessment, the purpose of the health impact assessment — and this was asked for by the Yukon government — "... was to describe the potential beneficial and adverse health impacts for Keno City residents that could arise from historic, current and proposed mining operations."

As I mentioned at the beginning of my questions on Keno, the health impact assessment identifies gaps in knowledge and provides the Yukon government with recommendations to address resident concerns and reduce the potential for future adverse health impacts to occur.

I'm just waiting to see if the minister is listening.

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. I would like to remind the member that you are speaking to and through the Chair. Mr. Tredger, you have the floor.

Mr. Tredger: It has been a year a half and I realize, as the minister said, that the residents of Keno are small in number and it's a remote community, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't pay attention to them. That doesn't mean they don't have valid concerns. The minister characterized me as angry. I am a bit angry and I am a bit frustrated, and I am very disappointed that the minister would consider them too small, too remote and too distant.

Dr. Hanley, the chief medical officer, made some recommendations to the government. My questions were merely to follow up to determine if these were being taken seriously, if there were concerns, so that I could work with the citizens of Keno and with the government to ensure that some of those recommendations are put in place.

They are not asking for special privileges; they are not asking for more than anybody else is. As I mentioned earlier, they are an independent people, they are resourceful, and they are used to making do on their own, but they do have a large industrial complex living on their doorstep.

I am disappointed in the lack of leadership being shown. To suggest that they are responsible — they are, in many ways, but it's a shared responsibility. I don't have any further

questions for the minister. I do ask him to take the health impact assessment seriously, to take the people of Keno City seriously. They do have some valid concerns.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's really unfortunate that the member — I know he doesn't quite understand some of the key elements here. I know he's passionate about representing his constituents and, despite our differences of opinion, I do appreciate his passion for representing his constituents, but passion should not be at the expense of understanding the facts.

Contrary to the member's assertions, I am not indicating that the community is too small to care about. I am pointing out, and will continue to point out, that those of us who choose to live in rural areas or rural communities cannot expect the same level of service as the people of Whitehorse or other municipalities do, when they are in closer proximity to emergency response agencies and to services.

Contrary to the member's assertion that people are being self-sufficient and government is not helping them, Keno is the only community in the Yukon where citizens receive trucked water delivery for free, at significant cost to their fellow taxpayers. We recognize the importance of them receiving clean drinking water. I've pointed out to the member — though he either did not understand or did not like the answer or assumed that, because he didn't understand the answer, that it must be a non-answer. The member seemed to miss the fact that some of the monitoring and water testing work — to which he was referring — is work that Alexco is required to conduct under the terms of their water licence.

Now there are regulators and government staff who work on ensuring — and do ensure — that the company meets its obligations under that licence. However, that is not the Department of Community Services. I do not have at my fingertips the most recent information on the number of testing wells, how frequently tests are performed, specific details around water quality, et cetera, et cetera. That information should be available. Some of it — depending on who it was provided to — we'd have to check whether it's available through Client Services and Inspections or through the Water Board. Some of it I would suspect may even currently be available on-line, but we'd have to check exactly where it is. The point is that the information is available. It can be found for the residents of Keno if they have specific questions about it.

If the member would take an attitude of asking a question or contacting ministers outside of session — through letters or e-mails — asking for information and, if he doesn't know who to ask, one suggestion I would make to him is perhaps he should ask either someone in his office or a minister, "If it is not your department that is responsible for this, could you please tell me who would be responsible for it?"

Or the member might find, if he asks specific questions in the letter, even if he directs it to the wrong minister, he will probably find that the minister will either acquire the information and provide him with a response or redirect his inquiry to whoever can provide that information. I don't have

some of those specific details at my fingertips right now, so I can't get into a detailed response right now.

The Yukon government does support and continues to support the people of Keno. Again, although the member may not like the response, some of the specific information to which he is referring — and that includes both water-testing data and information about emergency response plans — relate primarily to responsibilities of a company.

I will reiterate to the member that large companies at worksites do have obligations under occupational health and safety, which typically include having a safety plan filed. That will typically include information that meets the satisfaction of occupational health and safety related to how they would respond to emergency incidents. That goes from the very simple thing, like if the member were to tour a site such as, at Minto, the plant where they're processing the material from the Minto mine, there will be spots where you go through where you see eyewash stations or that have fire extinguishers or the requirement for safety glasses in certain areas.

Those are all things that are part of the company's obligations under Occupational Health and Safety and relate to their safety plan. While I don't have a copy with me of Alexco's safety plan, I am quite sure that they have one and I am quite sure that they have filed a safety plan that includes information about responding to emergencies with Occupational Health and Safety.

As I noted to the member before, if he wants specific information on that, he might wish to forward his inquiry to the minister responsible for Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety, and they can find out what of that information is publicly available or whether any of it is protected under the privacy provisions of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Any of the information related to that, which can be made publicly available, government will be quite happy to do what we can to ensure that the member and his constituents receive that information, if they wish to have it.

Again, I would encourage the member to pay a little more attention to the response and not assume that, if he didn't get the answer that he was expecting, that it means that government is choosing not respond. When I say, or when other ministers say, that is the responsibility of agency X or this department, the reason we say it is because it is a fact.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

We're going to move into line-by-line debate.

Mr. Barr: 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: Mr. Barr 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 \$10,383,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$4,267,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$14,650,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Chair: We're going to proceed to Yukon Housing Corporation. Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation. I believe this is the first time we've been into Yukon Housing Corporation. Mr. Cathers, please.

Yukon Housing Corporation

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'll make a few brief introductory remarks. As minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, it's my pleasure to rise today to introduce the 2013-14 supplementary budget for Yukon Housing Corporation. This budget contains a number of important additions to the capital and O&M that will assist Yukoners to address their specific housing needs.

I'd like to begin by providing members of this House with a progress report on Yukon Housing Corporation's activities and achievements since the spring sitting.

Earlier this year, Yukon Housing introduced the down payment assistance program to help qualifying Yukoners purchase their own homes. As of September 30, Yukon Housing had received 38 applications to the program and 23 applicants had been pre-approved to purchase their new homes.

The third Northern Housing Conference was convened in March. Over 250 attendees heard presentations from multiple speakers sharing success stories on overcoming a diversity of housing challenges. At the opening of the Northern Housing Conference, my predecessor as minister responsible for housing — the Member for Riverdale North — announced that the Yukon Housing Corporation would lead a team comprised of other governments and key stakeholders who would gather together to build a housing action plan for Yukon.

The Yukon government will lead the process through Yukon Housing Corporation and the departments of Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources and Health and Social Services. A number of community stakeholders will also participate and contribute to define and

create the housing action plan. I would note that the key part of this plan — as we indicated in the information pamphlets we made available to people at the conference as well as to Yukoners — is that building a housing action plan for Yukoners is all about building on the good work that has been done on the significant investments that have been made in social housing, in seniors housing and in supporting people in upgrading their own homes, to name but a few of these investments. It's all about building on that work and addressing the housing continuum. The housing continuum describes the spectrum of housing options typically available in many Canadian communities.

The continuum includes, on one end, home ownership; it includes private market rental, social housing, supportive housing, transition housing and emergency shelters. To speak specifically to some of the investments, the former 13-unit Alexander Street seniors residence was demolished in preparation for the new 34-unit seniors residence on the same property. I am pleased to report that construction is advancing on the new Alexander Street building on schedule.

While government has invested considerably since 2006 to construction new affordable social and seniors housing, there are still areas where additional work is needed and we recognize that, which is again why we are engaged with partners, including everyone from the representatives of the realtors and representatives of the major mining producers to a number of NGOs and other stakeholders who are participating both in the working groups as well as the community advisory committee, which will help us put together the good work done by the working groups and help us build the housing action plan that will help us identify short-term, medium-term, and long-term areas where steps can be taken to improve housing options.

It's important to note that this is not just about Yukon government's role, it's also about the role of others — private-sector and individuals, as well as NGOs in providing options and supports at the appropriate place.

As I have mentioned previously in this House, some of the steps that we are building on and including in the investments to the Yukon Housing include the good work done within the department of Health and Social Services, which includes the increase to funding for all three of Yukon's women's shelters, which has in fact occurred in previous years, and that has been a significant increase in funding for them.

It includes the investment in second-stage housing, including the Betty's Haven project, which was recently constructed, and it also includes second-stage housing in Watson Lake.

We will continue to build on the work and supports of various NGOs, including Options for Independence, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, the work of the Social Services branch in supporting Yukoners through programs such as the social assistance program as well as providing additional services and supports to those with disabilities.

The Yukon Housing Corporation recently issued a request for qualifications to participate in an upcoming request for

proposals to develop and operate affordable market rental accommodations. The intent is to leverage the remaining \$13 million for the northern housing trust fund to encourage private developers, NGOs and societies to consider new and affordable projects that will address identified housing needs through making available affordable rentals to address the pressure that is currently in place on that sector of the housing market.

The corporation issued the request for qualifications on October 23 with a submission deadline of November 19. While I note that the Official Opposition has been critical of this, as I reminded them, this is an initiative that has been applauded by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce. I would like to give credit and recognize the fact that, without the good work of staff of Yukon Housing Corporation as well as the board of directors of the corporation, we would not have seen this progress. I'd also like to recognize and acknowledge my predecessor, the Member for Riverdale North, for his good work on this initiative and many others within the Yukon Housing Corporation portfolio.

We are pleased with the response we have received and we look forward to entering the next stage, where the corporation will be evaluating those proposals prior to going out to the RFP stage. The submission deadline for the RFQ was December 10. The corporation provided more than 60 copies of the request for qualification documents to interested parties and received 22 submissions, of which 16 were from the Whitehorse area and six were from rural Yukon.

The response rate to our public process was higher than had been anticipated. We are hopeful that the review by staff will indicate a number of good and successful proposals and that interested parties will again participate in the request for proposals stage, once we reach that.

Madam Chair, here in Whitehorse, the Options for Independence housing project will be completed early in the new year, providing 14 new assisted-living accommodations for those living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. I should note the work we have done to support those living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder also includes significant supports that have been provided by the Department of Health and Social Services to FASSY, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, to support a number of their programs.

The government, during our time, has more than tripled the annual support provided to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, including picking up an area where the previous federal government, under Prime Minister Chrétien, had cut funding for FASSY. We stepped in and provided the support that they had cut.

Yukon Housing Corporation, in partnership with Community Services and Education, has launched a public awareness campaign to inform homeowners and the public about how to keep their home heating systems safe, efficient and reliable. Important information on carbon monoxide prevention and carbon monoxide alarms is also available to assist homeowners in understanding what they need to do to fulfill their personal responsibilities to keep their homes and families safe.

The Yukon Housing Corporation website was updated with a stronger focus on providing the information that the corporation is commonly contacted for and is aimed at being more user-friendly in providing information to Yukoners on those areas that they asked about most, including the loan programs and services, as well as information on the values and benefits of performing regular home maintenance, home heating safety, and information for new home builders and those seeking to renovate their homes to be more energy efficient, comfortable and maintain their value. That's just a sampling of the good work that is done by the corporation each and every day.

I would note, moving to a few specific details of the budget, that the supplementary budget includes an increase of \$1.279 million to the corporation's operation and maintenance budget. Those changes include \$207,000, required for collective agreement and managers salaries increase; \$30,000 that has been approved through revotes for completion of strategic planning, program reviews and training; \$120,000 for the oil-fired appliance public safety awareness advertising campaign; \$250,000 that has been reallocated, because rent supplement program expenditures previously netted by payments received from clients and private landlord units are now to be recognized in rental revenue; \$720,000 that has been allocated for payment of debentures; and the reduction of \$48,000 has occurred as a result of reduced interest expenses due to debenture payout.

With respect to the Yukon Housing Corporation's capital budget, there are numerous changes contained in the supplementary budget, and I'd like to take this opportunity to identify them to members of the Assembly. To begin, I'd like to focus on revotes in the corporation's capital budget. These include \$542,000 for the home repair program, which reflects 2012-13 commitments in place for approval and applications. Applicants now have one year to undertake repairs to their homes and the loans are budgeted as 95-percent recoverable.

\$30,000 is included for the home repair enhancement program, which reflects a commitment in place at the end of the previous year. Those funds are budgeted as fully recoverable. \$217,000 for the 2012-flood relief initiative reflects commitments that are in place, and \$155,000 of those funds are recoverable from Canada through the disaster financial assistance aid program.

We have also \$873,000 for mortgage financing loans against commitments in place as of March 31, 2013. These loans are also budgeted as fully recoverable. \$783,000 for home completion loans reflects commitments in place from last year. These loans are also booked as fully recoverable. \$435,000 for owner-build loans reflects commitments in place, and these loans are also fully recoverable.

There is \$281,000 for Options for Independence commitments made, but not fully advanced in 2013, with \$132,000 of that recoverable from Canada with the affordable housing initiative and \$149,000 from Options for Independence through a mortgage loan.

We have \$34,000 for rent or rehabilitation loans in place and these loans are fully recoverable and \$975,000 to the

affordable housing initiative reflects funds available from Canada through the agreement that were not advanced in 2013. We have \$32,000 for rental suite loans, reflecting commitments in place, and these loans are also fully recoverable. There is \$623,000 in a supplementary budget for the Whitehorse seniors housing project at 207 Alexander Street — approved, but not expended in 2012-13. These funds are also fully recoverable. There is \$663,000 for renovation and rehabilitation of existing stock, comprised of \$275,000 to the revote process and \$388,000 with new funding for tank and new furnace replacements throughout the Yukon.

In addition to the new funding I mentioned regarding tank and furnace replacement, there is one other allocation of new funds, which is \$225,000 for the Dawson City staff housing partnership, which is for the provision of staff housing units for Yukon government employees in the community of Dawson City. Board authority for corporations capital budget has increased by just over \$5 million, with the vast majority of these expenditures being revotes with associated recoveries.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the chair and board of the Yukon Housing Corporation for their commitment, dedication and focus on the housing needs of Yukoners. Through the development of a new protocol agreement and a new strategic plan, the corporation is focused on successful partnership programs and client-directed services.

I'd also like to acknowledge the efforts of our President Ms. Pam Hine as she builds a strong and effective management team to lead the corporation staff in working with the board and working with government to outline the objectives outlined in the corporations new five-year strategic plan.

With that, I will conclude my remarks.

Ms. White: Before I start, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the now Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for his good time as Minister of Yukon Housing Corporation. I hope that this new minister is as interested in getting along and working together. I'd like to thank the official for being here and for her always thorough briefings when we go through this. I'm going to start with a very easy first question in hopes that I have a similar answer in return.

Can the minister please tell me how many rural seniors are currently on the social housing waitlist?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: My understanding is that the current number is approximately 60.

Ms. White: For confirmation, that was 60? Thank you. And thank you for that very quick response.

In the *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act*, it requires that carbon monoxide detectors be in all dwelling units with fuel-burning appliances or attached garages. We believe that a top priority should be implementing regulations to make sure all oil-fired appliances in all Yukon buildings are installed and operated in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association fuel codes.

Where are we in the development of the regulations and when will we see them?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will not ask the member to refer her questions to the Minister of Community Services, although this is actually a Community Services' responsibility in developing that.

Those regulations are currently in the drafting stage. There are some details related to it that required work, based on reflecting what we believe is necessary in the regulations, as well as taking into account what we heard through the consultation effort done by my predecessors in both Community Services and Yukon Housing Corporation respectively. Some of the other members of the government caucus did a community tour and heard from Yukoners a number of perspectives and concerns about this.

Our focus is on coming up with regulations that do all that they must and should do to provide for safety of residents and address gaps while also recognizing some of the specific challenges faced by rural Yukon and ensuring that we are striking, to the best extent that we can, an appropriate balance between strong regulatory standards and not unduly interfering with people's ability to take appropriate steps in their own homes. Again, we recognize the importance of these areas.

As I've stated before in the House, I think that the tragedy that occurred where one family perished as a result of carbon monoxide probably did more than anything government can do, or the Yukon Housing Corporation can do, to make people aware of this need. I personally didn't have a carbon monoxide detector prior to that situation.

I've heard from a number of constituents who told me in conversation after that — or those I ran into in stores — that they were going out to personally purchase carbon monoxide detectors significantly in advance of government actually indicating we were going to change legislation in this area, simply because they recognized the safety risk to their family — or potential risk — and it was one they had not thought of before. I know there are others who do not share my opinion, but I believe that most people and most families will take appropriate common-sense steps to provide for the safety of their family and the safety of their homes if they're given good information about how to do that. While we remain committed to implementing the regulations under the *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act* — as unfortunately it does sometimes take a tragedy for people to be aware of risks. As I heard on CBC Radio this morning, for example, there was a news story talking about Jessica Frotten sitting down as part of the PARTY program and talking to students about the tragedy that happened to her and getting across to them the importance of responsibly partying and being safe — that is the purpose of that program, which is also aimed at teaching students and young Yukoners to think about risks, including who they jump into a vehicle with, and ensuring they don't ride with intoxicated drivers.

Those are just examples of where I think that, when tragedies do occur, government does — as we should — try to determine whether there is additional work that is necessary on government's part to reduce the risk of such a tragedy occurring in the future. But I believe that, in fact, personal

responsibility and personal awareness do more than government regulations can because most people, when they are aware of something they should do to protect the safety of their family, will be far quicker to address that than anyone in government or in any enforcement agency would be.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for switching his hat there for a minute. I appreciate the answer.

The minister referred to good information and I am just going to raise a couple of concerns I have with website.

If you click on the link toward carbon monoxide, it takes you to a press release. Under the press release, you can click on to the new act, but it doesn't give any information about which carbon monoxide detectors would work better in certain homes. I think that might be helpful.

Under that is the link for masonry chimneys. Last year there was a very easy-to-find link regarding chimney safety, and now if you click the "more information to be found at Yukon Housing Corporation" section, it just takes you back to the home page and it's not easy to find. I'm just going to put that out there

In that same breath, there are a lot of website links that have expired and all around safety issues, so the stove and chimney link takes you to CMHC guide to residential wood heating and it goes to the table of contents. It doesn't go anywhere after that — replacing your furnace, carbon monoxide. There are a bunch that don't go anywhere, so I will just flag that right now.

I think we've covered this before, but I want to just confirm that carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in all of Yukon Housing Corporation's stock.

I have questions about the carbon monoxide detectors. Are these the CSA-approved monitors that measure parts per million over a month-long period and if, after one month, there is an average of 30 parts per million or more, will they beep? This is important, because the way monitors work is important, given that there are some people who are more sedentary for one reason or another — so we can talk about the elderly or the disabled. In winter months they may not go out very much and they may not get that much fresh air. I'm wondering if the minister could speak to the concern I've heard about long-term exposure to persistent levels of carbon monoxide that are not high enough to set off the CSA standard alarm, but are high enough to cause long-term health risks.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, with regard to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King's question about the website, I thank her for pointing that out. I will ask staff to look at the website and make sure the links are current. I don't personally spend a lot of time on that website, so unless I'm looking for a specific piece of information, it's not something that I personally run across. Staff does try to make sure that the websites are up-to-date. In this case, I'll ask them to look at this. If the member runs into any specific issues related to the websites or if some of the information that we have up on there is not easily accessible, or if she doesn't find it user-friendly, I'm happy to take that information under consideration. I would invite her to feel free to write me a letter about that. Although that's something, in the case of the

corporation, I would share with staff and potentially the board, especially if there were requests for any changes to the website that had any significant cost to them.

I am certainly happy to consider that, pass it on to others and consider how we can make things more user-friendly in that manner. I do thank her for pointing out that there were issues around it and that it needs a bit of an update as far as accessibility and being user-friendly.

Also, switching hats for a moment, I'll ask staff of the Fire Marshal's Office to take a look — since the member has raised the issue of the housing website — at what we have available through Community Services. I appreciate the member's concern about whether it's telling people what type of carbon monoxide detectors they should have in their homes and whether it's giving them good advice on that. Again, I'm certainly familiar with the ads we've run, but I haven't personally looked through some of the information that's on-line. I'll ask staff of both the Housing Corporation and Community Services to take a look at that, and if there's any additional information that we should perhaps consider providing to residents about how to pick a carbon monoxide detector for your home, where you should locate it and those types of things, then I will ask them to assess what we currently have and see whether we should be adding to it.

I am assured that carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in all Yukon Housing Corporation's units. As far as what type they are, I don't have the answer to that question right now. I will undertake to have staff look into it. I get the member's point in that.

Since she's asked that specific question, I'm also interested in what the answer to that is, because I do certainly agree that there is some potential for seniors who aren't active to be at greater risk from cumulative low-level exposures of carbon monoxide. I don't know the answer, but we'll look into it and I will ask staff to provide me with the information. I'll happily provide it by way of letter to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Ms. White: I thank the minister very much for that. It wasn't a criticism; it was just merely for information giving and I will send an e-mail about the other links.

There was a great initiative of the firefighters in Dawson City and the Klondike Valley when they went door-to-door checking the functioning of detectors. Do we know of any other communities that are following suit? What sort of monitoring or oversight is there for private homes in the Yukon? Is there some way to make sure that rental units are equipped with carbon monoxide detectors?

The minister pointed out that many people have gone out and gotten their own because of the tragedy and I agree. But, for the safety of renters, is there a way to ensure that all rental apartments and rental units have carbon monoxide detectors?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member will have seen, I'm sure, that we just launched the consultation regarding regulations on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. That is actually stuff that relates primarily to Community Services and to both the regulations under the *Oil-Fired Appliance*

Safety Statutory Amendment Act and to the regulations under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*.

One of the reasons that it has taken awhile to draft our regulations under the *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act* is that these two sets of regulations and these two acts work together and have some effect on each other. There are important issues that have to be looked at.

Some of our policy people are the same people involved in looking at both files and some of the legal drafting services also. There's crossover and some of the same people are working on or involved in working with others working on those files. The oil-fired appliance regulations — those are in the works and I don't anticipate it being much longer before those proceed.

The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* regulations are currently out for consultation and if the member hasn't looked at it, I encourage her to take a look at them. They do include some important matters for consideration within the specifics of those regulations. Since I believe the member has asked about this in the past, one area that it relates to is whether they should apply to hotel rooms and if so, at what point — whether they should apply at the six-month level. The other concern that needs to be given serious consideration by everyone is the understanding of what's happened in other jurisdictions where such regulations have applied to hotel rooms. We need to be all be thoughtful of considering what is the benefit of implementing them versus what are the unintended consequences and does any substandard housing stock end up — does it get upgraded or does it create a situation where people are evicted just short of six months, or create a situation where stock is simply pulled off the marketplace. I think it raises the question, with certain things related to the rental standards, whether certain parts are better dealt with under general rules related to public health than under specific rental standards.

I won't get too much further into that at this point in time. I'd just draw that to the member's attention and encourage her to be thoughtful on that point. It's one that I've discussed with people, including the Anti-Poverty Coalition when I met with them this fall. I think that government, as well as NGOs and other stakeholders, should think through both the intent and the unintended consequences — or potential unintended consequences — of anything we do.

As far as the issue of rental units, the *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act* and the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, working together, was envisioned to have the end result of requiring rental units to have carbon monoxide detectors. As far as the process for handling that, some of that is subject to what actually gets put in place with the regulations. So I can't give the member a specific answer at this point, because that hasn't been fully determined yet.

Chair: Order please.

Termination of sitting as per Standing Order 76(1)

Chair: The time has reached 5:00 p.m. on this, the 28th sitting day of the 2013 Fall 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 Government 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.”

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 would now ask the Government House Leader to indicate whether Bill No. 11 and Bill No. 66, the government bills now before Committee of the Whole, should be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, the government directs that Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, and Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be called at this time.

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Pasloski, as the sponsor of Bill No. 11, for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, be deemed to be read and carried. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$71,178,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$21,906,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$93,084,000 agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Schedules A, B and C agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that you report Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, be reported without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 66: *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act* — continued

Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Kent, as the sponsor of Bill No. 66, for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Kent that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be deemed to be read and carried. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Clauses 1 to 22 agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that you report Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Kent that Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be reported without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Chair: As all government bills identified by the Government House Leader have 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 Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, and directed me to report it without amendment. Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, and has directed me to report it without amendment.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the 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 Committee of the Whole, shall:

"(d) with respect to each Government 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 that motion."

I shall, therefore, ask the Government House Leader to indicate whether Bill No. 11 and Bill No. 66, the government bills now standing at third reading, should be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the government directs that Bill No. 66 and Bill No. 11 be called for third reading at this time.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 66: Third Reading — *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 66, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Kent.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 66, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 66 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 66 has passed this House.

Bill No. 11: Third Reading — *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 11, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Madam Deputy Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, six nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 11 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 11 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to give assent to certain bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Phillips enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Mr. Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Deputy Clerk: *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act; Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Deputy Clerk.

Before I leave today, I want to do a couple of things. First of all, I want to take this opportunity to welcome a very special guest to the Legislature and I'm asking you to join with me in that. Trevor Thompson is my brother-in-law and he came to the Yukon a couple of weeks ago from nice, warm, sunny New Zealand. He went out onto our cabin trapline in the Yukon. He has experienced a little bit of the real Yukon and in the past couple of weeks he has had a wonderful sunny minus-39-degree weather. He snowshoed down a new trail, blazing the trees as he goes. He's pulled a snowmobile through hundreds of metres of overflow and he experienced a two-day blizzard out on the trapline. We really gave him a

great taste of the Yukon. I would ask all of you to welcome Trevor Thompson to the Legislature here.

Applause

Commissioner: I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Yukon Administrator Bob Cameron. Some of you may know that this was Bob's last day as the Administrator of the Territory in his three-year appointment. Bob is a long-time Yukoner who has served Yukon well in recording its history as well as being the Administrator and working for our office for the last few years, and actually standing in the last couple of times in the Legislature, passing bills. I want to wish Bob and his wife Lois well in whatever they do. I know they are going to be spending a lot of time on their boat down in Skagway and Juneau. I want to wish them well and thank Bob for his service to the Yukon as Yukon Administrator.

I also want to take this opportunity to wish all of you, your families and your staff a very merry Christmas and a very pleasant and safe holiday season — so the very best for you in the new year — and remind you that on January 1 at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, there is going to be the Commissioner's annual New Year's Levee.

This year we have several Yukoners receiving Commissioner's awards — young kids — youth receiving academic awards. Of course, we have our youth showcase with some entertainment from the young people at that event. I encourage you to come out at 2:00 p.m. on January 1 to the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, enjoy the levee and start off the new year right.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Before we adjourn, I'd like to wish all of you — my colleagues — a very merry Christmas and all the best for the new year. We will see you back here next year.

As the House has reached the maximum number of days permitted for this Fall 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 5:16 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled December 19, 2013:

33-1-106

Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Fund Annual Report 2012/13 (Nixon)

33-1-107

Yukon Liquor Corporation Annual Report April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013 (Cathers)

33-1-108

Yukon Housing Corporation Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 2013 (Cathers)