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HANSARD

Monday, November 16, 2015 — 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

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
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Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 16, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I now call this House to order.

Instead of beginning our proceedings with a prayer, which is our normal practice, I would like to ask all present to observe a moment of silence for those who were killed or injured in the terrorist attack in Paris this past Friday.

Moment of silence observed

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Please be seated.

The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 885, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Yukon Geoscience Forum and Trade Show

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pay tribute to the 43rd annual Yukon Geoscience Forum and Trade Show being held in Whitehorse from November 14 to 17. I would like to acknowledge the Yukon Chamber of Mines for its continued leadership role for mining in Yukon and the tremendous effort it puts forward each year to host Yukon's mineral industry at the Yukon Geoscience Forum. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the volunteers, sponsors, speakers, exhibitors and organizers. Their commitment and participation are what makes this a signature event for Yukon's geoscience and mineral resources industry.

The Yukon Geoscience Forum is recognized by people throughout the mineral sector as Yukon's key industry event. It's the best opportunity to network and share the latest research, technology and innovation in mineral exploration and geology. The Yukon Chamber of Mines puts together a tremendous venue where geologists, miners, service businesses and the public can showcase the best in Yukon's geoscience industry. All four days of the forum are filled with activities such as geoscience technical sessions, short courses, poster sessions, themed events and social events for networking. This event also demonstrates the Government of Yukon's continued commitment to exploration and mine development. We are committed to creating conditions so the mining sector can grow.

The Yukon Geological Survey has a key role in supporting Yukon's mineral industry with world-class research and quality geological data. This allows for better

decision-making by industry, which supports exploration efforts and land and resource management decisions.

This year's forum is especially important during this lull in global mineral markets. It's important because it provides the opportunity for industry to share information and strategies that will help ensure Yukon's mineral industry remains solid and is well-positioned for the next economic upswing.

We have numerous initiatives underway that will help move the industry forward. We continue to work with Yukon College, Yukon Mine Training Association, the federal government, industry partners and First Nations to meet long-term labour needs for the mining sector. We actively support relationship building and agreements between industry and First Nations through partnerships. We do this through the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board by providing funding for First Nations to attend conferences, negotiations, technical reviews and for the delivery of educational workshops.

The Government of Yukon also continues to work in support of the industry through the Yukon Chamber of Mines and Klondike Placer Miners' Association to increase public awareness of the benefits of Yukon's mineral industry. The Yukon Geological Survey also hosts the Yukon placer forum during the Geoscience Forum. The day is filled with sessions about placer geoscience and technology and is a venue where placer miners can network and share their experiences with each other.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity while speaking about our mining and exploration industries to acknowledge a company that has been part of our landscape for 50 years. Archer, Cathro & Associates was formed in 1965 by Al Archer and Bob Cathro and is now in its fourth generation of partners. The company has performed exploration and consulting work for numerous major and junior mining companies in every corner of the territory. They were instrumental in significant discoveries including Casino, Wolverine and, more recently, Klaza, Silver Range, Tiger and Osiris.

Archer Cathro was dedicated to responsible exploration and has designed and implemented programs on behalf of companies that have received four Leckie awards for excellent environmental stewardship and two honourable mentions since 2000.

Archer Cathro has not only shown tremendous dedication and optimism in Yukon for the last five decades, but also has provided many Yukoners with employment, skills and fulfilling careers. Their contribution to the Yukon cannot be understated.

The Premier and the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources will be at the Geoscience Forum to share new developments and update delegates on government's latest initiatives to move Yukon's mining industry forward. They will also be alongside members of the business community and industry to acknowledge and celebrate their accomplishments and achievements.

Yukon will emerge from the current downturn in better shape than when we went out. We look forward to building

more relationships, exchanging ideas and sharing expertise at this very important event.

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 43rd annual Yukon Geoscience Forum and Trade Show.

Every year I attend, it gets better and better. This year was special. As the member opposite mentioned, it was the 50th anniversary of Archer Cathro in the Yukon, celebrating 50 years of success.

The Yukon Geoscience Forum continues to be a showcase of the achievements and the challenges that exist in this territory. It also gives the industry a platform to put forward our hopes and dreams of what our minerals economy could be in the future.

I was happy to attend forums on Saturday and Sunday to hear from a cross-section of companies, individuals and investors involved in the industry. I, along with others, listened to their concerns and their hopes for the future of mining in the Yukon and a number of exciting potential projects. It was heartening to hear their visions and, Mr. Speaker, perhaps most importantly, their enthusiasm and their belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon. I commend the presenters and industry for not avoiding the current challenges. Like true businesses, they're not shying away from these challenges; instead, they're rolling up their sleeves and getting down to work.

I listened with interest to the presentation of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. This is an example of successful financing options that could be emulated here in the territory. Again and again during my visits I was reminded that now is the time we must take advantage of the current lull in activities to fully prepare for emerging opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the leadership and the partnerships from industry, First Nations and Yukon government is critical. It is with entrepreneurial leadership, business acumen, thinking outside the box and a desire to contribute to society that have made and will continue to make the mining industry such an important part of Yukon's past, present and future.

I was especially pleased to see many of the booths and companies represented were promoting job and career opportunities for Yukon men and women; and I was especially delighted to see a number of my former students now engineers and employees working those booths. I heard again about the success of the Yukon mining incentive program — the first of its kind in Canada — that was brought in by an NDP government during a commodities lull. It was designed to encourage exploration in the Yukon and, to this day, continues to provide instrumental seed monies for exploration. The program was developed for just such times as we are now experiencing and I am pleased to learn this valuable program will be continued.

I would like to recognize the many contributions that the mining industry makes to Yukon, from the service industries to the educational and work opportunities and programming that are supported, both directly and indirectly. Mr. Speaker,

during my career in the Yukon, I've been fortunate to work with and alongside many members of the mining community. I've taught their children in our schools; I've worked with them on school councils and coached sports teams with them. We've met in local welding shops, in tire shops and mechanical shops. We've worked together during presentations to children in our schools. Whether it's Victoria Gold spearheading an attendance initiative or Kaminak building a land-based databank and curriculum, the contributions of the mining industry enhance Yukon life.

The NDP recognizes and appreciates the many ways the mining industry and those working within the industry contribute to our Yukon community. Throughout the events of this weekend's lectures and displays, I was inspired to hear from so many people who so obviously love their work and are committed to the Yukon. I want to congratulate and thank you for your commitment to our community and responsible mining in this territory. I encourage everyone to drop by and take advantage of the work on display, walk through the show, enjoy those displays and, most of all, visit with the people engaged in the industry and help celebrate their successes.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to pay tribute to the 2015 Yukon Geoscience Forum. This is an important conference that recognizes the role that mining plays in the territory and gives updates to the general public and industry on what new projects and technologies are on the horizon. It has been a difficult year for the Yukon mining industry, and it's my hope that better days are on the horizon. As you know, mining has played an important role in the Yukon for 100 years so far, and we want to see that contribution flourish for the next 100 years and beyond.

I would like to thank the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the valued key sponsors for hosting the 2015 Yukon Geoscience Forum and show my appreciation to all the men and women who work in Yukon's mineral development field. The Yukon Liberal Party is grateful for your many contributions to this territory.

In recognition of local municipal governance

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislature to celebrate and congratulate our former and newly elected local leaders. October 15 marked a day of elections in Yukon for our local governments and, over the course of the past weekend, these newly elected and re-elected representatives gathered in Whitehorse for training, orientation and to begin working together on their commitments to make a difference in their communities.

Yukon government remains focused on working with its community partners, both new and returning, to support their goals and deliver on their priorities. By working with our partners over the past number of years — from LACs to unincorporated communities, municipalities, First Nations and the AYC — we have made a lot of positive progress. The "Our Towns, Our Future" initiative remains our framework and foundation for going forward as we build on its significant legacy. This includes the new, comprehensive municipal

grant, modern and regional solid-waste management systems, community development teams, improvements to the *Municipal Act*, an online municipal resource library and, most recently, a municipal sustainability toolkit and work on asset management.

The comprehensive municipal grant, for example, is a significant commitment by the Yukon government in support of municipalities. We have increased unconditional municipal funding from \$12.5 million in 2007 to \$18.27 million in 2015. This ensures that our local governments can deliver the programs and services that are important to their communities. Yukon government also recently renewed its memorandum of understanding with the Association of Yukon Communities. This MOU has helped guide our cooperation and collaboration in the past and will continue to do so in the future. It formally recognizes our shared commitment to foster the development of safe, healthy and vibrant Yukon communities. Evidence of this positive cooperation is the newly elected officials training workshop that local leaders attended from Thursday to Saturday this weekend in Whitehorse.

Our Community Affairs team in Community Services supports the AYC in delivering this important workshop. This training brings together municipal and community government officials, giving them an opportunity to gather in one place, meet their peers and learn about their roles and responsibilities, focusing on a variety of subjects from good governance to working with the chief administrative officers in their respective communities.

Stepping up and serving one's community is not an easy task. Yukon's local leaders face many challenges and are required to manage numerous demands all at once. We understand their difficulties and we appreciate their service. Without our local leaders, our communities would be unable to thrive as they do. This is why we continue to prioritize our support for local governance.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to formally welcome the new local governments and, on behalf of Yukon government and members of the Legislature, emphasize how much we are looking forward to working with them in partnership to make our territory an even better place to live.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker — and for the Geoscience Forum tributes that were delivered by all parties here in the House today. We're joined by some members of the mining community, including Hugh Kitchen, the past president of the Yukon Chamber of Mines; Mike McDougall, recently elected president of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association; Randy Clarkson, the executive director of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, as well as a couple of other gentlemen. Had my son Eli not felt that glasses were optional for me, I would be able to recognize them and tell everyone in the Chamber who they are — my apologies to you gentlemen.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming a few officials from our Community Affairs branch. We have: our acting director, Kirsti Muller; Damien Burns, community advisor; and Zoe Morrison, a community advisor.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I'll be the glasses for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and welcome a Klondiker to the gallery, Mr. Dan Caley.

Applause

Speaker: I would like to welcome Conrad Tiedeman, a constituent of mine, to the gallery.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have for tabling a document, entitled *Yukon Territory Poverty Progress Profile*, by Canada Without Poverty, 2015.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Notices of motions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to expand respite care options available to primary caregivers to include employing individuals living in the same residence as the primary caregivers, including other children of age of majority, grandparents and other relatives.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support the development of effective asset management programs by providing up to \$40,000 to each municipality and First Nation during the 2015-16 fiscal year.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to provide enhanced financial support for local area councils.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to support Yukon municipalities by using the simplified formula for calculating the comprehensive

municipal grant that has seen significant increases to the amount of unconditional funding provided to municipalities.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Friends of Mount Sima to help develop an early-season training facility for elite ski and snowboard athletes from across Canada.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to work with the Yukon Freestyle Ski Association to purchase a 16-by-20-foot airbag to use in conjunction with two indoor trampolines to provide safe landing for athletes.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to work with Cross Country Yukon to complete an engineering design and class B cost estimate for paving five kilometres of existing trails at the Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to work with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to build an extension to the existing Nakwataku Potlatch House.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ban the harmful practice of long-term separate confinement at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and to ban the use of separate confinement for inmates with histories of self-harm or mental health issues, in keeping with the recommendations stemming from the coroner's inquest into the death of Ashley Smith and the Government of Canada's decision to ban long-term solitary confinement in federal prisons.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure students from rural Yukon can stay at the Gadzoosdaa student residence if they are attending the Whitehorse Individual Learning Centre.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Local procurement

Ms. Hanson: It's a fact that in northern Canada the cost of doing business is simply higher. With our remote geography, and relatively small local market, Yukon's private sector faces higher cost structures and lower revenues.

Last week when we asked this government how they will support Yukon's local private sector, they offered no solutions and no explanation for their unilateral 2013 decision to remove local preferences from Yukon's procurement and contracting directive.

Actions speak louder than words, and the Yukon Party's actions show they are not champions of Yukon's local private sector. In fact, their changes favour Outside competition, not the competitiveness of local businesses.

Yukon needs more emphasis on local content, expertise, hiring and benefits. When will the minister prioritize Yukon's private sector and put local benefits back into the procurement directive?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned last week during Question Period as well as in debate of Highways and Public Works, we're proud of the local construction industry and the local contracting industry and being able to deliver on many of the projects that we tender as a government.

As mentioned, 14 of the 15 completed vertical infrastructure or building projects were delivered by local Yukon companies as general contractors. The lone exception there was the F.H. Collins project, which had 75-percent local labour and a number of local subcontractors that worked on that project.

When it comes to road-building opportunities, many of those projects as well are awarded to Yukon companies. We're very proud of the expertise and the opportunities that allow Yukon companies to bid beyond our borders as well. As I mentioned, there are a number doing work in northeastern British Columbia. If you go back far enough, you'll note that the company Pelly Construction actually did some work in Antarctica building an airport for the international community. The expertise is here in the Yukon. We're proud of those contractors that are able to deliver on projects within our borders and are able to bid and deliver on significant projects outside of these borders.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, Yukon's businesses are struggling. The issues related to the AIT extend beyond major capital projects. The Yukon Party chose to remove local provisions from the Yukon procurement directive back in 2013 and they don't plan to speak up for Yukon businesses as the *Agreement on Internal Trade* is being renewed.

The Yukon had exemptions built into the AIT to help level the playing field. We are a remote jurisdiction of less than 40,000 people, not over four million like BC and Alberta. Our local Yukon businesses must be given a real opportunity to compete for contracts. This government should be working with local Yukon businesses as the AIT negotiations take place; yet in February, this government flat out told Yukon businesses there would be no such consultation.

Will the minister strike a working group with Yukon businesses and industry to identify local priorities for strengthening Yukon benefits under the AIT?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week we heard from the Minister of Economic Development about Yukon's ongoing mandate for negotiations with regard to the AIT. Obviously, in the

previous iteration of the AIT, Yukon had carved out exemptions in a number of areas that allowed us to provide programming and services to enhance the viability of local businesses to access government contracts. Those include the business incentive program that encourages the hiring of local labour and the purchase of locally produced goods.

Obviously, we will continue to advocate at the AIT table on behalf of Yukon's interests. We will continue to negotiate with other provinces and territories throughout the country to ensure that we are able to provide those unique types of programs and services that recognize Yukon's unique reality when it comes to our economy. Obviously our economic realities are different from those of certain other provinces in the country and we'll continue to advocate that Yukon be treated a little differently in the AIT than other provinces.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, what we can continue to do is ensure that Yukon businesses are competing in a competitive area where we can ensure that Yukon businesses have competitive business legislation, the likes of which we brought in over the course of the last few years, whether it's the *Business Corporations Act*, the *Securities Act*, or more recently, the *Land Titles Act*. We also continue, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that Yukon businesses are taxed at a low rate. We'll continue to lower taxes for businesses.

Ms. Hanson: The minister is correct. One of Yukon's exemptions under the AIT is our business incentive program or BIP; but it's interesting to note that the Northwest Territories also has a BIP exemption. The Yukon BIP is available to everyone and provides rebates to hire Yukon residents or use Yukon products on government contracts; but it does not level the playing field. The Northwest Territories BIP is only available to companies owned and operated in the Northwest Territories and provides a bid adjustment of up to 15 percent to their local companies on public contracts. Yukon businesses know the Northwest Territories BIP promotes local economic growth and the capacity of those businesses more directly than the Yukon BIP. It's time to strengthen our own programs.

Will the minister work with local Yukon businesses to strengthen local procurement incentives as part of the AIT renewal?

Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is quite right that the Northwest Territories does have a different style business incentive program than Yukon. I believe that it is a matter of debate as to whether or not it is better or if it has produced better business outcomes for the businesses that engage in that program.

The member opposite can shout off-mic all she wants, but that won't change the fact, and the fact is that we have carved out our business incentive program in the AIT. We will continue to advocate Yukon's interests at the negotiating table of the AIT. I won't conduct those negotiations on the floor of this Legislature, but what I will do is ensure that Yukon's interests — the interests of our economy and the interests of Yukon businesses — are reflected and continue to be a key

part of our position when discussing these issues of national importance at the AIT negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that the AIT is not about putting up protectionism and it is not about increasing protectionism; it is about ensuring that goods can flow freely and that businesses can compete nationally. We have seen examples of Yukon businesses competing outside of our borders on contracts, and we want to preserve that ability for them to do so, but we do acknowledge that some unique considerations need to be given to the Yukon, given our frontier economy and the different realities we face here in the north.

Question re: Climate change action plan

Ms. White: In its 2012 *Climate Change Action Plan* progress report, the Yukon government set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its internal operations. Emissions from 2010 were independently verified with external auditors. The government committed to cap its emissions at the 2010 levels, and it further committed to a 20-percent reduction by 2015. The action plan stated — and I quote: “With the Yukon government's audited baseline established, annual reports on GHG emissions from internal government operations and activities will be available.”

Mr. Speaker, where are the annual reports on greenhouse gas emissions from government operations made available, and will the government meet its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by the end of this year?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important issue for the Yukon government. We are not a large contributor to climate change. We are a good example of how to adapt and how to mitigate when it comes to climate change. This has been the focus for this government for many years. That's why we developed and created a climate change action plan and a Climate Change Secretariat, and we have an energy strategy. That is why we conduct research to learn more about climate change impacts on the north. That is why we take part in local, national and international gatherings and topics and that is why we are sending a robust delegation to COP21. I am looking forward to getting everybody — the members opposite, the Grand Chief and everybody else — to go over there and tell the story of how climate change affects us in the north.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way to tell that story is by knowing our own greenhouse gas emissions.

The first step in reducing emissions is accurate reporting, but government numbers are now in doubt. A 2015 report into greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon's transportation sector reveals problems with data collection. It says — and I quote: “Under-reporting is prevalent across all Yukon sectors...” It goes on to say, “...actual emissions are an average of 75% higher than reported from 2009 through 2012...” If emissions are under-reported across all sectors, it means Yukon's carbon footprint is unknown and there is no way to track our progress on reducing our very own emissions.

Mr. Speaker, how will the government ensure accurate greenhouse gas emissions reporting from all sectors?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question again. Of course, the issue is of the utmost importance for the north. We are feeling the impacts now, and we are already making changes to the way that we do things in order to adapt. We are proud of the actions that we have taken with our greenhouse gas emissions and our use of renewable energy.

Nearly all of our energy in the north is met with hydro power. We're looking to expand our access to hydro power through our next generation hydro project.

We have increased funding for wildlife surveys, air emission studies and increased water-monitoring stations. We're one of the leaders in Canada when it comes to permafrost research. That's why other jurisdictions look to us. That's the story that we're looking to tell at COP21 in a few weeks.

Ms. White: Electricity generation may be green, but the transportation industry certainly isn't.

Responding to climate change is complex, and we recognize that a lot of great work is being done by departmental staff, but the lack of accurate reporting makes us question the government's will to reduce Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions. Yukon Party ministers make the excuse that carbon is a necessity for us northerners, not a luxury, but they are continuing to ignore viable affordable alternatives for much of our fossil fuel dependence — for example, space heating.

Mr. Speaker, how can Yukoners take this government seriously on climate change when their emissions data can be up to 75-percent off what is actually being reported?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: That's why we report every year through our state of the environment reports and keep track of our numbers. I'm going to list a few examples: the energy efficiency programs, the hydroelectric dam, the Mayo B and a partnership with the First Nations for a project on wind in Kluane. We're working non-stop to expand the grid and to help more communities get off diesel power and on to hydro. That makes a real difference. That reduces greenhouse gas emissions. That is part of the good story that we have to tell.

We'll have the opportunity to tell our story at COP21 so that Yukon values, our circumstances and ideas are factored into the national and international discussions on climate change.

Question re: Internet connectivity

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party has been talking about improving the reliability of our Internet and cellphone systems for the last three years and it has certainly been aware of it for almost the 14 years that they've been in office. Despite this, the recent announcement about a new fibre optic link up the Dempster Highway certainly looks like it was hastily written on the back of a napkin. The only sure thing in the entire plan is that the government will try to say they can check off the done box when we go to the polls next year. The reality is that this project was announced with no financial plan attached to it. The reason is now very clear: there is no plan to finance it.

Mr. Speaker, other than the fact that they want to look like action has been taken on this issue, why did the government make this announcement when it's clear that the money is not there to build it yet?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a long-standing issue over the last number of years and it has been studied consistently and thoroughly over the years. We've had debates about this and ultimately we have arrived at a decision, which is a route that we are planning for the provision of a new fibre optic line to the south. Ironically, that line goes north, but it will indeed connect us to the grid through the Mackenzie Valley line and thus provide Yukon with the redundancy and capacity that we need to allow our businesses here in Yukon to be competitive and to ensure Yukoners have comparable access to service here in the north.

Now, Mr. Speaker, over the years, we've studied a number of routes. We've looked at a route going south through Skagway to Juneau. We've looked at routes that have gone along the highway into Alaska. And, of course, we've studied this particular route up the Dempster Highway. Ultimately, after considerable deliberation, considerable discussion and considerable study, we've arrived at the conclusion that this is the best way forward for Yukon taxpayers, this is the best way forward for Yukon business, and this is the best way forward for Yukoners who are interested in seeing a competitive level of services for Internet and telecommunications here in the territory.

The costs, of course, are not complete yet on the overall side, Mr. Speaker. What we know is that the fibre line will be in the neighbourhood of \$32 million. It's a project that we feel has national significance and we'll likely be seeking funding partners in both Northwest Territories and in Canada.

Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and we're glad that this is now a priority for this government, but unfortunately, there is no plan in place to finance it. At the same time, the government's commitment to — and I quote: "Maintain a level playing field in supporting small business and ensure that government funding...do not foster unfair competition within the business community" has been thrown out the window. For many years, the government maintained that this project would not be given to one company without competition. Now, in its last-minute decision to look busy before the election, it has decided not to tender this project but to simply give to one company millions of dollars of public money for nothing in return. A similar project in the Northwest Territories has just been tendered, for example, Mr. Speaker.

So why did the government break its promise to maintain a level playing field and simply select a winner with no competition?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For the member opposite to suggest that this investment — that Yukon will receive nothing in return shows that he is simply not aware of how important this project is. Mr. Speaker, it's important that Yukoners who rely on telecommunications and the Internet, more specifically, are

provided a comparable level of service as those in the rest of Canada receive. It's important to us that we move forward on this particular issue. It is a priority. That's why we have seen significant investments made in this project over the years and now we see the next step forward with this particular project.

The simple reality though is that we live in a part of the country where it is not economical for businesses to do this on their own, so the Yukon government is stepping forward and has committed to invest in this project. As I indicated before, we see this project as having a greater significance than just the Yukon so we hope that the Government of Canada and we hope that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be interested in supporting it as well.

So we'll be seeking funding partners going forward. We haven't committed a dollar amount yet, Mr. Speaker, but we have committed to the project. We have committed to moving forward with it and we look forward to seeing the fast, affordable, reliable telecommunications that will come as a result of this significant investment in our IT industry here in the Yukon.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect, I think the minister is missing the point of the question. The Liberal caucus absolutely supports a second fibre optic link and we're also prepared to support public investment in seeing this link established — absolutely. What we're concerned about is this government picking winners and losers and funnelling money directly to one company or another without any competition. This is what the Yukon Party's position was until it seems like they panicked and decided that announcing something before the next election was more important.

The government has received no guarantees from the company on pricing and has agreed to simply give the new line to the same company once it has been built. This is not the case in the Northwest Territories where a similar project is underway. This is a rollover. Any leverage the government had is now out the window.

So Mr. Speaker, why was announcing an agreement instead of negotiating some control over future pricing more important to this government?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the years past when the member opposite was criticizing us for not moving quicker. Now he's criticizing us for panicking and making what he calls a hasty decision.

Mr. Speaker, we have studied this issue over and over. We have looked at the options. We have considered alternatives. We have looked at funding models and we have arrived at a conclusion and we have made a decision, which is that we think that the Dempster route is the most beneficial for Yukoners.

We think it will provide us with redundancy throughout the Yukon that we didn't have previously. We think it'll enhance our capacity, improve the resiliency of our telecommunications system and that it's a reasonable project for the Yukon government to invest in. As I've indicated before, we do think that there are implications to this project

that are broader than simply those belonging to Yukon and we think that this may be a project where there would be a reasonable degree of expectation that the Government of Canada and perhaps the Government of Northwest Territories would be interested in committing to it. As I've said, we haven't arrived at a final conclusion as to how much those investments will be, mostly because in both the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada we have relatively new governments and we want to take the time to speak with them and discuss what the options are going forward.

What we've indicated is that we have a general overview of the project's costs and we have a commitment by the Yukon government to participate. While we haven't hammered out the details yet, we are committed to this project and we think it will be of benefit to all Yukoners.

Question re: Social worker caseloads

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Auditor General's report from 2014 the auditor spoke of the vacancy rates for social workers in communities. It noted some communities had extended vacancies of more than 10 months. The department responded that it had developed strategies to support existing social workers and attract new ones. I'm hearing from some communities that in fact they are lucky to have a social worker come to their community for more than an hour or two a few times a month.

Can the minister tell us how many communities do not have permanent social workers and are reliant on itinerant workers from Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly thank the member opposite for her question. Government remains committed to working with all communities in the territory with staffing positions. As the member is well aware, from time to time there are staffing vacancies that come up and we do work very diligently within the department and a number of other departments to fill those positions, whether temporary or contract positions — but we certainly do work with the communities, as the member opposite has indicated, in filling those social worker positions.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm hearing from social workers that some are required to travel to communities with vacancies, complete their work and return to their home community the same day so that no overtime is claimed.

Can the minister tell us how this would be considered a timely and appropriate level of service to individuals in Yukon communities needing the support and services of social workers?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had indicated in my previous response, certainly we look at the recruitment of social workers throughout the territory. The recruitment of rural social workers has been redefined to identify social workers with specific interests in rural social work practice and a strong commitment to working with Yukon First Nations. We always remain committed to providing social work services through qualified staff who reside in rural Yukon.

The region is currently fully staffed, with the exception of one short-term vacancy due to a maternity leave, as I understand it.

Ms. Stick: I hear differently from social workers in the communities.

Social workers are required to provide a range of services to communities, including child protection services. Without a social worker there permanently, this means that children and youth in our communities might not receive the protection or support they require. Without social workers, foster families cannot receive the support they might require in the communities.

The social workers who are in the communities are doing their best to help our communities thrive, but are not receiving the support from this government that they require.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us what his department has done since the Auditor General's report to fill these multiple vacancies in the communities?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I thank the member opposite for her question. Certainly the information that she is providing is not the same as the information that the department provided to me. We understand right now that the region is fully staffed, with the exception of one short-term vacancy due to a maternity leave. We continue to work with a number of different departments, including Community Services, on retention and recruitment for social workers. Certainly retention bonuses for regional social workers were established in January 2010 under that collective agreement and we work with Yukon Housing Corporation to provide housing to some social workers in some of the communities. We will continue with the good work, Mr. Speaker, but I don't believe that the member opposite has her facts correct. The region is fully staffed, with the exception of that one short-term vacancy.

Question re: Hotels, long-stay

Ms. White: When it comes to long-stay hotels, the government has said that it's reasonable that not all tenants have equal protections under the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. When we raised this issue a year ago, in October 2014, the Department of Health and Social Services was paying \$57,000 monthly to house people in long-stay hotels. We're not talking about tourist accommodations, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about long-term housing.

The government wants the NDP to propose an alternative — well, here it is: Treat all tenants equally before the law. Will the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm that health and safety inspections are done on the rooms for which his government pays hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to use as housing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have discussed it a number of times, but the NDP proposal to have the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* regulations apply to all hotels is something I don't think is going to be an effective alternative. I appreciate their creativity in coming up with a new position. It is the first time,

to my knowledge, that they have actually come up with an alternative to something they've actually talked about.

The limit we have set is at six months. That is the point at which someone staying in a hotel transitions from being a hotel guest to being in a landlord-tenant relationship with the hotel. We believe that the six-month threshold is a reasonable one. We think it's the result of considerable consultation and discussion.

I appreciate that there are different viewpoints on this, but we have made a decision on this and are going forward with that as the threshold. It's not something we have come to lightly; it is something that we think is the best possible way forward. We have looked at other jurisdictions. This is similar in concept to what happens in other jurisdictions. Most jurisdictions — in western Canada at least — have the six-month time frame; some have blanket exemptions. For hotels such as in southern BC, this is something that we feel is a reasonable accommodation of the interests of the tourism industry and of landlords and tenants throughout the territory.

While I appreciate the member coming up with an alternative, we don't think we'll be carrying forward that particular proposal.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the alternative — treat all tenants equally before the law. The Minister of Health and Social Services spends hundreds of thousands of dollars a year on housing that does not meet the minimum standards of the government's very own legislation because it's only for six months minus a day.

For many folks, housing insecurity is year after year and it's those same tenants in those same rooms. Since tenants housed in long-stay hotels for less than six months are not recognized by the act, they cannot bring any health and safety concerns to the Residential Tenancies Office.

My question is simple: Who should they call to report health and safety concerns? What department should tenants in long-stay hotels call if they have issues with their landlord or concerns about their safety?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If any individual has an issue with public buildings or buildings that are accessed by the public, like hotels, they can raise them with the Building Standards Board or with Environmental Health Services. However, if the question is more of an issue related to the relationship between them and their landlord or, in this case, if it's between a guest and the hotel, then there is always the option of looking to the Residential Tenancies Office.

The Residential Tenancies Office is a new creation. It comes into effect with the regulations we brought forward with the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. The RTO has begun providing accessible and binding dispute resolution outside the courts. It's an effective alternative to the courts for residential landlords and tenants who have disputes between them. It is a positive step forward. It's one of the new innovative features of the act that we brought forward when the legislation came into place. If any of those individuals are seeking advice about the relationship that they have with their landlord, they can also come to the RTO. While I appreciate

where the member is going with this, the intent here of the regulations is to ensure that there is an appropriate threshold upon which one transitions from being a hotel guest to being in a landlord and tenant relationship.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre availability of methadone treatment

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, from 2008 to 2012, Whitehorse Correctional Centre had made available a methadone treatment for inmates with opiate addictions. The program, known as methadone maintenance therapy, was cancelled in 2012 for reasons that were either easily remedied or have since been abandoned by the Department of Justice. Oral methadone treatment reduces risk of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, has better long-term treatment success than detox, and has shown to reduce recidivism. In July 2015, the Government of Yukon reinstated the methadone treatment policy at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, yet some inmates are still being denied methadone treatment.

How many inmates are currently being denied methadone treatment at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the methadone program has been reinstated. What I can advise the member is that there currently are inmates receiving methadone. The decision on whether to place an inmate on methadone maintenance and at what level is a health decision. It's not one that is made by management at the jail. It's made by the contract physician who has been specifically trained in that area.

I have been advised that there have been areas of differing opinion between individuals' physicians prior to them going into WCC and the contract physician. My understanding is that in those cases, the two physicians do consult, but ultimately the final health care decision is made by the physician who is contracted to make that health care decision at WCC.

Ms. Moorcroft: The Minister, in his response, Mr. Speaker, did not answer the question of how many inmates are being denied treatment.

The principles of restorative justice, which are being recognized this week, are that helping offenders get back on their feet is not only the right thing to do, but it's the smart thing to do.

The use of methadone has been shown to improve outcomes for people with addictions and reduce recidivism. There are risks, but those risks can be managed. Dr. Ruth Martin, director of the Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and Education at the University of British Columbia, has stated that methadone withdrawal has severe physical consequences and that inmates who have their methadone treatment discontinued do worse.

The World Health Organization recognizes methadone as an essential medication and its use is supported by the Yukon Medical Association.

Does the current Minister of Justice support the use of methadone treatment to help rehabilitate Yukoners at Whitehorse Correctional Centre with opiate addictions?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Yes, we do support doctors having the ability — as a contract physician does — to make the decision on a health care basis. I'm not involved in that decision, nor is management at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The physician who is contracted to make the health care decision about whether a prisoner at WCC should be on methadone therapy — and if so, at what levels — is entirely the health care decision made by that contract physician.

Ms. Moorcroft: We know that there are inmates at WCC who have had their methadone treatment discontinued. There is evidence that being cut off from methadone carries health risks, not to mention the risks to Correctional Centre staff and the Yukon public when these inmates are released.

Denying inmates methadone increases the risk that they will relapse when they are released. The methadone treatment policy was reinstated, but it is clear that it has not been adequately implemented.

Will the minister ensure that methadone treatment is administered based on a medical model of best practices to ensure the safety of inmates, WCC staff and the Yukon public?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact that's exactly what's happening. There have been, I understand, differing opinions between physicians with certain inmates — I'm not going to speak to individual cases where there was a difference of opinion about a prescription that an inmate had prior to entering WCC. I've been assured that, in those cases where there was a difference of opinion with the contract physician at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the practice is for the two doctors to consult, but that ultimately the final health care decision is made by the doctor who has been given specific training in appropriate methadone maintenance therapy. That is entirely a health care decision that is made by that physician.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 19: *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 19, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 19, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 19, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I tabled the 2014-15 Public Accounts as well as *Supplementary Estimates No. 3* at the beginning of this Fall Session. I appreciate that the members have taken the opportunity to review both documents and will

have noted the Auditor General's observation that one department exceeded its voting during the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that our government takes the authority of the Legislature very seriously. Contravention of the *Financial Administration Act* is a matter not to be taken lightly. Notwithstanding, it does occur where year-end expenditures in excess of the approved votes do arise. Of course, these expenditures require scrutiny, debate and approval by the Legislative Assembly.

Today, I present Bill No. 19, *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and the accompanying final supplementary estimates for 2014-15. This fourth appropriation act fulfills the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act* and provides the opportunity to the Legislative Assembly to debate and grant statutory authority for departmental expenditures.

Members will note that the total of \$3,000 identified in this fourth appropriation act was required for the Office of the Ombudsman related to improving soundproofing to ensure the privacy of the Ombudsman's clients. I am sure members can agree that the protection of privacy is an important principle to maintain and this modest expenditure is a small price to pay to safeguard this principle.

I am keeping my comments here today very brief, but please allow me a few moments to speak about our 2014-15 Public Accounts and our 2014-15 financial results.

Members will note that the 2014-15 Public Accounts are presented with a clean, unqualified audit opinion from the Auditor General — a clean bill of health, Mr. Speaker. Our 2014-15 year-end financial statements reflect that the government continues to maintain a healthy financial position. On a consolidated basis, as of March 31, 2015, our government reported an enviable net financial resource position of \$389 million, and the consolidated results for 2014-15 yielded an annual surplus of \$94.5 million, contributing to an accumulated surplus of \$1.723 billion. The 2014-15 Public Accounts reflect our government's commitment to disciplined fiscal management. Our positive net financial resource position and our positive surplus position are significant and important indicators of Yukon's financial health, providing the Yukon government future opportunity and future flexibility to respond to potential emerging issues and priorities important to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, we are not borrowing money today to pay for services today and leaving that debt for our future generations. We are truly the envious position in this country. By the accounts of the Alberta NDP government with their latest position, by 2017 Yukon will be the only jurisdiction in this country without any net debt — truly the envy of this country.

I look forward to discussing this supplementary appropriation more fully in general debate.

Ms. Hanson: I hadn't anticipated speaking this afternoon with respect to the acknowledgement by the Minister of Finance of the importance of the integrity and respecting the *Financial Administration Act* and the

importance of making sure that the appropriations that are voted on by this Legislative Assembly are respected. The reason I wasn't intending to was because I acknowledge, as the Premier and Finance minister has pointed out, that the amount of \$3,000 is not material; it's the principle that is. However, I do think that the Finance minister's comments with respect to — and it's unfortunate that he hadn't suggested that we would be debating or discussing the Public Accounts, because I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of elements within the Public Accounts that do warrant further examination and do in fact contradict the Finance minister's assertion that there are no debts going forward for future generations of Yukoners. If we look at the details of the Public Accounts, that becomes abundantly clear.

As well, the Minister of Finance has asserted numerous times — extolling the virtues of the position of the territorial government as reviewed by Standard & Poor's, but he always neglects to point out that Standard & Poor's continues to say year after year that the actions of this government have reduced the amount of flexibility that the territorial government does have now and going into the future in terms of the flexibility with decisions as a government to make decisions about future challenges that come forward.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we welcome the opportunity to get into discussion and debate with respect to the Public Accounts. I can tell you that members on this side have spent a fair amount of time reviewing those very same documents. If that's what we want to get into, we would be more than happy to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Silver: I'll be very brief here.

This is a small amount but there is a principle here that needs to be discussed — absolutely. There has been some time in this Legislature since we actually have seen a fourth appropriation act to authorize extra spending that went past the normal course of the year. It was actually in 2010-11 — the first Sitting of the Yukon Party 2.0. At that time, the Premier did say — and I quote: "...our government recognizes that as we carry out our new mandate, continued prudent financial management is critical in order that we meet the challenges that are ahead... I appreciate that members have taken the opportunity to review the 2010-11 Public Accounts and will have noted the Auditor General's observation that four departments exceeded their vote during the 2010-11 fiscal year. Contravention of the *Financial Administration Act* is a matter not to be taken lightly. Under our new mandate, we are committed to ensuring all departments better manage their financial pressures within approved votes".

Now, Mr. Speaker, we do know that this is a very small amount — \$3,000 — but we are here four years later and the Public Accounts report once again points out overspending in one department. It is a very small amount, but it is worth noting that this does contravene the *Financial Administration Act*.

Mr. Speaker, Public Accounts also confirmed that the government didn't follow the *Appropriation Act* when it

expended grant payments that exceeded amounts authorized by this House as well. This occurred in two separate departments.

As I noted, the amounts are small; however, the principle of only spending money that has been appropriated by this House is something that we should all strive to uphold.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting this bill.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess my closing comments will be brief.

I certainly shouldn't be surprised at my disappointment, but I am disappointed with the Leader of the Official Opposition's inability to read financial statements in terms of the context of her comments — not understanding where we are. We are a territory without net debt — soon to be the only jurisdiction that will occur in, as Alberta has indicated that, by 2017, they in fact will have net debt and have already begun to borrow money to pay wages on a daily basis.

That is something that this government has no intention of — a path forward. We believe that it is the responsibility of the territorial government to manage the finances of this territory in good times and in times that are not as good. Our record speaks very loud and clear in our ability to do exactly that and, while we do it, to continue to make strategic investments in infrastructure — providing infrastructure growth that we will need for years to come — but also creating good jobs and opportunities for youth through apprenticeship training as well.

Mr. Speaker, we do know that the opposition would love the ability to create more flexibility. It's special code — for the NDP — saying that they want to raise taxes. That's exactly what she's implying. Thank goodness this government did put in place a number of years ago the *Taxpayer Protection Act* to ensure that sort of behaviour would not come forward. We know exactly what the record of the NDP is when it comes to running the finances of the provinces and territories.

I also just want to — because of the quote of Standard & Poor's, I just thought I would take an excerpt where they quoted: "In our view, the territory demonstrates strong financial management, which positively affects its credit profile. Its annual financial reports are comprehensive and detailed and are independently audited. Yukon's budgets provide visibility and are detailed: The territory provides three-year financial forecasts and a five-year capital plan. We believe management of debt and liquidity is prudent and related policies are risk-adverse."

This government is very proud of its management of the taxpayers' coffers and will continue to work forward. I know that this was disappointing to the Liberal leader, in terms of the overspend — as he did point out that this has not happened since we have come into office and tabled the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We assumed office after the

October 2011 election, Mr. Speaker, and we are talking about an amount of \$3,000 on an overall appropriation of approximately \$1.3 billion. I won't calculate what percentage that is of the budget. I'm sure they appreciate the good work of the Ombudsman and the reason for which there was an overspend in that department.

With that, I will close second reading debate and we look forward to future debate on this *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 19 agreed to

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

Speaker: It has been move 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): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 94: Act to Amend the Education Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I stated in the second reading debate, the Education Appeal Tribunal is an independent body that derives its authority from the *Education Act*. In 1990, as part of the *Education Act* at the time, the Yukon government established the tribunal to provide the ability to deal with four particular kinds of disputes in a less costly and cumbersome manner than dealing through the courts. There was no intention in 1990 for the tribunal to take over from the courts in any other type of dispute.

The proposed amendments before us here today are relatively minor in scope and are targeted to this specific issue, which is the Education Appeal Tribunal's authority. These changes will clarify the power of the Education Appeal Tribunal and ensure that the tribunal operates within its intended scope of powers under the *Education Act*. The amendments will clarify the original intent of the legislation that the tribunal may only hear appeals of four matters that are

laid out in the *Education Act*. We feel that by making these changes, we will ensure that the tribunal does not assume more powers over time and operate outside of the authority granted to it under the legislation.

With those brief remarks, I will wait to hear from opposition parties to see if they have any questions, and I will attempt to clarify wherever possible.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his statements of introduction. We support the need to clarify certain elements of the Education Appeal Tribunal's scope, but I am concerned that the government has not adequately consulted with the tribunal itself or educational stakeholders about the most effective way to achieve the desired result.

It's my understanding that this bill was proposed following the attempted appeal of a student who wanted to pursue a French language secondary school diploma at F.H. Collins instead of at École Émilie Tremblay.

What is being proposed through the changes to the *Education Act* does not appear to, as the minister said, substantively change the tribunal's mandate. I will ask a series of questions and hopefully we can alleviate many of my concerns.

The laws of fundamental justice indicate that there must be an appeal process on decisions made, and that this appeal be made to an independent body. From an educator's perspective, this provides checks and balances that I believe are necessary so that when people have concerns with how programs are being applied or how their programming is being done, there is an independent appeal process.

I guess when there is a lack of clarity or when there is a blank when an issue is not covered directly in terms of the appeal tribunal — when the act is not clear — then it's up to the appeal tribunal to make that choice as to whether or not they have the authority to hear it. By more narrowly defining it or by defining the aspects that the tribunal can hear, it may be cutting out other avenues that the public or students need to be able to appeal a process.

I'm wondering if the minister can comment on that and assure me that this was not the intent and that there are indeed other ways that a student or his parents or a school committee or any of our partners can appeal to the tribunal, and where they would appeal with concerns.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Under the *Education Act*, there are a number of appeal mechanisms that are separate from the Education Appeal Tribunal. On certain issues, people can appeal to their own school councils. School councils have been given authority under the act for specific issues as well. Other than that, the act refers to other types of appeals, such as local or administrative decisions, where a decision made by a person employed in the school significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student. In those specific areas, there is an appeal process established.

I also want to assure the member opposite that the Department of Education has met with the school board to ensure that adequate appeal provisions are available to students who are in the position like this particular student, who was the basis of this change. The student wished to

complete a French first language diploma without attending a French first language school. If a student was in that position once again, they would have an appeal mechanism through the francophone school board. In all cases, there are appeals available. Of course, the ultimate appeal for any parent or student who feels that they have been wronged in the school system is to appeal to the courts. There are always appeal mechanisms for any decisions made that impact students' health, safety or education in the school system.

Mr. Tredger: An appeal to the very board, committee or department that made the ruling in the first place does not have the transparency or the arm's length that an independent board would provide. My concern remains that in doing this we are narrowing some opportunities. I realize that it may not have been explicitly contemplated in the act. When I read through the amendments to the act as proposed, many of the powers remain the same. However, in section 161(d): "directing a School Board or the deputy minister to enroll a student in a school named by the Education Appeal Tribunal" — I could not find that in the new amendments. Other than that, the ones around special needs and others were definitely noted.

Can the minister tell me where section 161(d) might be found in the new amendments?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think the member opposite is going to have to clarify a little bit more because I don't understand the section of the bill that he has enumerated. Could he perhaps clarify his last statement please?

Mr. Tredger: In the *Education Act* under "Powers of the Education Appeal Tribunal", section 161(d), it says that one of the powers of the Education Appeal Tribunal is: "directing a School Board or the deputy minister to enroll a student in a school named by the Education Appeal Tribunal."

I don't see that captured anywhere in Bill No. 94, *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: It hasn't been changed; it's still there. We're not changing that one in any way, shape or form.

Mr. Tredger: My understanding of the *Act to Amend the Education Act* was defining in: "157(1) The Education Appeal Tribunal is established to hear appeals made pursuant to subsections 17(1), 20(7), 41(7) and 43(5)" — and is replaced with 17(1), 20(7), 41(7) and 43(5). I don't see where the powers identified in section 161(d) are covered in any of those.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite seems to think that, under section 161, we have made some changes. We did not make any changes under 161. Section 161 deals only with the powers of the Education Appeal Tribunal when they hear an issue in which they have jurisdiction. So in other words, the act has given the Education Appeal Tribunal authority to hear four specific kinds of appeals. Under 161, the Education Appeal Tribunal, in deciding a matter being appealed, may make an order doing one or more of the following — these are the remedies they have for an appeal heard under section 157.

All we are clarifying is those four things that they may hear appeals on. None of the other sections have changed.

Section 161 is still there — (a) through (e) are still there, not changing. We are only clarifying. We are not trying to take anything away from the appeal tribunal, nor are we trying to add anything.

Mr. Tredger: It seems highly unusual to make changes to an act as involved and complex as the *Education Act* to respond to a particular situation. Has the minister directed that other solutions be considered? It is just very unusual that we would change an education act in such a precise manner when perhaps there are other ways to do it.

The *Education Act* is quite complex and has a series of interwoven things and a series of discussions should be taking place around any changes that happen. This seems like a fairly extreme way of going about doing it. Have other considerations been made?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The reason that this one is so surgical in nature is simply to ensure that there was only this one issue that we were dealing with. We're not attempting to make a number of changes in the *Education Act*. We only wanted to clarify the powers of the Education Appeal Tribunal.

The reason for that is fairly simple. We at the department believe that the Education Appeal Tribunal was straying beyond their authority when they decided to hear an appeal of a student regarding which courses he could take by correspondence. We agreed with the French school board that this was beyond the authority of the Education Appeal Tribunal to hear, and that was when the Education Appeal Tribunal's lawyer — or the Education Appeal Tribunal — decided that they would take the French school board to court because they believed that they have this authority. We agree with the French school board — they don't have that authority. It was never intended that they have that authority under the act, so we had to make sure that it was clear to all parties — rather than go through court to get a clarifying decision that we believed was essential.

I guess if the members opposite wanted, we could have continued on with the court action and we could have been asked then — I'm sure we would have been in here every day being asked how much the court action was costing. This way it's very clear; it's very surgical. We're only doing this one thing, and that's to avoid going any further with the court action.

Mr. Tredger: I just must respond to that a bit. I am asking questions because I'm trying to follow the act. I'm not suggesting the minister should have done that or should have done that, and for him to imply such or say that I would be asking questions about it in the House — I find that quite disrespectful and it is not conducive to carrying on an examination of an act that I consider very important and essential to the education of children in our schools.

As I have said, it is highly unusual to open up the *Education Act*, even if it is in a surgical manner. I can remember many discussions with the Department of Education, with the ministers of the day, around other issues that were not brought forth because of a reluctance to open up the *Education Act*.

Opening up the *Education Act* is a major undertaking. Has the minister consulted with First Nations, Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees, or any other school committees, prior to beginning this exercise?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite seems to believe that this is a major undertaking. I will go back once again to say that the reason for this change is to clarify the authority of the Education Appeal Tribunal — nothing else. We are not trying to make any changes to the way schools operate. We are not making any changes to anything other than a clarification of one section in the act. I don't know how else I can explain it. That is the intent. We did not consult with all of our various school partners because we did not feel that there was any requirement because what we are doing is clarifying the intent of the act itself.

Mr. Tredger: I think it does set a precedent, and I would say that it is unwise to insist that the only way to solve a problem is to legislate changes, especially when the law is as complex as the *Education Act* — especially with the amount of consultation that went into it.

Has the minister directed his department or the people who put the law together to consult with the original writers of the *Education Act* when it was brought into place — the partners involved in the writing of the *Education Act*?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I believe that, even in my speech at second reading, I made a comment that we had checked back with Hansard in 1990 in the development of these changes. In making these changes, all I can say is — it would be interesting to hear how the member opposite felt we could otherwise have avoided court action. I am really curious to understand what the member opposite felt that we should do in order to avoid court action between CSFY and the Education Appeal Tribunal. Of course, the Department of Education would have been brought into the action as well. There seem to be two varying opinions, and somebody had to make a decision about what to do. We consulted with both groups, both groups felt that they were right, and we felt that the only available opportunity to us to clarify the situation was to make this one change in the act.

Mr. Tredger: If I am going to offer suggestions, I will need a little bit of information first. Can the minister tell me the number of cases that have been brought forward to the Education Appeal Tribunal? How many of those were resolved through mediation and how many of those did the Education Appeal Tribunal rule on and come back with a hard-and-fast ruling on in the last five years?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We went back to 2007 in the statistics. The total number of appeals to the tribunal in those years, from 2008 to present, was 14 — I'm sorry, since 2008 there were only eight appeals. There have been 14 appeals in total. Six were related to special education; two were clearly outside of the mandate of the tribunal; one they heard, as I understand it, even though they felt it was outside of their mandate, and that one dealt with the safety of a student; and the other is the issue we're talking about — distance education.

I'm sorry — I do not have the dispensation of the other six appeals at this time, but that is the total number of appeals that the Education Appeal Tribunal has heard since 2008 — eight appeals, six of which were related to special education and two, we felt, were outside of the mandate.

Mr. Tredger: Can the minister tell me how many of those appeals were decided through mediation and how many of those did the Education Appeal Tribunal make a ruling on?

Hon. Mr. Graham: No, Madam Chair, I don't have that information right now, but we can bring it back to the House.

Mr. Tredger: I guess what I'm trying to bring forward is that, in almost 10 years, there have been eight cases. I believe all of those were resolved through mediation and that the appeal board did not have to make a final decision. They did hear somewhat in areas that the minister considers outside of their jurisdiction and did come to some sort of resolution around them. That would indicate to me that this is not an insurmountable situation, that there may have been an opportunity for mediation or for other methods to resolve this.

I maintain that opening up the *Education Act* is a major undertaking and that, when we undertake things in haste and when we open up an act as complex as the *Education Act*, it may have repercussions in other ways that we don't understand. That is why it is important to consult with our partners, with the YTA, with the First Nations, with the school boards and committees, and with the Association of Yukon School Councils, Board and Committees. They may see other implications for it that have not been perceived.

I'll just leave it at that. It is a concern to bring forward an act that will be applied retroactively — another highly unusual situation. It is extremely uncommon. In fact, I am not aware of it ever having been done in the Yukon before — that any of our acts be applied or passed retroactively.

Has the minister received legal advice that retroactive application of the bill will not present any problem and can he table that legal advice?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Obviously, we have had advice that says we can retroactively apply this. We will not be bringing that legal advice forward because that's protected under client-attorney privilege, but had we had legal advice that said we can't do this, then we would not be doing it.

I don't know what I can say when the member opposite insists that opening the *Education Act* is such a huge thing. We bring it in — we bring in the act to amend the *Education Act*. It's very simple. It's very tiny. It's very surgical. It does nothing but clarify what was already in the act. It therefore avoids going to court and having a judge say that was not intended in the act or that was intended in the act. That's what we're doing. We're avoiding the court battle that would necessarily ensue if we did not clarify the act and make it retroactive to the date at which this decision was made.

I don't know what else I can say, other than the fact that it is what it is. We're not trying to subvert the education system. We're not trying to ignore our partners. We're currently involved in a number of discussions with all of our partners in

a number of different areas. This one is a clarification. That's all.

Mr. Tredger: It is, as I said, highly unusual. I can remember a number of situations, some of which different people thought were quite important. I remember a previous minister talking about not wanting to open up the *Education Act* to deal with temporary teachers. There were close to 100 temporary teachers at the time, but the YTA was told that any opening of the *Education Act* would be a major undertaking. I'm merely repeating what I was told by a previous minister of this government.

You want to avoid going to court, but by passing this act, what option does that child and his or her parents have to pursue this further?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I've already explained to the member opposite that the department has discussed this with the French school board and said that what we need them to do is ensure that they have an adequate appeal process in place. I mentioned that earlier today — that they have an adequate appeal process in place to handle situations such as this.

We are now in agreement with CSFY that they have an appeal process in place, and if another person came up with the identical problem, they would have an appeal system that they could take advantage of.

Mr. Tredger: So the minister has seen the appeal process? Can he table that appeal process so that we can let the parent and the child know what rights they have?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I will ask the department to obtain that from CSFY and table it in the House as quickly as I can.

Mr. Tredger: There were two parties in this dispute. Has the minister had conversations with the parents and/or the Education Appeal Tribunal who felt that they were able to hear this?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This incident happened with the family in 2013. Since then, I believe that the student has already graduated. So no, I haven't had any conversations with them. I have not had any conversations, although I have had some correspondence with a member on the Education Appeal Tribunal. The department and CSFY have had a number of discussions and on September 9, the appeal tribunal was informed that we would be proceeding with this decision. That's the reason for this change. That was the reason for the September 9 date. I think that was all that I was asked to do.

Mr. Tredger: So I guess when we look at different options and stuff, the Education Appeal Tribunal has been operating since the implementation of the act and, by all accounts, quite successfully, if indeed that's the number of matters they've heard.

Certainly, one would think that they would be involved in any conversations to define their authority. They may have some suggestions as to how to go further and resolve issues like this, as this one has passed through time, but for future ones arising. That's why I think it would be important to sit down with the present and past members of the Education Appeal Tribunal and see if they have any other alternatives.

I guess another question that I would have is: Does the minister see in this act to amend the act any implications for future distance education? Apparently there was another one that was heard. Will it have any implications for future distance education courses — the rights of people within the department, school boards or committees around denying courses of study and whether the department itself has a very clear procedure for someone who wishes to take a course that the department makes a ruling on. Is there an independent body or independent arbiter that would hear an appeal?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I also stated earlier, there are appeal mechanisms in place for a number of different issues that the act refers to as local or administrative decisions, where a person is employed by a school or the department and they have an impact on a student's education, health or safety — all of those matters are appealable. I would imagine, Madam Chair, the obvious appeal process is to go through the process within the department, going up to the deputy minister.

We're talking about eight appeals since 2008. There are thousands — literally thousands — of questions that come up on a daily, monthly and annual basis in the Department of Education that are resolved through mediation — through simply the parties all sitting down and talking together.

So the *Education Act* specifically identified those four areas where we needed to have the Education Appeal Tribunal. We agreed with the original drafter — well, maybe not necessarily agree with them, but we acknowledge the fact that this was the intention back in 1990, and we did not want to change anything in the act, other than to clarify what's already there.

That's why we took such a narrow view and such a narrow change to the act — because we didn't want to have an impact on any other process that's currently available throughout the Department of Education.

Mr. Tredger: I guess we agree that the Department of Education — and any department does resolve thousands of issues over the course of time, and sometimes in the same day, but, in fundamental justice, there must be an appeal process for someone to an independent body. They are very rare, as the minister indicated.

Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done and an independent body to look at it. Maybe — well, it's not currently, according to the minister, embedded within the *Education Act*. It would behoove us to move toward that. Has the minister checked with the Human Rights Commission to see if they felt that this limited some basic rights, or whether they felt this was in keeping with the spirit of the act?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, these are very difficult questions to answer because, as I've said over and over and over again, this is a minor, clarifying change. There's no substantive change to the legislation whatsoever. We're just confirming with absolute clarity the existing situation, thereby avoiding a costly court battle that we believe would come out and confirm exactly what we're saying here.

That is why there was no necessity to consult with all these other groups that the member opposite would like us to

consult with, because we're not changing the intent. We're not changing substantially anything in that act. We're simply clarifying what was already there.

Mr. Tredger: Just one last comment before I turn it over to someone else.

It is unusual to make minor changes to a major act. That's why it isn't done very often. It is also unusual to make those changes retroactively. It is also unusual to make changes to the act — any act — without consulting with the partners — all of the partners. Therein lies my concern. As the minister said, these are minor changes but they aren't minor to the Education Appeal Tribunal. They aren't minor to the student who was denied a course. It may not be minor to future students or future committees. I'm somewhat relieved to see that the minister feels that there is an independent appeal process for students caught in this situation in the future. It would be nice if we had them and we had some assurances that this was indeed in place before having to vote on this bill. As the minister said, they may be forthcoming fairly quickly. I would also really appreciate a legal opinion on whether or not applying it retroactively is possible.

Having expressed my concerns, I would like to thank the department for looking for a solution — and the minister. There are things that come up all the time.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Elias: I was just looking through the Standing Orders and specific rules under Question Period and rules for debate and no member shall ask for a legal opinion on the floor of the Assembly.

Chair: Did you wish to speak on the point of order, Ms. Moorcroft?

Ms. Moorcroft: Thank you, Madam Chair. The guidelines for Oral Question Period do say, under specific rule 5: "A question may not ask for a legal interpretation of a statute".

My colleague is asking the minister to explain on what basis they made these changes to the *Education Act*, and this is not Oral Question Period.

Chair's ruling

Chair: It's true that the rules that apply to Question Period are unlikely to apply to Committee of the Whole. However, it is probably not in order for any member to compel the tabling of a legal opinion. Can we move on?

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the minister and his officials for their time this afternoon.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the members from the department coming here today and for their time, and thanks to the minister for his clarification. We too have been hearing a few different concerns and, after listening to the debate so far, I do have some clarification questions.

We are opening this act and looking at — are we creating two different paths based upon whether or not you are under a certain public school system or under CSFY? Just for clarification, depending on whether a student is in the public school system compared to being under the authority of the CSFY, where exactly do appeals to the CSFY go? Is this a different process than if a student was just in a public school per se? Also, a concern that has come to our office is: Would that appeal cost out of pocket comparatively? Are there actually now two different pathways — one that would cost the parents money to appeal, whereas the other one would be an internal system? If the minister can clarify some of those concerns, it would be greatly appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Graham: We are talking about a public school system. CSFY is part of the public school system in the territory. It's just that they have a board. That is the primary difference. What we are talking about in this specific instance was distance education, and distance education, we do not believe — whether it's in CSFY or F.H. Collins or Porter Creek Secondary or Dawson City — should not be something that is appealable to the Education Appeal Tribunal. It was never intended under the act in 1990 to be appealable or it would have been mentioned. We do not feel that it should be appealable today. The whole system is exactly the same. We're not making any special arrangements. The only special arrangement would be that if a person in the CSFY had a concern over distance education, they would go through that school board's appeal process. That's why I said the Department of Education wanted to ensure that CSFY had an appropriate appeal process in place for distance education courses and that it would have to mirror the Department of Education's appeal process for every other school in the territory because the Department of Education is essentially the school board for the rest of the territory.

Chair: Does any other person wish to speak in general debate?

We will proceed with a clause-by-clause reading of Bill No. 94.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

Mr. Tredger: It was on the second page. I missed the back part of clause 4.

Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request unanimous consent to revisit clause 4.

Unanimous consent re revisiting clause 4

Chair: The Member for Mayo-Tatchun has requested unanimous consent to revisit clause 4, which we previously carried. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Clause 4 — revisited

Mr. Tredger: Clause 4(b): “The Minister shall appoint to the Education Appeal Tribunal a chair, secretary and up to nine other members, for terms specified by the Minister.”

My question for the minister is, given the need for an independent body — an arm's-length body — has he considered bringing it to the attention of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees so that the members could be appointed through that standing committee?

Hon. Mr. Graham: First of all, this is currently in two sections and I think we're combining it into a single section. It is not changing; it is exactly the same as it is now. We have not considered turning this over to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, because we don't believe it is a major board or committee.

There are a number of other appeal tribunals where the exact same process is followed. I don't see any point in changing it at this time, but it is something that I suppose we could consider — that's for sure — but at this time, no, I haven't made any suggestion that we should do that.

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Mr. Tredger: This is the retroactive portion. Given the concern around this, will the minister consider making it effective today rather than retroactively?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think I explained why it was done this way. We're not certain if it would have any implications on the court case that is currently underway, but I just want to make sure that the member opposite — he seemed to believe that retroactive amendments are extremely unusual, but I am informed that is not actually the case. Retroactive amendments are made from time to time when necessary. They are really not that unusual. In this case, the date selected was the date at which time the Education Appeal Tribunal was informed that we would be going ahead with these changes. That's why that date was selected.

Clause 5 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Elias: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Elias that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, and directed me to report the bill 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.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 90: *Land Titles Act, 2015* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 90, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 90, entitled *Land Titles Act, 2015*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 90, entitled *Land Titles Act, 2015*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm not going to be very long in speaking to this as there has been a substantial amount of debate, especially with the Member for Copperbelt South, on this bill and the contents of it. I will just again thank all who have participated in this project, including the stakeholder advisory group, all the stakeholders who have commented, and the Department of Justice as well as other assisting departments, including Energy, Mines and Resources and Highways and Public Works, for all of their work in developing this piece of legislation. With that I will conclude my remarks and commend it to the House.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to again express our support of the amendments to the *Land Titles Act*. In fact, it's an entirely new act. The *Land Titles Act* that remains in effect now is dated 1898, and we're about to pass at third reading the *Land Titles Act, 2015*. I would also like to thank the department, the staff of the Land Titles Office, the interdepartmental working group, the stakeholders community — including Yukon surveyors, lawyers and realtors — all those who provided input and put many hours of work into these changes.

I want to acknowledge that the Department of Justice used a consultative approach in modernizing the land titles system in the Yukon. After receiving an inspector's report in 2012, there were a couple of years where a discussion paper was put out and a "what we heard" document was put together, and then the legislative drafting was done with the participation of the stakeholders group.

During debate one of the issues that I identified was to do with the need to purchase a new computer platform to move forward. The minister indicated that, along with the Department of Highways and Public Works, the Department

of Justice is working to ensure that the contract could be structured in a way that increases the chances of local companies being able to bid on it. The minister indicated that it would probably take three years or more to have the electronic system fully functional and to move toward an electronic registry of land titles.

We're pleased to see the statute but the work isn't completed yet. Improvements to the business practice in the Land Titles Office have already been undertaken; however, it can still take up to four weeks to receive permanent title. The minister indicated the department's goal is to get the registry process down to five days or less, and we're certainly hopeful that can be achieved.

A significant addition to the *Land Titles Act, 2015* is the ability to register category A and B settlement lands of First Nations without losing their aboriginal rights and title. With regard to the assurance fund, we had some discussion about making sure that the monies would stay in the assurance fund and that there would be no move to put the assurance fund into general revenue, even though the new act does provide for that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to make mention of the fact that the minister indicated that the target completion date for the regulations are for spring of 2016, so there is more hard work ahead for the department staff who put so much time into getting the *Land Titles Act, 2015* to the floor of the House. We thank them again for that and hope that the regulations process will also be able to be accomplished by the spring.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to speak at third reading to Bill No. 90, which contains amendments, as we know, to the *Land Titles Act*. I also do want to thank the officials of the Department of Justice for the work they've done over a number of years to produce this modern piece of legislation.

There are several improvements to our *Land Titles Act* which will hopefully bring it into the 21st century. The impact may not be felt for some time, however.

The introduction of the ability for Yukon First Nations to register their land in the Land Titles Office while retaining the aboriginal title is a major step forward. This will allow First Nations who so choose to opt into setting up long-term leases on their own land. I welcome that. I want to take this time to congratulate the Kwanlin Dün First Nation on their leadership in pushing for these changes, and I look forward to the positive economic impacts that this will have for our territory.

I do have a question for the minister when he gets up in third reading here; specifically, can the minister inform the House when the government anticipates that this bill will come into force? With that, I will be supporting this legislation here in third reading, and I want to thank all those who have worked so hard to put it together.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank all members for their comments in support of this legislation. In the specific answer to the question the Leader of the Third Party asked, I had actually provided it earlier, but he may have missed that. I had indicated that the regulatory package to bring the bill into force and effect — the first three portions of those regulations are on a tight schedule, but we hope to be completed during the spring of 2016. The three portions of that regulatory package are the general regulations necessary to bring the act into force and effect, the regulations pertaining to registering a plan in the survey office and last, but certainly not least, the ability for First Nations who chose to do so to register category A and B settlement lands in the Land Titles Office after first concluding an agreement with the Yukon government allowing them to do that. That will bring the bill into effect at that point in time if all goes according to plan on the admittedly tight drafting schedule.

Again, I would like to acknowledge the work not only of the policy people, but the legal drafters who have had a very large load on them in terms of completing this large project to modernize legislation that is over 100 years old. They also ensured that within the, I believe, 120 or so pages of the act, we have properly addressed and allowed for the transition to an electronic registry, which have better reflected modern land practices, and have done so in a way that puts in place a bill that will stand the test of time for the Yukon in setting up a more modern land titles system.

With that, I will commend this bill to the House.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 90 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 90 has passed this House.

Mr. Elias: 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): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 11, Women's Directorate, in Bill No. 20, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20: *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: Prior to the break, the Chair announced we would be discussing Vote 11. That is not correct. We're going to be discussing Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise today, Madam Chair, to speak to Bill No. 20, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, our supplementary estimates to date. I should begin by noting that I'm joined by Chris Mahar, our director of finance for Community Services, and Paul Moore, who, as of last Monday, is the new Deputy Minister of Community Services.

The supplementary estimates before us consist of a \$5.7-million increase in operation and maintenance expenditures and a decrease of \$4.3 million in capital expenditures. The department's combined O&M and capital budget for 2015-16, including this supplementary estimate, is just over \$140 million. This represents a significant investment in programs and services that directly benefit Yukoners in our communities by making strategic investments in Yukon infrastructure, nurturing and building strong relationships with Yukon communities, delivering satisfactory levels of emergency services, completing major legislative and regulatory projects, providing improved recreation opportunities for Yukoners, and administering a broad range

of licensing, business and regulatory services for the health, safety and protection of the public.

The department continues to work to achieve goals set out in our strategic plan and in our mandate. We have made significant progress toward these priorities in 2015-16, and this supplementary budget helps illustrate what we've done and will continue to do over the remainder of the fiscal year. Our programs, services and targeted investments help make Yukon a great place to live, work, play and raise a family.

Madam Chair, as I mentioned, we have an overall increase of \$5.7 million in this supplementary budget for O&M. The largest portion of this was due to a \$4.6-million increase for additional fire suppression activity. Every year Yukon can experience emergencies, including wildfires. As a part of Community Services, Wildland Fire Management protects Yukon communities and infrastructure at risk from unwanted wildland fires and other natural or human-caused disasters. Wildland Fire Management provides leadership, expertise and support in the areas of aviation management, telecommunications, safety and training, wildland fire operations and preparedness, planning and science, and logistic and support services.

In 2015, Yukon had its most active spring fire season on record, with 184 forest fires affecting approximately 177,000 hectares. This contrasts with 2014's relatively quiet fire season, when only 33 fires affected 1,300 hectares. Ultimately this necessitated an increase in our O&M for this year to support our important fire suppression activities.

Additionally, we increased our investment in O&M to support rural EMS community and First Nation partnerships. In this area, we have made great progress. We have increased our in-station training for community responders, we have implemented an online learning management system, and we built even stronger relationships.

In Haines Junction, for example, at the request of local responders and community partners, Yukon EMS implemented a pilot program aimed at both engaging the community in capacity building and on increasing the volunteer base over the long term. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and representatives from the aboriginal recruitment and development program also worked with YEMS during that recruitment process for the pilot program. As a result of this program, YEMS has strengthened its relationship with CAFN and has contributed to the professional development of its citizens.

Yukon First Nations will continue to be important partners as YEMS builds and supports the volunteer base of community responder teams in other communities. Although the pilot program ended on September 30, 2015, YEMS continues to work with the community to look for long-term solutions for community coverage using the volunteer model of service delivery.

In addition to our investments under Protective Services, we have also made modest increases in O&M for community development and corporate policy in Community Affairs in this supplementary budget.

First, I would like to highlight that we have increased our O&M by \$70,000 to support the participation of Yukoners in the 2016 Haywood Ski Nationals event. Our Yukon skiers are among the best in the country and they always proudly represent us at national and international events.

With regard to winter sports, Madam Chair, I look forward to discussing some of the success and new initiatives we've had with regard to Mount Sima, and I will do so later on today.

We have also increased our O&M budget by \$414,000 to assist communities with developing asset management plans. Asset management is an important part of capital planning and sustainable infrastructure. Community Services is assisting Yukon communities to build asset management and sustainable service delivery practices into their organizational cultures. An asset management implementation pilot project for both the Village of Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council was successfully completed this summer.

The results of that pilot project, along with the lessons learned on asset management, were shared at a conference on asset management earlier this month. That initiative was the beginning of a new series of programs, services and supports that we will be providing, along with the AYC municipalities, to enhance the capacity with regard to asset management in the Yukon going forward. I would be happy to talk about that a little bit further as we get on with today as well.

Finally, under operation and maintenance, I would like to highlight a \$78,000-revote to support the public information material related to the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. As I'm sure everyone is aware, we recently completed the regulations that will bring the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* into force. The new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations will provide Yukoners with modern tenancy legislation that balances the interest of landlords and tenants and promotes a healthy private rental market in Yukon.

The Residential Tenancies Office will administer the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. It will provide a number of services, including access to binding dispute resolution for landlords and tenants. Our team in the Yukon Residential Tenancies Office is in the process of delivering a comprehensive public awareness and education campaign for both landlords and tenants in order to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the new act. This campaign includes information sessions and printed materials, including a comprehensive information handbook and information sheets. That campaign is underway, and readers of local newspapers will recognize the advertisements in those papers, which are soliciting input and participation from the public.

The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations will apply to most current and future residential tenancy agreements in Yukon. The act will also apply to housing agencies, including Yukon Housing, the Grey Mountain Housing Society and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. As well, this new legislation will also apply to hotels, motels and other

tourist establishments where guests stay for six months or longer.

The legislation provides new standards for safety, including mandatory carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms that will help protect tenants. A one-year transition period from January 1, 2016 to January 1, 2017 will provide landlords with time to make repairs or improvements in order to bring their rental properties up to the minimum rental standards.

I should add that the Yukon Housing Corporation has recently introduced several housing funding programs to help landlords with the cost of building improvements. The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations take into consideration some of the unique rental situations that we have here in the Yukon regarding the age, character and location of some rental units from log cabins off the grid to fully serviced residential properties.

The completion of this act and its regulations delivers upon our 2015-16 departmental mandate to complete major legislative and regulatory projects. Before moving on, I should note that I appreciate the input that we've received from stakeholder groups on that work. The group that I met with most recently a number of months ago was the landlords association, which provided significant input with regard to our education campaign that is underway currently.

Moving on, I would like to describe the changes in our capital expenditures as a part of the supplementary estimates as well. This supplementary budget includes a decrease in capital expenditures of \$4.3 million for the Department of Community Services. This change is largely due to deferring over \$3.3 million in funding for the construction of the new Carcross fire hall until next spring. We have recently signed a Yukon asset construction agreement with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation that will help this project move forward, and we are pleased to see the progress that has been made. My understanding is that project has recently closed or is about to close — I stand to be corrected. We look forward to that project moving forward.

We are also deferring \$480,000 in funding for the Dawson City recreation centre as part of the revised workplan provided by the City of Dawson. This means that Dawson expects to spend a total of \$1 million this year rather than the originally budgeted \$1.48 million. We are also deferring \$110,000 in funding for the Yukon outdoor sports complex to a future year. We remain hopeful that this complex will be able to move forward soon in order to provide another important piece of recreational infrastructure for the Yukon and our athletes, both recreational and competitive.

Under this supplementary budget we have a modest increase of \$113,000 to support the information technology equipment and systems required under our new personal property lien registration and search system.

The remainder of our changes under the capital portion of our supplementary budget relate to adjustments around the Building Canada fund projects. These include a number of realignments of estimates to reflect the remaining overall project budget that is available. Suffice it to say, we continue

to make significant investments under Building Canada in all of our communities. In 2015-16 alone, we expect to spend over \$30 million in projects, including those supporting our water and waste-water infrastructure, solid-waste management, green infrastructure, bridges and roads.

Municipal and First Nation governments, as well as various unincorporated communities throughout the territory, have benefited from the funding. The original Building Canada fund is ending next year in 2016, and the new Building Canada fund will begin to roll out at the same time. The new Building Canada fund will provide approximately \$342 million to support Yukon infrastructure over the next 10 years in a 75-percent Canada/25-percent Yukon split. This funding will help Yukon government address our ongoing infrastructure needs, create jobs and improve the quality of life for all Yukoners.

While to date we have been planning for the new Building Canada fund, as I expressed, obviously there is a degree of uncertainty around what our continued infrastructure funding will look like. With the new government in Ottawa having committed to make fairly substantial increases, it remains to be seen what that fund will look like — whether it will be part of the new Building Canada fund or if it will be a new program altogether, in which case we'll have to adapt to that as it comes.

The funding priorities will continue to be guided by a new Yukon infrastructure plan that identifies projects within the target areas for the funds. To develop the plan, Community Services met in early 2015 with municipalities, First Nations and local advisory councils to identify their local infrastructure priorities.

Projects will continue to be subject to the Canada-Yukon approval process under the new Building Canada fund. The focus under the new Building Canada fund will continue to invest in the core infrastructure of all our communities.

However, again I should note that it remains to be seen whether or not the new Building Canada fund will continue in its current form or whether it will be changed substantially, in which case it's possible that the processes by which we apply for that funding could also change.

The ongoing partnership we have with Canada, municipalities and First Nations is helping us to build vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities while we address core infrastructure priorities of roads, clean drinking water, green energy, and solid-waste and waste-water management at both territorial and local levels.

While the Yukon infrastructure plan was a valuable exercise, if there are substantial changes made to the national funding priorities of the Government of Canada, we may have to revisit that plan and we will rely on the strong relationship we have with Yukon municipalities to inform any changes that we may indeed want to make.

In closing, Madam Chair, I want to emphasize that the Department of Community Services continues to work with and for Yukon communities to make a difference through our 2015-16 investments in O&M and capital projects. Our team members in the department, whether staff or volunteer, make

significant contributions each and every day. Collectively we put the “community” in Community Services and we continue to work tirelessly on behalf of Yukoners to make our territory a great place to work, live, play and raise a family.

I see that my time is soon to lapse, so I will conclude my opening remarks and I look forward to hearing from members opposite about questions they have with regard to this budget, and I will do my best to answer those.

Mr. Barr: I would like to thank the officials for being here with us today and for their ongoing work in the Department of Community Services. I know it’s a large area and I would like to congratulate Deputy Minister Paul Moore on his appointment. It’s very nice to see.

I’ll just start right off with some questions, and I thank the minister for his opening remarks. I remember last time he just got up and said to take it over, so it was a little different this time. He chose to speak and it’s good to hear from you, actually, when we start these things off.

I’ll just go through by asking questions about some of the things you spoke of, and I have some other concerns from past issues that are ongoing, and I will just go through it like that, if we could. One I would like to start with is — the minister just mentioned the Dawson City recreation centre. We know that it’s a long-standing project. These appropriations of \$480,000 — almost a third of the rec centre is planned. An appropriation of \$1.48 million has lapsed. What is the reason? Why is the government letting yet more money carry over on this long-overdue project?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Dawson recreation centre, we have a committee between the City of Dawson and the Department of Community Services — two members from Community Services and two members from the City of Dawson — that presents a workplan annually for the expenditure of the funds that were allocated for that project for the Dawson City recreation centre. That committee makes recommendations to government and to the City of Dawson about how that money will be spent.

In this case, a change was made to the amount of work they wanted to do this year. I think it just related to what they felt was necessary this year — as to why there was a change, a reduction — but this wasn’t something where we are holding back money or anything like that. This is simply a case where this committee makes recommendations about what they want to do to that facility on an annual basis. Once that funding that was allocated a number of years ago runs out, then we’ll have to have another conversation about the next steps for that facility.

Just to provide the background, there was a commitment made by a previous Premier about a fixed amount of money. I can’t recall what the original amount of money was — yes, it was about \$4 million that was to be spent in this way. There is still a pot of money available that was originally allocated there. That is the money that we’re talking about now and it is disbursed, based on the recommendations of the committee.

The remaining budget for the work on the facility, I should note, is just over \$2.8 million; \$1 million will be spent in 2015-16, and just over \$1.8 million will be remaining,

which is currently planned to be spent in 2016-17. The current annual workplan outlines that the City of Dawson will complete inspection of superstructure and roof cladding, correction of life-safety-related deficiencies, electrical controls and sprinkler system repair, duct cleaning, feasibility report on an artificial ice mat system, installation of ice — including slab-rehabilitation investigation and work — roof work for the curling rink, and consultation and planning for the unused upstairs recreation area.

Health and safety concerns are still paramount. Dawson understands that these must be addressed before anything else. The recreation centre is inspected each year in the fall by a structural engineer. Since 2006, engineering reports have shown that ground movements are not significant enough to affect the occupancy or safety of the existing facility but that ongoing monitoring should occur.

Madam Chair, this is an ongoing project between the City of Dawson and the Government of Yukon. I know that over the course of the last few years, there have been some changes in thought about what the future of that facility should or ought to be and I know there is an ongoing discussion in the community of Dawson about that — in particular, the potential use of the unused space in the upstairs, which, I guess, would be the west end of the building. I think there is an interest in the community to see that used for something other than what it is being used for now, which is sitting empty.

I hope that answers the question for the member opposite.

Mr. Barr: It just seems that this has been dragging on. I understand that the minister has stated that the committee decides what’s next and so on and so forth. When is this going to be spent? We’re looking at years from your response. I’m sure the people of Dawson would like to hear why this is just not completed.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Again, as I said before, there’s a fixed amount of money that has been allocated. It has been allocated since, I think, about 2009. That money is being spent per the wishes of the community vis-à-vis the committee, so the City of Dawson articulates, through its members on the committee, what it wants to see done in a given year. This given year they have decided to spend \$1 million. That will mean that \$1.8 million remains. It’s anticipated that will be spent by the conclusion of the 2016-17 budget year. That will complete the funding that has been allocated for the last number of years. Once that’s gone, in 2017, there will have to be a decision about what the next steps are, but the reason this has taken so long is simply a function of the decision-making process that is in place for this money.

We have a committee in place — two reps from CS and two reps from the City of Dawson — and they make recommendations based on what they feel is appropriate for next steps for that facility. I appreciate that it hasn’t moved terribly quickly, but it has moved at the pace that the community has expressed.

The current agreement ends in 2017 and that’s about all I can say about that.

Mr. Barr: Perhaps the Member for Klondike will have something else to add to that. I'll leave that for now.

The planned replacement of the Carcross fire hall seems to be almost completely deferred by the government. Again, why has this replacement of the fire hall — I have attended some meetings and I was kind of under the impression that things would be underway by now. Some of the comments we hear from the community is that we are waiting to hear of the colour of the building, which doesn't seem quite right to me, but I would just like to get an update on what's happening with the fire hall in Carcross.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We are indeed moving forward with plans to replace the existing fire hall in Carcross. The Government of Yukon has allocated a total of just under \$3 million for the fire hall construction in this budget but, as I noted, that is being deferred to next year. There have been a few things that have delayed us. One was the negotiation of the YACA with the CTFN. That Yukon asset construction agreement has been signed now. The construction tender was released at the end of last month. I believe it either has or will be awarded very shortly, so we can anticipate construction of that facility to begin in the near future, perhaps as soon as the building season commences in 2016.

If there's some advance work that can be done, I'm sure it will done, so I stand to be corrected as to the start time of that. From our perspective, this is going forward well.

With regard to the community consultation, the Fire Marshal's Office has met with the community a number of times. The FMO met with the local advisory council to discuss the new fire hall, which is based on an existing proven design. The Fire Marshal's Office will continue to work with the community to ensure that the exterior of the building is in keeping with the character and sense of place that is reflective of Carcross. At the last meeting between the Fire Marshal's Office and the community, our fire marshal presented a number of options to the community. It is my understanding that they selected a concrete board-and-batten style exterior, which I think they felt best reflected the sense of community and the look that they wanted for the community. I realize there are always competing views about what should or should not be inside of the building, but in this case it is a fire hall and it needs to be functional for our Fire Marshal's Office. We chose a design. I believe it was based on the Mount Lorne design, which was an effective design that we have had experience with and we thought was the most appropriate from a functionality perspective. With regard to the exterior, the colour and the design of the siding, we consulted with the community, and the choice of the options presented was made to go with the concrete board-and-batten. I don't recall the actual colour of it, but I can get back to the House with the colour.

At the end of the day, this project is going forward. I hope the community is satisfied with the consultation that has occurred, although I am sure there are some members who would have like to have seen different things in this hall. As we move forward and construct it, I am sure that the Fire Marshal's Office will be happy to further engage with the

community to ensure that the facility meets the needs of the community. The important thing is that this is a new fire hall for the community, and it is going to be a functional, useful piece of our infrastructure that will help protect our citizens.

I think that covers off the design and contracting aspects of it, but if there is more to this, I am happy to answer further questions.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I do remember when there had been ongoing meetings regarding the building itself and that it would house search and rescue, ambulance and fire. The Minister of Community Services at the time had met with some of the residents upon a request from this member, which in turn led to having a meeting space within the new building. There was a sense at the time — because of the long-standing request for a new community centre in Carcross, which has yet to be seen — was that the meeting space within the new building be of a size where people could gather, and actually the response of the community was to have that being the larger part of the building in conjunction with the emergency services building.

I know that this didn't happen and the room is also going to be used for training, which is very helpful, especially with the problems in the past that existed from people being expected to travel into Whitehorse. Now we have someone coming out to the communities doing training and so that space is there. It may seem like a small, insignificant thing, but members of the community asked for three sinks in this training room. It seemed to be that there could be no guarantees that they could have three sinks and the reason for it was that when it wasn't used for training, there could be some other little functions going on there and that will allow the regulations around handling food and so on and such, requiring three sinks. Can the minister let us know if he had heard anything about this and, if not, would he be amicable to doing this? I have offered to pay for the extra sink. The community would really like this extra sink and could the minister commit to having three sinks in this training room?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I wanted to just be clear that this new building will indeed integrate the three components of Protective Services. There will be YEMS, fire and search and rescue all co-located within this building. Earlier I said Mount Lorne; it's actually Golden Horn that the facility is based on.

It will integrate the local emergency services. It will have three bays for fire, EMS and search and rescue. As well there will also be a fitness room available for community use. That was part of the consultation that occurred — the fitness room within the fire hall would be available for community use. My understanding is that it would replace an aging existing fitness room somewhere else in Carcross. I think it's a positive step forward for the community to have access to that.

The Fire Marshal's Office has also had discussions with the LAC president or former president at least, who also happened to be the former fire chief, to build community support for the volunteer fire department. Additionally, it has offered to attend LAC meetings to share information further.

As well on the training front, I think it's important to note that we are in both our volunteer fire and EMS developing the capacity to provide additional training online so that community residents don't have to travel into Whitehorse as much as they used to. There will still be times when people will have to come into Whitehorse for certain things, but we're trying to develop the capacity across Protective Services to provide that training online for rural volunteer members.

I also want to note that this new building is going to be a huge upgrade on what is there now. I think it's an old metal-clad grader station, actually, that they're using in Carcross currently. I am confident this will be a welcome improvement on what we have.

With regard to the number of sinks, I don't know how many sinks there are in the building. I hadn't heard that before. I'm reticent to commit to adding another sink because I think the contract is already closed for the construction of this building, but if it hasn't, it's closing shortly and I don't think we want to make design changes at this point.

While I appreciate the willingness of the member opposite to chip in for the sink, I don't think that's going to be possible. If there's a need for an additional sink, I think we're going to have to stick with the current design, although I can't tell you how many sinks the current design has. It may indeed have three and I could be off base anyway.

While I appreciate the intent, I don't think we'll be making design changes at this point. I also should note, Madam Chair, that we are — and this isn't in this budget or even in this department, but — making a considerable investment in the community of Carcross with regard to the learning centre that's being undertaken in partnership with the CTFN. So there are some major public assets being constructed in Carcross currently and, on the whole, we hope that these will at least begin to meet the community demand for public spaces. I know that some residents of Carcross aren't content with the learning centre. I think they would prefer a different building of some sort, but currently we're going forward with that learning centre and we're going forward with this new fire hall, which will integrate our local emergency services — EMS, fire and search and rescue. I think it's a positive step forward and we were happy to respond to the community needs with regard to providing public access to the fitness centre in that new building.

Mr. Barr: I would encourage the minister, if there have not been any design changes, to look into that. Also, as I think back to the building of the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre, there were many design changes and it didn't seem to stop that or other infrastructure building needs.

I don't want to go on about this too long, but I would say that, although the community of Carcross is happy they're getting this building and the learning centre and so on and so forth — and this has been stated many times in the community — their priority of the four major infrastructures would be different from what they're receiving, although they are happy that they're receiving this building. It is in my riding and, from numerous meetings over the years, the learning centre, which was called the potlatch house at one point, the priorities

were that yes, it was the learning centre first with a timeline to a community club. The minister may be happy to know that there's a whole new board for the community club. It's quite active.

I believe 20 people came out to the meeting to breathe life into that place. One of the reasons for the sink is that they need the kitchen remodelled in the community centre so that they can do some of these things. It was just felt that they have been asking for that for a long time — years — and so in the meantime a sink in this room was not too much of a hardship to ask for.

Also, since we're still in Carcross, there has been interest for a couple of years in the old VIC, which sits empty except in the summer months when the washrooms are used for visitors coming to the community. I know that there is some more recent activity with some folks being able to access that building. I was wondering if the minister could update this side of the House on what's been happening with the VIC.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I just wanted to clarify — certainly back to what the member said — was he suggesting that the Carcross fire hall was not a priority for the community? I wasn't clear. He said that there were a number of priorities and I think if it was up to him, this wouldn't be a priority or something like that. I was just kind of unclear whether or not he was implying that the Carcross fire hall, and the replacement of this old metal grader station to provide a new modern fire hall, was not a priority for the community? Can he clarify that for me?

Mr. Barr: Definitely a priority — when and what would be built. The priorities that came from the community was first the potlatch house, which is now the learning centre; then a community centre, which would also engage youth opportunities; and then on the list would be the fire hall. It's not that it wasn't a priority — just in the timelines of which would come to the community.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the clarification. I think that when we look at these things, the consideration with regard to the ability to provide emergency services like response to fire and EMS need to be prioritized above certain things, and I appreciate that not everybody agrees with that. When we look at the needs of a community and we consult with the communities, we often take issues like life safety very seriously. I know that every community wants a variety of new things and we can only do so much, but in this case, the learning centre and the fire hall are underway. I'm sure that, in the coming years, we'll be able to make some changes with regard to recreation, but we did feel that the local emergency services that were important to life safety needed to be prioritized.

With regard to the visitor information centre, my understanding — and I've had a number of conversations with the LAC about this — I think ultimately the building itself falls under the responsibility of Highways and Public Works currently and so they are able to set out the priorities or the uses of that building. I know that there has been some interest from the Tourism department and the LAC about the building.

I do know that a number of different individuals, groups and other levels of government have expressed some interest in the use of that building. I know that the Department of Highways and Public Works is aware of it and is giving some thought as to what can be done with that building. I think it is fair to say that it is probably being underutilized currently. I think there is something we can do there, although the Department of Community Services doesn't have a direct role in that. I would encourage the member to raise that with the Minister of Highways and Public Works at the appropriate opportunity.

Mr. Barr: The minister had mentioned the volunteer service delivery model, which includes rural EMS. Speaking about the volunteers, I know that out in the Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes area, there are a number of very stable fire crews and EMS services. It is difficult to know where we are at in the territory, in all of the communities. Could the minister tell us the level of volunteer sign up for first responders across the Yukon? Is it adequate to meet the communities' needs?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think, given the question, the specifics that he is looking for is EMS, so I will start with EMS. Throughout the territory, we have a largely volunteer-based system, except for here in Whitehorse. We also have paid staff in Dawson and Watson Lake. In other communities, we rely on volunteers. That is partly by virtue of history and partly of cost and partly of finding the best way to deliver the services in those communities. Every community ebbs and flows with regard to volunteers. It is always a challenge to find an adequate number of volunteers in any community for these types of roles. They are very important roles, and we do our best from the perspective of the Yukon government to support them, whether it is through providing training, equipment, uniforms, or the ability to liaise with others in other communities to learn from what's going on.

Community recruitment and retention of volunteers is difficult everywhere. I would say, as a general statement, that we are doing fairly well right now. There are some communities where there are challenges, and I will speak about some of those in a few minutes. The member opposite asked a very broad question about the entire territory, and I would say that, on the whole, I think we are doing a pretty good job. We have some communities where we can bolster our volunteers, and there are some ways that we can do that, and I will speak about them in a moment. On the whole, I think the model we have right now is sound. It would be nice if we had an unlimited amount of money to have paid EMS responders in every single community, but that is simply not possible, so we do have the system that we do.

From time to time, though, communities experience local pressures — challenges of a very local nature — and require specific changes. I know the member is very familiar with the pilot project we did in Haines Junction with the Village of Haines Junction, the local volunteers and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

I can get into more about that pilot project in a few minutes, Madam Chair, but the overall intent of that was not

to change our system fundamentally away from the volunteer model. It was to enhance the ability of that community to respond to its volunteers' needs or to its need to provide volunteers. It was a shot to try to get things going in that community with regard to volunteerism.

We're going to do a review of that pilot project in the coming weeks and months, along with our community stakeholders. So it remains to be seen how successful that was. I do know that — anecdotally I've heard — it has been successful and we do now have, as a result of that project, a number of new trained volunteers in the community.

What is particularly encouraging is that those volunteers — some of them, at least — are coming from the First Nation in the community. That's an area where I think we can make improvements across the territory — better engaging with Yukon First Nations to have First Nation citizens participate and volunteer in the local EMS and fire emergency services in their communities.

With regard to some of the overarching numbers, I would be happy to provide some of those now. Across Yukon there are approximately 185 YEMS volunteers in 15 communities and 225 active volunteer firefighters overseen by 16 district fire chiefs in unincorporated communities. There are more than 100 ground and inland water search and rescue volunteers in seven communities, and there are 50 Yukon Amateur Radio Association volunteers who are located primarily in Whitehorse.

Emergency response is a shared responsibility in Yukon, of course, and Protective Services trains volunteers and provides equipment needed to respond safely and effectively. The communities are responsible to help recruit volunteers and to champion their programs.

To simplify public access to emergency health as well, Protective Services is leading Yukon government's efforts to expand support for basic 911 emergency call service, which is a key part of our mandate for this year. All Yukon communities will soon be served by the system based in Whitehorse. Once in place, Yukoners and visitors alike will be able to dial the same easy-to-remember emergency number used across North America. We're working very closely with the RCMP to expand that capacity, and I look forward to providing more information about that in the coming discussions.

With regard specifically again to EMS — last year, in 2014, EMS responded to 6,632 ground calls, 5,329 in the Whitehorse catchment area and 1,303 in the communities. The YEMS medevac air ambulance service responded to 876 calls in the same time frame. Since 2007, when responsibility for YEMS was transferred from the Department of Health and Social Services to Community Services, demand for YEMS services has increased, as evidenced by ongoing annual increases in call volume.

To meet that demand, staff have been added to the Whitehorse stations to increase service delivery. Permanent paramedic staff have been stationed in Dawson City and Watson Lake, as I mentioned earlier.

Additional personnel were allocated to clinical and medevac operations, and infrastructure upgrades have been made in all communities where YEMS has a presence. In particular, 17 full-time staff have been added to YEMS in Whitehorse, bringing the complement of full-time staff members in the city to 72. Seven new members were distributed between Dawson City and Watson Lake. In addition to paid staff members, YEMS relies on the services of more than 185 dedicated volunteers territory-wide, as I mentioned earlier.

In 2007, a memorandum of understanding between YEMS and rural volunteers clarified the roles and responsibilities. It also increased honoraria, identified funds to support volunteer activities and established codes of conduct.

In 2013, the expired MOU formed the basis for the new standard operational procedures and internal policies that provide program consistency.

In 2013, a new payroll system was implemented to process volunteer honoraria payment. The Yukon government has invested \$179,000 in funding in 2014-15 to improve YEMS infrastructure across the territory and to increase volunteer recruitment and retention. We have made a subsequent investment of \$500,000 for this fiscal year and plan to spend another \$321,000 in 2016-17 to support this important work.

The measures that are included in this allocation include increasing the supply of uniforms, upgrading medical equipment, enhancing safety equipment and improving fleet management and station maintenance.

In addition to providing in-station training to community responders, YEMS has implemented an online learning management system known as LMS, which is a key part of our department's mandate for this year and enables community responders to development and maintain clinical competency without having to leave their home communities.

YEMS completed a review of its clinical guidelines in the spring of last year. The new guidelines were made available to responders in both electronic and print formats.

YEMS also has MOUs with Yukon College and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology to allow paramedic students to complete their ambulance practicums here in Yukon. This contributes to the development of the paramedic profession and offers valuable recruitment and cross-training opportunities to YEMS.

YEMS has moved and upgraded its primary and backup communication centres. The service enhancements offered by this upgrade are already available to communication officers and territorial responders. Full operational integration of phase 1 services started on September 30 of this year.

In November 2013, the new emergency response centre in Whitehorse was officially opened. It was built to post-disaster construction standards and it houses Whitehorse's primary ambulance station and YEMS corporate offices.

The existing ambulance station next to the hospital now serves as Whitehorse's second station but, as we all know, this Riverdale station will relocate to a purpose-built facility on

the hospital campus in 2016 as a part of the Whitehorse General Hospital expansion project.

Together these two facilities are improving response capability and emergency service to residents of the greater Whitehorse service area.

Furthermore, to strengthen the organization's interoperability capabilities, YEMS staff are trained in the instant command system used by emergency responders in Protective Services and across North America. In addition YEMS, the Fire Marshal's Office and Yukon Search and Rescue have engaged in a pilot program offering shared, inter-agency response training in Dawson.

In 2014-15, two new ambulances, at a cost of about \$155,000 each, were deployed as part of YEMS's ongoing operational strategy to replace units on a multi-year, distance-travelled basis. Another two ambulances have been ordered for deployment in this fiscal year.

YEMS, with the support of Community Services, forwarded an order-in-council in December 2014 requesting indemnification for the contract's position that advises YEMS's clinical practice. Following receipt of government approval to extend this indemnification, YEMS contracted a physician to oversee the clinical elements of its quality assurance and clinical review processes. This is a best practice used in all Canadian EMS jurisdictions.

EMS has partnered with Health and Social Services and Alkan Air to implement a bariatric transport system to improve Yukon air ambulance medevac service for patients whose weight or girth exceeds the safe operating parameters of standard medevac equipment.

At the request of the community partners in Haines Junction, we undertook the pilot project there. I know I had committed to providing a little more information about that, so I will now. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and representatives from the aboriginal recruitment and development program in the Public Service Commission also worked with YEMS during the recruitment process for that pilot program. As a result of the program, YEMS has strengthened its relationship with CAFN and has contributed to the professional development of its citizens.

Yukon First Nations will continue to be important partners as YEMS builds and supports the volunteer base of community responder teams in other communities. Although the pilot program ended on September 30 of this year, YEMS continues to work with the community to look for long-term solutions for community coverage using the volunteer model of service delivery. YEMS continues to strengthen its internal administration as well as its reporting, education and staffing practices to improve the delivery of high quality and efficient pre-hospital care to Yukoners across the territory.

As you can see, we have come a long way with EMS since it became a part of Community Services. While we have made considerable progress, and I believe we are on the right track, there is more work to be done. The challenges related to recruitment and retention will be ongoing as long as we have a volunteer model in place. That challenge will not be one that we can meet alone, and we will have to rely on our

community partners in a variety of Yukon communities to meet that challenge. In the case of Haines Junction, I think we have demonstrated a unique and specialized approach to that challenge. It's one that we will consider in reviewing that pilot program — whether or not it is appropriate for other communities as well.

I hope that answers the member's question with regard to recruitment and retention of EMS members here in Yukon and some of the ways that we support those individuals.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response.

Just to stay on with EMS and in speaking with the Marsh Lake volunteer fire department just last month when I had been inquiring, it's part of a broader question of emergency preparedness within rural communities, unincorporated — that they have an emergency plan that the community knows about, that has input from the services like fire, ambulance, search and rescue, and so on and so forth. I know Mount Lorne had been looking for — and there had been at one time some monies available to someone who would help organize an emergency plan where people would all gather in some kind of situation where they knew there would be water there, help, and so on and so forth. I know that Mount Lorne is asking about having support and getting that back on track.

Some communities do have an emergency plan. When I was in Marsh Lake and speaking with the volunteer firefighters there, they had wanted to have input to the plan there and had stated that there wasn't an opportunity for them to do that. I would ask the minister why we wouldn't include the people who were going to be part of helping in an emergency — why they wouldn't have their input. These folks at Marsh Lake — the volunteer firefighters — thought it made sense that they would be asked and not just handed something without their input.

There are a couple of questions in my remarks. Which unincorporated communities have emergency preparedness plans and which don't? Can the minister respond to why there wouldn't be input from those emergency services volunteers in the plan itself?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to specific communities and which communities have plans in place or which don't, I'll have to return to this. In general, in the case of a natural or human-caused disaster, Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization brings together the resources and expertise required to support the response in a timely and effective manner — whether it be from a local source across Canada or across North America. A lot of what the member was talking about in his question relates to the role of EMO and how we, through EMO, liaise with various volunteer organizations.

EMO leads Yukon government's emergency preparedness and coordination planning, from departmental to territory-wide. It focuses on the four key pillars of emergency management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

EMO also provides a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government's areas of responsibility. Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations

have their own emergency plans, inclusive of business continuity, and progress is being made on the rest.

EMO is engaging with and advising all of Yukon's self-governing First Nations to help them strengthen their emergency preparedness planning, develop specific plans and build local capacity.

In Yukon, the RCMP is responsible for all ground and inland water search and rescue operations for missing persons. EMO supports the RCMP by helping to provide training and equipment to search and rescue teams.

The government's approach to emergency management includes all hazards. EMO works with Wildland Fire Management, the Fire Marshal's Office, Emergency Medical Services, Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works and other government and non-government partners to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

As we all know, periodic flooding poses risks to some communities. To help residents prepare, EMO and the Department of Environment publish weekly seasonal flood risk reports. These are distributed to media, stakeholders and the public. In partnership with federal, provincial and territorial partners, EMO delivers its 24-hour emergency preparedness public education campaign every May and reinforces this campaign year-round.

In short, Yukoners are encouraged to learn about the risks they face, prepare an emergency plan and have an emergency kit to support themselves and their families for a minimum of three days. As part of its preparedness programming, EMO led a successful first annual Great Yukon ShakeOut exercise in the fall of last year. Yukon participants joined millions in North America and around the world to practice the drop, cover and hold on earthquake preparedness drill during the world's largest annual earthquake exercise. This year's ShakeOut took place on October 22 with more than 7,000 registered participants.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission requires broadcasters to alert Canadians of imminent threats to life through Canada's national public alerting system. EMO facilitates the regularly scheduled testing of the system in the Yukon. EMO is working with the Department of Highways and Public Works to ensure Yukon government's licensed transmitters of the Canadian radio and television service sites meet CRTC licensing requirements.

EMO continues to collaborate with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to ensure that there's a redundant radio communication system in place in case a telecommunications failure in the territory occurs. Yukon Amateur Radio Association, with support from EMO and the Canadian Coast Guard, maintains the marine radio system in the Southern Lakes region.

EMO also participates in regional, national and international partnerships to share information and best practices related to emergency management and to develop national emergency management strategies, guidelines and standards to coordinate their implementation.

Madam Chair, we work on a number of emergency planning initiatives. We do them on a community basis and

they are usually done in collaboration with the self-governing First Nation in the community, if there is one, and that's the way we have been doing this to date.

With regard to a specific plan in Marsh Lake, I will have to ask the member to provide me a little bit more information about which planning exercise he's talking about. Obviously in any of these we're trying to involve as many people as possible, especially local emergency service personnel. If an instance occurred where a group didn't feel they were adequately consulted about an emergency plan, I would be happy to consider following up and determining what the best next steps are, but I would need just a little more information as to which plan it was that the Marsh Lake volunteer fire department didn't feel they were adequately consulted on.

Mr. Barr: It was about if there was a catastrophe, where people would muster and so on and so forth. If that answers the member's question, I would be happy to send him the e-mail regarding that specifically.

In your response, I am happy to hear of everything that EMO is doing and it seems as though there are still communities without a catastrophe plan. There has been a specific ask, I know, from Mount Lorne in the past and it had come up at their AGM. I was wondering if that had been followed through on. I had raised it in the House. I'm not sure if this minister was the minister at the time. It could have been the previous Minister of Community Services that they had asked for support in developing their emergency plan for people to muster in Mount Lorne. I am interested to know if the minister knew that each community — where they were at with their individual plans? If you don't have that information, I would look forward to knowing what was going on in rural Yukon, pending a disaster. I know it's on the minds of some folks out there and I've been asked that question.

I would also like to go back to some infrastructure issues in some of the communities. I would like to get an update on the skating rink and arena recreation planning for Carmacks at this time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To answer the first question, I don't have in front of me each community's emergency plan, so I don't know where individuals muster in the event of a specific emergency in Mount Lorne. I also don't know which communities have, or do not have, plans in place right now. I know that there are a variety of degrees of plans. Some have plans specifically with First Nations; some have more general plans. I would have to look into that to determine what the specific case is in Mount Lorne and more generally with other communities.

Turning to Carmacks, prior to the election of the municipal government there last month, I had met with the mayor a number of times. I know our officials had met with the CAO from Carmacks to discuss the challenges they were facing with their recreational facilities, and in particular their hockey rink. My understanding is that they have an arrangement in place with the First Nation in the community to move the boards to a new site, which will hopefully allow them to continue to offer ice throughout this winter.

More generally, with regard to what the next steps are for the recreation centre and the ice rink are, at the officials' level, we worked with the CAO and the administration in the Village of Carmacks to come up with a number of options that the community could consider going forward.

I don't have the options in front of me, but as I recall they included three options that ranged from a Sprung structure that looked something like what we might see at the Yukon Broomball Association's facility up in Takhini to a different type of structure that would be a little more robust.

My understanding is that currently we're undertaking a community consultation to review those designs — when I say "we" I mean we are supporting the Village of Carmacks. The new council will be considering what they want to do with that facility in terms of tearing it down, replacing it and what that replacement might look like. All the while we have been working with that community to provide them with information, ensure that they have the data and plans and other information that they need.

At this point, given what I understood from the mayor this weekend, they were going to have a community consultation of some sort in the coming weeks or month and we look forward to hearing back from the municipality on what they gleaned from their public consultation process — which of the three options they are leaning toward — and, once that's determined, we can look at taking the next steps. The next steps of course would include determining whether or not Yukon government would contribute, how much we would contribute, what the contribution would look like and how it would be structured. These are all questions that are unanswered, but will be considered upon the community vis-à-vis the municipal government arriving at a conclusion with regard to what type of structure they want to see replacing that.

I hope that covers the first part about the emergency plans and, more specifically, answers the member's question about the status of the Carmacks Recreation Centre and the hockey rink.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response.

I do understand and heard that there are plans ongoing for the upgrades that are necessary to have a rink in Carmacks, but it does leave those youth without a skating rink this winter. When I go around the Yukon and I see different areas with outdoor rinks and indoor rinks, such as in Whitehorse, there are a number of communities that do have those options. Haines Junction — there's a great rink there. There is curling, and many of the communities do have bonspiels throughout the territory. I think the last time I was up in Old Crow the rink was in there. I'm not sure about the state of the rink at this time, so I would like to hear about that rink.

I want to just get back to Carcross. I believe that, with the emergency building, that there was some talk about the rink in Carcross — that there is no cement bed there; there are just boards. They had been asking for a long for some upgrades there. The community volunteers that got it ready were hoping — I believe, in some of the conversations about the EMS building, there were going to be some upgrades to that. Can

the minister comment on outdoor rinks in general in the rural communities and, more specifically, in the rural communities? I know we have lots to offer in Whitehorse.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: For some of this answer, I guess I will have to wrack my brain and go back to my minor hockey days when I travelled to probably every community and played on pretty much every rink. I won't be able to do that precisely today. Let me try to answer some of these questions.

First of all, as a general comment, I think it's important when we consider the development of recreational assets in communities, that they are constructed in a way that is affordable on an ongoing basis for the community. I know every community would like to have a brand new, giant, Canada Games-style building, but as we know, that is just not feasible in many communities, especially the smaller communities in Yukon. That's a consideration that everyone needs to take when we make these decisions and have these discussions about what is the appropriate level of recreational infrastructure for a community.

I know that it is top-of-mind for the Village of Carmacks with their facility. What is an appropriate level of service versus what is an important level of expenditure for the municipality on recreation? That's an ongoing question that each municipality and each community needs to answer for itself. As we develop these recreational assets in various communities, that is a question that needs to be asked and answered by not just government, but by the community that is ultimately going to be responsible for it.

I think the model that we have seen in some communities — for instance, Burwash — is a sound one, where they build a manageable rink and then add to it gradually over time, typically through their own funding or through funds like the community development fund or other types of funds. It ensures that the rink and the capacity of the ice and the facility grow with community demand. There is no point in building a brand new, huge rink in the community if it's not going to be used. If a rink is built and it's quite simple — just a sheet of ice and maybe a roof — then we can add to it gradually as demand requires.

I look at what has happened in Takhini with the broomball rink there. That started as a tented structure and it has since grown. They've added a scoreboard. The broomball rink has added a heated area for viewing. There are bleachers and more and more equipment there all the time. It is now fenced and gated to protect the assets that they have. That's an instance where a community group started with a particular asset and then gradually developed it over time. As I said, I think Burwash is an excellent example of that type of planning and that type of activity. They started with a facility and have gradually developed it more and more over time as demand required.

With regard to Carcross, I visited the rink there. It's an outdoor rink. There is some lighting — not great lighting, but reasonable lighting. It is not asphalt or concrete or anything like that. It's just a packed gravel or sand base, I believe. What I indicated to the LAC when I met with the president there in town last summer was that I thought that would be a

fantastic opportunity for them to tap into the community development fund. I think it would be much more nimble than anything we could do through a budgetary process. If the community could just come together and get an application into the CDF, I thought that would be an excellent opportunity.

That's not something I've discussed with the Minister of Economic Development or anything. That was simply a comment that I made — that type of project is one that I think is usually well-received by the community development fund review process.

There is nothing that is planned for that rink with regard to the fire hall. The fire hall wasn't going to have any sort of link to the skating rink, to my knowledge.

More generally, I can speak a little bit about some of the recreational funding that's available for various communities for infrastructure. One of the most significant changes made that helps just about every community was the change in CRAG funding that occurred last year under my predecessor. That was a substantial change that led to a significant amount of funding flowing into unincorporated communities throughout the Yukon. The amount that it increased by was significant — it varied for each community — but I think it bears repeating that it was a substantial increase.

For instance, just to name a few — in 2014-15, Beaver Creek received just over \$33,000 for their recreational grant; in 2015-16, they are receiving more than \$47,600, so that's an increase of over 143 percent. Burwash Landing, for instance, received just over \$7,400 in 2014-15. In this budget year of 2015-16, they're receiving more than \$24,000 — that's over a 327-percent increase.

The Carcross pool received just under \$55,000 in 2014-15. In this budget year they received — you know what, Madam Chair, my numbers there were a little bit off. I was reading off the wrong column, but suffice it to say the increases in these communities have been substantial.

The increase in Carcross is just over 47 percent, and that's to a total of \$81,000. I can go through these community by community; I'm not sure that's exactly what the member opposite wanted though, but the important thing is that we're working with communities, trying to roll out a sufficient amount of recreational infrastructure in a way that's conducive to the community being able to handle it and being able to afford to maintain it. In some cases, as I said with the CRAG funding, we have increased it significantly and we're seeing the benefits of that this budget year as communities across the territory have seen dramatic increases.

Maybe just for the member opposite, I'll stick with communities in his riding. Mount Lorne — sorry, that's the Member for Copperbelt South. I mentioned Carcross. Marsh Lake received \$39,600 in 2014-15, and in 2015-16, they will receive over \$83,000, so that's an increase of 110 percent for that community. For Tagish, they received just over \$35,000 in 2014-15; in 2015-16, they'll receive over \$68,000, which is an increase of 93 percent.

These numbers, Madam Chair, seem small in the context of the overarching Yukon budget, but those kinds of increases

in a small community are pretty profound and I think they are well-received. It enables those communities to do more with the funding that they have and do more with regard to programming and service.

If there are other specific questions about specific rinks, I would be happy to answer them. We talked a little bit about Dawson's rink; we've touched on the rink in Burwash; we've touched on Carcross and Carmacks; the rink at Pelly is great — I think it is run by the First Nation, if I'm not mistaken. Watson Lake has a fabulous rink. This summer the community hosted a number of NHL players through an initiative led by the RCMP and the NHL Players' Association to bring Mike Smith and a number of other NHLers to Watson Lake. They brought with them tens of thousands of dollars' worth of children's hockey gear to that community, to stay with the community and allow increased access for those who couldn't afford their own hockey gear to go and play hockey. That is a fabulous initiative. I suppose it is a little off-topic, but I think it's worth mentioning.

Those kinds of initiatives are going on all the time in communities in the Yukon and I think we could do more to recognize them, but that is a different issue. If there is another specific rink I've missed, I would be happy to comment on it.

The Old Crow rink — I haven't been to it since last year. At the time I saw it, the ice wasn't in, but my understanding is that the ice should be all right. I think I heard from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin that there was a hole in the roof, so hopefully we will be working with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to see that patched. I'm sure an application is in for a community development fund application right now. If it's not, I would be happy to send the necessary forms to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin so he can take that on for his community.

With that, I think I've covered off what the member is looking for.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his remarks. There are a few areas there, and I bring up rural recreation because we speak about volunteerism and such, and it is about having these places functioning and the community can gather, which then leads to a sense of more well-being for the communities to join, to get on the ambulance, to get on volunteer fire departments — so on and so forth. It just generally creates a good will in the community. It helps build community and recreation, and starting folks young is a big part of that.

I know that the Beaver Creek one has a covered area with lights due to the surface, which is also dirt, like Carcross. They resorted to using the curling rink as the ice. I don't know how big of an area for hockey that is — a curling rink — but it brings to mind that curling was also huge in Carcross.

The minister may be hearing about some funding requests for that curling rink to have ice due to climate change, which is more and more on the tongues of people because they depend upon it getting cold in that area, in Carcross. I know I'm jumping around a little bit, but they want to build community and they want to do it with that building, so they can't have ice.

Are there any thoughts about paving the Beaver Creek one or would you suggest the community development fund again? Another infrastructure issue in Beaver Creek is also the library. Has it been moved to the community centre and has the building been safety tested? I know there are about four questions in there.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I guess first of all on the general comment, I would completely agree that sports and recreation can provide an excellent community building initiative for just about any community. The ways in which the Yukon government supports sport and recreation in our communities is a long list. I don't even think we have enough time in the day to get through it all. I think some of the ways we support sports and recreation in our communities bear discussing because of the fact that I agree with the member opposite that they are very important.

The Yukon government, I should say, contributes to a better quality of life for Yukoners through its investment in sport and recreation and through active living initiatives that offer a wide range of opportunities to be active and engaged in healthy living. From community recreation to funding that helps support the development of athletes, coaches and officials in their pursuit of sport excellence, Community Services helps make Yukon a great place to undertake sports and recreation.

We continue to implement the renewed active living strategy by providing \$250,000 annually to support training, build rural community capacity and develop programs for during and after school — all designed to promote and keep Yukon children, youth and adults active and healthy.

In 2014-15, Community Services negotiated a funding agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada for \$2 million over the next five years under the Yukon Northern Wellness Project. Both the active living strategy and the Northern Wellness Project are providing active living opportunities for all Yukoners — children, youth, adults, seniors and elders. We are helping communities build capacity so they can design and lead programs and projects to meet their unique needs.

In partnership with the Canadian Tire Corporation, Community Services is supporting the Canadian Tire Active at School program Yukon-wide. Beginning in 2015, Canadian Tire will contribute \$125,000 over three years in cash, equipment and in-kind support to promote physical activity in children and youth in the school setting.

We are providing funding for after-school programs to help create opportunities for children and youth that will enhance their sports skills and their well-being, and encourage them to take part in healthy activities each day. We also continue to support seniors and elders by encouraging them to take part in active living opportunities, such as local friendly competitions and competitive sport training. This encourages them to stay involved and continue to hone their skills in helping lead healthier and happier lives, regardless of age.

We are providing action grants so that non-government organizations, communities and schools can expand active living programs for Yukon's children and youth. We are

enhancing leadership training and programs for community leaders that offer after-school programming. We are providing equipment to deliver active living programs in schools. We are continuing our commitment to programs like Moving to Inclusion, Active Start, and the Yukon Development Games, which are offered through Special Olympics Yukon.

We are providing funding for the rural healthy eating active living leaders program, the RHEAL leaders program, in rural communities across the territory. We continue to support the ElderActive Recreation Association of Yukon, which keeps seniors and elders active, healthy and connected to their communities through ongoing programming activities. We are also continuing annual support for Team Yukon at the Canada 55+ Games, which occur every second year. In August 2016, Team Yukon will represent our territory at the 2016 Canada 55+ Games in Brampton, Ontario.

The ElderActive Recreation Association is dedicated to supporting a large variety of programs and activities for Yukon's 55-plus population and is building capacity by supporting leadership training in a number of those activities. We believe in the importance of active and healthy living for all Yukoners, and I wanted to acknowledge and thank our community volunteers and leaders who provide opportunities for kids, youth, adults and seniors to participate.

In October of this year, Community Services partnered with the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon to host their annual Yukon recreation gathering with participants from recreation organizations, boards and societies from across the territory. This year at the gathering, CS was pleased to have the opportunity to launch the *Community Recreation Leaders Guide*. This guide is a comprehensive training tool based on core competencies that will build leadership capacity in rural communities in the delivery of recreation. The community recreation planning toolkit was also launched at the rec gathering and provides a checklist of processes and procedures for communities that wish to develop a community-driven community recreation plan.

The gathering was a great opportunity to work together on priorities for territorial and national initiatives. By coming together, Yukoners and their recreation community staff and volunteers were able to strengthen relationships, establish new connections, and explore ways to enhance recreation in communities.

I should note that this gathering was held at the Inn on the Lake in the member's riding, and I would encourage anybody who is interested in recreation or seeing recreational programs develop in their respective communities to have a look at those new toolkits and new guides that have been put out by Yukon government in collaboration with RPAY. They really are fantastic. They give a really good sense to the local recreation official or volunteer about how to set up their programs. A lot of things in there kind of go unnoticed by many people but they're actually very important — how to manage liability, how to manage access to recreational infrastructure, how to apply for funding to various Yukon government programs.

As I've noted, there are a number of programs out there that offer support — funding support or otherwise — to Yukon communities and recreation volunteers and officials. If they have access to that information, they are better off. I certainly encourage anybody from the recreation world in the Yukon to consult with those new resources that are available. I should also thank the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon for their work in developing those assets. It's a lot of work and I think it's a very useful product at the end of the day.

In February of this year, provincial and territorial ministers — myself included — and the Government of Canada supported the framework for recreation in Canada 2015. That was a collaborative effort between provincial and territorial governments and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. The framework presents a renewed definition and vision of recreation, as well as confirming common values and principles. The framework also provides opportunities to enhance mental and physical well-being, connect people and nature and address constraints to participation. Implementation of the framework has now begun at the territorial, municipal and community level, as organizations are invited to apply the framework to their own policies, practices and procedures.

We expect to release the Yukon sport action plan this fall. That plan aligns with the new Canadian sport policy and will guide our direction for funding and focus for the next seven years in sport across Yukon. The Yukon sport action plan builds upon our past successes and presents strengths and future opportunities that will help us develop the type of sport we want to see in our territory, that which is inclusive, fun and fair.

We continue to invest in community leadership through our Yukon sport and recreation groups, which bring tremendous benefits to athletes, coaches, officials, recreation enthusiasts and all Yukoners.

In 2013-14, we began a partnership with the departments of Education and Economic Development, F.H. Collins Secondary School and Sport Yukon for the first-ever Yukon sports school and physical literacy project. The sports school had a very successful first year, with 64 students registered for the 2014-15 school year. The sports school was once again at capacity with 64 students, 32 enrolled in each semester.

This program gives students in grades 10 to 12 opportunities to train and enhance physical performance to better perform in their sport of choice. It is based on a program in BC that has had a tremendous success record. This program gives Yukon students a new way to improve sports school performance, all during the school day. We are continuing our support of the sports school this year by providing funding for training, equipment and facility rental fees.

Sport Yukon has been funded again this year to develop partnerships, provide programming and raise awareness on physical literacy. The physical literacy coordinator continues to work with all rural communities to develop fundamental

movement and sport skills and build capacity of community leaders.

Our Sport and Recreation branch, Sport Yukon and RPAY will continue to work in this area, which will provide great benefits to our communities and schools in rural Yukon.

In April 2015, a Yukon framework for physical literacy was developed so greater impact can be achieved through collaboration on common priorities. We support infrastructure investments that benefit the sport community as well. I discussed some of those in my opening remarks, and there is some information about that in this budget with regard to the Outdoor Sports Complex Association.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Elias: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Elias that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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. 20, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, and directed me to report progress.

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.

Mr. Elias: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.