



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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33rd Legislature

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## HANSARD

Monday, April 25, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

**DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake**

## CABINET MINISTERS

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

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

<b>Darius Elias</b>	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

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

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, April 25, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Earth Day

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I rise today to pay tribute to what is an important annual event, Earth Day, which was last Friday, April 22. The theme of this year's Earth Day was "Trees for the Earth". Thankfully, there is no shortage of trees here in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I am continually learning more about the environment. The other day, I was reading on our Environment website on Earth Day that the Yukon is known to be home to 1,242 species of plants from 84 families. The number jumps to 1,348 when we include subspecies and varieties. That's a lot, Mr. Speaker.

Earth Day is more than a single day where we worry about our environmental actions. It's an opportunity for us to reflect on our own habits and consider the positive changes we can make over the long term as individuals and as a government. Of course the north is uniquely vulnerable to human-caused environmental impact — most notably, perhaps, by the impacts caused by climate change. In the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, we are already experiencing significant impacts on infrastructure, of traditional ways of living and ecological systems.

The Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan* commits to several goals to mitigate these adverse effects, including enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change, improving our ability to adapt to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and leading Yukon action in response to climate change. Our government released an updated climate change action plan progress report in 2015. It gives me great pride to say that we are making real progress on implementing the climate change action plan, as reflected in the report.

I would like to recognize those who have helped the Yukon make great strides toward these goals. We are fortunate today to have Kirsten Burrows and Stephen Roddick join us in the gallery today. Ms. Burrows and Mr. Roddick are Department of Environment staff who work with our Climate Change Secretariat. As we know, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot going on on the federal scene when it comes to that. Their team works hard with other departments, with the Outside partners and with industry to coordinate Yukon government's response to climate change on a daily basis, and I want to thank them.

The Yukon government's Climate Change Secretariat does excellent work in coordinating this response, while also forming climate partnerships with various organizations and developing climate change policies and strategies. The Yukon government sends delegates each year to the UN Climate Change Conference. This past year the Yukon government, with the Council of Yukon First Nations' participation, at COP21 ensured that distinct Yukon values, circumstances, cultures and ideas were factored into the national and international decision on climate change.

Our government also sent a Yukon climate change youth ambassador to the COP21 in recognition of the importance of our youth involvement in climate change issues. When almost 150 countries gathered on Earth Day in New York last Friday to sign the Paris accord, Yukoners could be proud that they were part of the process that created this historic global climate agreement. This demonstrates our commitment to enhance the knowledge and skills in Yukon youth to effectively solve the problems of the future linked to the changing climate.

This government's commitment to a healthy environment goes beyond climate change; more broadly, our aim is to serve as a recognized leader and a trusted partner in environmental stewardship. Recently, the government has embarked on a number of initiatives to improve Yukon's environment now and for future generations. This year, we will be allocating \$3.9 million to clean up contaminated sites. We have also earmarked \$1.5 million to be invested in Yukon's water monitoring network in 2016-17 so that Yukoners can be confident that we will always have water for nature and people for generations to come.

Just recently, the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse launched the rideshare program to offer greener commuting options for city residents. I should note that the launch of this initiative coincided with a jointly organized transportation showcase called "shift", which highlighted alternate methods of travel for Yukoners. I did see other members of this House at this event, and I would like to thank them for supporting this positive initiative, which will benefit our environment.

As an avid outdoorsman, Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be the Minister of Environment. I have a great respect for environmental stewardship, and I appreciate the efforts of those dedicating their time to maintaining and advocating for a healthy, sustainable and prosperous Yukon now and into the future.

I encourage everybody — I was glad to see everybody out there celebrating Earth Day and I would just like members to please provide a warm welcome to Kirsten Burrows and Stephen Roddick who are in here today.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to this past Earth Day.

Mr. Speaker, as time progresses it seems to me that we are moving further and further into an age of consumer culture. It's often hard to remove ourselves from the rush of

feeling that we need to “have” in order to be successful. We are constantly romanced by advertising that tells us bigger is better, more is better, shiny is best and whatever it is that we bought last year or last month, well, it’s no longer current and in order not to be left behind we should probably replace it. I’m not here to tell anyone how to spend their money or what to do with their energy, but I am here to offer a different perspective; one that was reintroduced to me at the Working Towards Zero Waste Conference this past March. This conference was a roller coaster ride of fascination, frustration and inspiration.

The way society looks at objects and possessions has changed so much since the advent of plastic that topics like waste diversion and extended producer responsibility are at the top of mind for the folks who have to deal with our collective garbage, because never before has humankind generated as much needless waste as we do now. Everything we purchase not only has a financial cost, but it also has an environmental cost. As consumers, how we choose to spend our hard-earned money has power and how we choose to use that power is up to us.

When we shop we can ask ourselves basic questions like: Does this product need to be wrapped in so much plastic? If it doesn’t, then by choosing to purchase the same item without that extra packaging we’re sending a message to the companies that produce it. We can also ask ourselves: Will the product we are about to purchase stand the test of time? If it won’t, by looking for something similar that is of better quality makes sense because we won’t need to replace it so soon, saving ourselves money in the long run and being a little more kind to the environment.

By changing our purchasing habits, our consumer dollars will ultimately change the way products are either manufactured or packaged by companies because, believe it or not, they are paying close attention to purchasing trends. Lawrence Alvarez was the final speaker of the event and he brought with him the concept of a sharing economy. Mr. Speaker, he wasn’t referring to companies like Uber or Airbnb; he was talking about an economy based not on money, but one based on the peer-to-peer base sharing of goods and services. Lawrence explained that, in a society that has so much, pooling our resources to share for the benefit of many just makes sense.

He introduced conference-goers to the Toronto Tool Library — a concept, he explained, that isn’t new as there are 40 tool libraries in North America and the first one opened in 1979. Tool libraries greatly reduce the cost of pruning and greening neighbourhoods, allowing the transformation of homes and community spaces into vibrant places that reflect a commitment to sustainability and environmental concern. At the Toronto Tool Library, anyone with a membership can sign out tools for both their home and community initiatives. The library offers a wide range of equipment for a low cost, a resource-sharing and space-saving alternative to purchasing and owning tools. A yearly membership is \$50. Imagine being able to borrow nearly any tool for one payment of \$50 a year. It’s an incredible concept.

I live in a neighbourhood that often shares resources, whether it’s lawn mowers or table saws, air compressors to meat thermometers. The small-scale, sharing economy in action is a beautiful thing. Many people in the territory believe and live by the concept that we need to make decisions and live with intent. We can choose to continue like nothing is wrong, or we can choose to acknowledge that we all have a role to play as stewards of our planet.

There are examples clear across the Yukon of people making intentional choices — from the Dawson City recycling centre that offers a range of bulk liquid soap for the community to purchase to the boutique-style free stores in Mayo or in the Mount Lorne transfer station and, right here today, would be the example set by the staff who have joined us from the Climate Change Secretariat. As consumers, we have power to influence the industries that serve us and with that power comes the responsibility that I know we can handle.

So Mr. Speaker, I know that deep down inside each of us is an eco-warrior, ready to make positive change for the planet and today, like each and every day, I salute them.

**Mr. Silver:** I also rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Earth Day. Canada is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Earth Day by promoting a Rooting 4 Trees campaign with the goal of planting 25,000 trees in the month of April.

Now, Earth Day was originally intended to be a one-time environmental awareness event, but we can all agree that it has gone long past that scope by now, with many campaign ideas like hour-of-no-power use or Rooting 4 Trees. There is a broad vision for Earth Day celebrators but with a common value to preserve our environment.

Mr. Speaker, one person can make a difference. By turning down the heat while at home or in the Legislative Assembly, biking to work once a week, eating less processed meat, not running the water while you are brushing your teeth, or whatever other contribution we may make to lessen our effect on the environment, it all adds up. Actions taken by Earth Day participants across the globe have a significant effect on the world around us.

The Yukon has an environment unlike many others — beautiful scenery, fresh air, clean water. We are very fortunate and must be sure not to take for granted what many countries do not possess. The conscious actions that we take to ensure a smaller footprint don’t have to be grand, but day to day. If we as individuals make small lifestyle changes to protect our environment, the changes will gradually become grand. The opposite is also true, Mr. Speaker. If individuals do not make the effort and choose to simply stand aside, the Earth as we know it will no longer exist.

Earth Day is an environmental movement that spans across the world with over one billion participants. This is a movement in the global village and we need to stand up and to commit to being part of that global village.

### **In recognition of National Immunization Awareness Week**

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I rise on behalf of this House today to acknowledge April 23 to 30 as National Immunization Awareness Week.

Here in North America, we sometimes take immunization for granted, forgetting that not so long ago, childhood diseases and influenza killed thousands of people every year. The predominant influenza strains — unlike many childhood diseases — change from year to year. This is why it's important to get your flu shot every year; and yet during this last flu season, about 8,100 Yukoners got their flu shot, which was down about 1,500 from 2013-14.

In the world of childhood diseases, we have taken amazing strides in the reduction and eradication of some diseases, but there is still a lot left to do. We have the means to eradicate all of the vaccine-preventable diseases. In Canada, even though we see high rates of coverage in general, some diseases like measles and pertussis only need a small percentage of unimmunized people to gain a foothold and cause an outbreak.

We have seen measles and pertussis break out in different areas of the country over the last few years because of under-immunization. That's why the Yukon's chief medical officer of health emphasizes the importance of remaining vigilant and why he encourages parents to keep their children's immunizations up to date.

According to the 2013 Yukon childhood national immunization survey, 95 percent of Yukoners agree that childhood vaccines are important to a child's health and yet many Yukon children remain under-immunized. We all understand why. Life is busy and some details get lost in the shuffle of day-to-day living.

Maybe National Immunization Awareness Week is a good time to take a look at our records to see if our children have any outstanding immunizations and, while we're at it, we can check on our own immunization status. Is our tetanus immunization up to date? Have we had our pertussis booster in adulthood? You can call your local health centre and they'll certainly let you know.

I would like to acknowledge here that some parents have misgivings about immunizing their children. While I respect every parent's right to decide for himself or herself what is best for their child, I urge all parents to obtain the best scientifically vetted information before making their decision. The site [www.yukonimmunization.ca](http://www.yukonimmunization.ca) is an excellent place to start this research, and you can check with your health care provider. They are an excellent resource when trying to decide what is best for your child.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the staff at the vaccine program and the staff at every one of Yukon's community health centres. Their tireless efforts on behalf of Yukoners certainly go a long way in keeping us healthy.

### **In recognition of Yukon Education Week**

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Yukon Education Week, which runs from April 25

to 29. During Education Week this year, we are celebrating the important contributions of our partners in education to the success of all Yukon learners, from early to adult learning with the theme of "A strong team builds bright futures". The theme celebrates the significant role our partners play in our education system. It includes First Nations, Yukon educators, parents, school councils and the French school board, Yukon College, education service providers, and the many others that are integral to the learning process or experience of all Yukoners. From early to adult learners, our partners play an important role, supporting the success of all of our learners and preparing them for life beyond the school.

This week is also a time for us to remember the many public benefits that our education system makes to society. It prepares informed and engaged youth who are ready for a career of their choice and ensures the ongoing development of knowledge for individuals of all ages that enriches our whole society. Public education plays an important role in the lives of all Yukoners, no matter what their age.

Our education system is made richer through the act of engagement and participation of our partners in education. As part of this year's theme, I would like to thank them for their important work. To our First Nation partners, Yukon First Nation governments, citizens and communities are essential partners in the success of First Nation students, and their work offers all Yukon students the opportunity to learn more about First Nation cultures and traditional knowledge.

The dedicated educators within our territory are probably the most important factor in student success in class. Teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, guidance counsellors and instructors are all integral to the development of our students. Throughout the school year, they are encouraging students to be at their best and ensuring that they know there are few limits to what they can all achieve. The parents, families and school councils, including the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees and the Catholic Education Association of Yukon, are all essential partners in the Yukon school community. Their engagement in and dedication to the school community builds the capacity for delivering a high-quality education for students in our territory.

Merci beaucoup to the French community and the Yukon francophone school board. Whether French first language or French second language, they play an important role in engaging students in the learning of the French language and promoting a bilingual Canada. The educators and staff at the future Yukon university provide essential knowledge and career-ready skills training for Yukon post-secondary students. As we progress toward the future Yukon university, we look forward to even greater contributions that they will make both to our economy and to the future careers of Yukon's post-secondary students.

The service providers we work with for Advanced Education — with their work, we are able to provide diverse learning pathways and training opportunities to post-secondary and adult learners as well as job seekers. To the many other individuals, groups and organizations that help

shape minds from young to old in our territory, thank you for the time and dedication you contribute to making our school system what it is today.

Throughout this week, the department is celebrating our partners and the many benefits of our education system with events hosted by schools and community organizations. The department will also be at the Lake Laberge Lion's Club Yukon Trade Show from April 29 to May 1 talking about the educational services and programs that are offered here in the territory. I encourage my fellow members here in the Legislature and the public to attend many of the events that will be taking place during the week and visit the department during the trade show to see the many ways the department is working toward enhancing the learning experience of all Yukon students. More information and a full calendar of events for Education Week are available on the Department of Education website.

**Mr. Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition in this Yukon Education Week to pay tribute to education in the Yukon.

This year's theme, "A strong team builds bright futures", strikes to the core. We have much to celebrate and I would like to acknowledge some of the team — the many people in our territory who are involved in the education of our children. We are most fortunate to have a very skilled, dedicated and dynamic group of educators. In this special week, we extend our gratitude to professionals involved in a wide range of education, from early childhood and elementary, to high school teachers and to our college, education assistants, remedial tutors, Yukon Teachers' Association — the commitment, dedication and creativity of those serving Yukon children and their lifelong commitment to lifelong education and training have a lasting effect on the future of our children and on our grandchildren.

But, Mr. Speaker, these professionals don't stand alone. They and our children are supported by secretaries, custodians, office administrators, bus drivers, college instructors, public servants, early childhood educators; they are the first greeters and the pick-me-uppers and they are making a difference.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of non-governmental organizations such as Yukon Learn, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Child Development Centre and Skills Canada, as well as many contributions from the departments within Yukon government.

Many of our local businesses and industries play an integral part in our education — miners, professional engineers, scientists, tradespeople — all sharing their skills and knowledge while supporting our children.

The remarkable contributions of parents and volunteers who sit on school councils and boards and who assist teachers in public schools with extracurricular activity, who work with children and adults with special needs through various non-governmental organizations are recognized this week. We

extend our heartfelt thanks to those many volunteers, and we know that a strong team builds bright futures.

In the Yukon, we have many success stories and many instances to celebrate, but we also have too many students who are not succeeding in our schools — children living with disabilities, children who have been traumatized and at-risk children. As well, we have the challenge of meeting the needs of rural and First Nation children. How we react and meet the needs of all our children is critical for all our students and our society. It says a lot about our quality of life and the inclusiveness of our community.

Research has shown that community involvement does make a difference. We have seen success stories like Food for Learning, the Champagne and Aishihik cultural and language programming, the Tantalus and Watson Lake Moodle program combined with blended learning, the early literacy initiatives that the department has announced and is going forward with this year, the Individual Learning Centre, Wood Street, the experiential learning centres, Reading Recovery, Wilson Reading — all programs that contribute every day to the well-being and education of our children.

We know that research and experience tells us that the involvement of families and children in programming and extracurricular activities is critical. We know that involved parents and family lead to more engaged students. We must work together to find a way to ensure that all parents can contribute to their child's educational life and be valued for that contribution. To become a strong part of our educational team, all parents need to be involved.

Some parents have had less than satisfactory experiences within our school. Perhaps they have been attendants at residential schools. Previous experience has soured them. They have a reluctance to take a risk. It is incumbent on all of us to find a way to enable all parents a place in their child's education. Education should embrace that commitment. Like never before it takes a whole community to work together to wrap around and support children in all our communities.

There are no simple answers. Education and learning are about working together and about learning together; it's about taking risks and taking chances; it's about building relationships; and it's about being part of a team. We have an opportunity in the Yukon, so while we take this moment to celebrate and acknowledge our successes, continuing success will depend on all of us — you and me, Mr. Speaker, and each and every Yukoner — rolling up our sleeves, innovating, creating, caring and doing the work. Let us celebrate the relationships, the partnerships, the dedication of all those who have made education their passion and vocation. Let us work together to build a strong and inclusive team because we know a strong team builds bright futures.

So to those listening and to those in the Legislature, I urge you to get involved in education, attend some of the happenings this week and visit a school near you.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I joyfully stand today to pay tribute to Yukon Education Week on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party. This year's theme, "A strong team builds bright

futures”, reminds us all of the saying that it does take a village to raise a child. Education doesn’t just happen in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. I think we can all agree that we learn something new every day, which comes from a wide range of sources.

Children spend most of their day being taught in the classroom, but they also interact with many people in the community and learn from them as well. Sometimes it is within this interaction where the greatest lessons are learned. In our day-to-day lives it is the interaction with others and the relationships that we foster that guides us on the path of learning.

As legislators, we need to make sure that our citizens have the opportunity to pursue any learning path that they choose. We need to encourage and foster programs like YNTEP, which promotes First Nation involvement as educators in our communities. We need to encourage community involvement by inviting outside professionals into our classrooms to go beyond the scope of the standard lesson.

Many of our teachers continue to contribute their efforts outside of the classroom, volunteering their time in many extra-curricular programs, such as coaching or instructing or as tutors. Teachers play a large role in the development of our children, not just academically. They teach a child self-worth and how to build confidence; they promote inclusion, which goes beyond the classroom and into the child’s daily life. The stronger we build up the system that surrounds our children, the stronger our children will be. I’ve said this many times before and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, we have the best students in Canada here in the Yukon and they do deserve the best education in the world.

### In recognition of Lorenzo Grimard’s Birthday

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to tribute Lorenzo Grimard on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

April 23, 2106 in Dawson City not only marked the earliest day on record for the breakup of the Yukon River, but it was also cause for the celebration for the oldest-living francophone in the territory: Mr. Lorenzo Grimard.

A party was held in his honour for his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday where he was recognized by both the Governor General of Canada and also the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. Lorenzo is an inspiration of positivity and an example of free-spiritedness that we can admire and aspire to. At 100 years young, he still has the glass-half-full attitude on life. He still knows how to entertain the crowds and he keeps the residents and staff of the McDonald Lodge smiling and happy.

Now, the Governor General and the Prime Minister were not the only ones to recognize the 23<sup>rd</sup>, because also the mayor and council of Dawson City also weighed in with a special proclamation and I would like to read that into the record here today. “Proclamation: Lorenzo Grimard Day:

WHEREAS Mr. Lorenzo Grimard is celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 23, 2016; and

WHEREAS Mr. Lorenzo Grimard has been a long-time resident of our community and an active member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers; and

WHEREAS council is inspired by Mr. Lorenzo Grimard’s long life and offer him the sincere best wishes for continued good health and happiness now;

THEREFORE I, Wayne Potoroka, as Mayor of the City of Dawson, Yukon Territory, do hereby proclaim April 23, 2016 to be Lorenzo Grimard Day in the City of Dawson, Yukon Territory and commit this observation to the people of Dawson City.”

So Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of my colleagues here in the Legislature, I would like to wish Lorenzo a happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and congratulate him on the proclamation to have April 23<sup>rd</sup> known as Lorenzo Grimard Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming a couple of fellows from the Yukon government’s chipper crew team here today: Big Jon Rudolph and long-time resident of Teslin, Mr. Frank Johnstone. Rumour has it that Mr. Johnstone will be retiring from the chipper crew this year, so if that rumour is true, well, congratulations, Frank.

*Applause*

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

Are there any reports of committees?  
Petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### Petition No. 26 — received

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 26 of the First Session of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on April 21, 2016.

The petition presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King appears in two versions. One version of Petition No. 26 meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. This is the version that will be entered into the working papers of the Legislative Assembly and is the version to which the Executive Council shall respond.

The other version does not meet the requirements as to form and will be returned to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

**Speaker:** Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 26 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been deemed read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation. Therefore, the Executive

Council response to Petition No. 26 shall be provided on or before Thursday, May 5, 2016.

**Speaker:** Are there any petitions to be presented?  
Are there any bills to be introduced?  
Notices of Motions.

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a new vision for education by examining student-centred learning, supports for learners, learning environments, supports for educators, family and community involvement, governance and responsibility, teaching and pedagogies, assessment, curriculum and programs, and that this work be guided by the new vision principles that:

- (1) meet the diverse needs of all learners and foster development of the essential skills and competencies they need for life in and beyond school;
- (2) identify the strengths and needs of each learner without pre-judgment or bias;
- (3) integrate northern perspectives and Yukon context at all levels;
- (4) embed Yukon First Nation cultures and world views in the curriculum at all grades;
- (5) implement the education-relevant recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- (6) celebrate Canadian diversity and use culturally relevant approaches to support the individual strengths and needs of each learner, school and community;
- (7) engage students in their learning by providing a wide range of choices at school, on the land and in communities;
- (8) value and support our educators;
- (9) build the capacity of educators to work with learners and communities in a positive and respectful process, flexible in approach, and focused on competencies; and
- (10) be accountable, using research and evidence to ask questions, make decisions and celebrate successful practices in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release detailed cost estimates for the operation and maintenance of the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motions?  
Is there a statement by a minister?  
This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Federal funding for capital projects

**Ms. Hanson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker — right on time this time.

So far this Sitting, various Yukon Party ministers have told this House that the government sought federal funding for

the Dempster fibre optic line, the Stewart-Keno transmission line and the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. So imagine Yukoners' surprise to read that the Minister of Community Services now says that the Yukon Party government had not in fact applied for federal money. Rather, they were trying to influence how the federal government would set up some of these new funds that they had proposed setting up. The Minister of Community Services says that this government hasn't applied for funding for these projects, yet other ministers say they have. A simple question for the Premier: Has this government applied for federal funding for these projects or have they not?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is referring to a submission that this government put forward to the Finance committee of the Parliament of Canada prior to the federal budget coming down. That committee was seeking input on the shaping of the federal budget and the Yukon government sought to provide input for that process and we did so. We included four projects that we thought would be of interest to the Government of Canada and the Parliament of Canada and we thought that those individual projects would help shape potential funding pots that were going to become available in the federal budget.

In the case of the fibre project, that is one that has not been formally applied for. It was a project that we highlighted in our submission, because we knew that the federal government, or the Liberal Party, had committed to looking at broadband in the north. So we provided that project as an example of a project that may be eligible for a future broadband in the north fund.

Once that fund becomes available, we will obviously seek to apply to it. In the case of that project, Mr. Speaker, discussions are ongoing with CanNor and other branches of government to see if there's going to be an opportunity for funding on that.

With regard to the other projects, the roads to resources project has been applied for. The Minister of Highways and Public Works tabled that application last week. With regard to the continuing care facility, we've had a lot of discussion about that. We're funding that completely out of our own budget and there is more discussion to come on the transmission line

**Ms. Hanson:** Let's just pursue this a bit further. The combined total for the three projects that I just outlined are an estimated \$276 million. To be clear, these are not projects in the planning stage. The fibre optic line is supposed to be finished next year. There is \$5.3 million for planning on the transmission line, and there's over \$66 million in this budget for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. These projects are well underway and they are a cost that will be borne by Yukoners if federal funding is not secured.

Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't start building a home without having the financing to pay for it. It just wouldn't be sensible, yet this is what this government has just done. How does the Premier explain his decision to go ahead with these capital projects without having identified the source of funds to pay for them?



**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Quite frankly, I think the member opposite is confused about the nature of the submission we provided to the Finance committee. Each of these projects has a different story. In the case of the continuing care facility, as I've noted, there is close to \$67 million in this year's budget to proceed with that project. We're fully able and willing to move forward with that on our own. However, we knew the federal government was interested in input around social infrastructure, so we provided some comment to them about a project we had underway that we thought may be eligible for funding under the social infrastructure component of their infrastructure plans. That hasn't been the case. I don't believe that we will receive funding from any of those new infrastructure funds for that project, but it was worth asking.

In the case of the fibre project, there is approximately \$500,000 in this budget for the detailed engineering planning, and discussions are ongoing with Canada with regard to funding that project. As I've indicated before, we think there's an opportunity through some of their broadband in the north funding that could be applicable on this particular project.

For this Mayo-to-Keno transmission line, that project has come up numerous times and my colleague, the minister responsible, would be happy to provide an update, but that project is not ready yet to begin construction. In the case of the roads to resources projects, that is one that we have applied for under the national infrastructure component of Building Canada, and we hope to hear back from the federal government very soon.

**Ms. Hanson:** Most people don't budget based on wishes. For a government whose most noteworthy accomplishment has been increasing our reliance on federal transfer payments, one would think that we would at least know by now that to receive federal money, one has to apply for it.

The Minister of Community Services indicated that his government chose not to apply for the New Building Canada fund money for the Dempster fibre link. Instead, this Yukon Party government hopes, as he said, that a new pot of infrastructure money will be developed to pay for it. Instead of applying for existing money, this government is planning to apply to a fund that doesn't yet exist.

How does the Premier, as Minister of Finance, explain his government's failure to properly plan for the financing for these projects and does he accept responsibility for putting Yukon's bottom line at risk?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I do certainly stand up before this House and all Yukoners to say that, in the 12 or 13 years the Yukon Party has been in power and we've had the ability to serve Yukoners, we have had no tax increases. In this mandate we've had annual modest surpluses. We have no net debt — now the only jurisdiction in this country — and we're standing very tall for Yukoners and not imposing a new tax on carbon that will raise the price of everything.

Yukoners are confident in the Yukon Party government — in managing our finances through good times and bad times. As I have said, I know that I am very optimistic for the future of this territory under a renewed Yukon Party mandate.

### Question re: Prescription drug abuse

**Ms. Stick:** Last week, the first confirmed fentanyl-related death in Yukon was reported by the Yukon coroner.

Fentanyl is a strong painkiller often prescribed by doctors to manage ongoing chronic pain. It is 100 times more powerful than morphine and is known to be highly addictive.

Fentanyl use has been declared a public health emergency in British Columbia where there have been 370 deaths since 2012. In Alberta there have been almost 400 deaths in the last two years.

What specific preventive action is this government taking in response to the emerging fentanyl public health crisis we are witnessing across Canada?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Certainly, as the member had indicated last week, Yukon learned that fentanyl was implicated in a recent death of a Yukon resident. Yukon is just as susceptible to this drug and other drugs as other jurisdictions across the country — or across the world, for that matter.

Fentanyl has found its way into many other illicit drugs. Individuals expecting their regular drugs may unexpectedly be exposed to lethal amounts of fentanyl. Yukon's chief medical officer of health has issued a public warning both to drug users and to those who may be with those drug users at the time they are taking the drugs.

At the same time, the department will be establishing a small working group made up of community nursing, the CMOH, Alcohol and Drug Services, the hospitals, the RCMP and EMS to determine outreach messaging to the public about fentanyl — certainly surveillance and protection for people who call 911 for an overdose.

Mr. Speaker, we need to collaborate to ensure that we have the right tools and the right messages for our citizens, and that is exactly what this government is doing.

**Ms. Stick:** Fentanyl is one of many varieties of opioids. More commonly prescribed opioids include codeine, morphine and oxycodone.

One of the contributing factors to this health crisis has been the high rate of opioid prescriptions in Canada. No other country in the industrial world prescribes and consumes more prescription opioids on a per capita basis than Canada. Opioids are highly addictive, leaving some patients seeking opioids illegally when their prescription is cut off or ends. Other opioids have been implicated by the Yukon coroner in several other deaths in the Yukon Territory. The United States has released new guidelines advising doctors not to prescribe opioids for chronic pain in most conditions.

What action has this government taken to work with physicians to improve the education and prescription monitoring in Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I indicated in my first response, the department will be establishing a small working group made up of community nurses, the CMOH, Alcohol and Drug Services professionals, the hospitals, the RCMP and EMS to determine outreach messaging to the public about

fentanyl. We continue our close working relationship with the Yukon Medical Association, with the chief medical officer and with the chief of staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital, as well as other hospitals, with respect to how doctors are prescribing. This is just one area. But, as the member opposite indicated, we do know that fentanyl was implicated in the recent death of a Yukoner, and we will continue with the establishment of the small working group that I had indicated in responding to the community's needs on the basis that we can provide more information about fentanyl to Yukoners.

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, addiction treatment programs for dependence on opioids like fentanyl present distinct challenges to our health system. Opioid withdrawal is not just a matter of willpower. The detox process to ease physical dependence can last from hours to days, with physical and mental discomfort persisting for weeks. Opioid withdrawal is extremely difficult to endure, and relapse is common. Treatment may require other medications such as methadone and intense counselling and in-house programs. Escaping the cycle of detox and relapse is a long-term process for these individuals addicted to fentanyl or opioids. Opioid treatment programs are far and few between in Canada.

What level of treatment capacity will the new Sarah Steele facility have to treat opioid dependence in this territory?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I indicated in my first response, Yukon is certainly just as susceptible to this drug and other drugs as any other jurisdiction in the country — or the world, for that matter.

I also indicated that we will be establishing a small working group of training professionals throughout the territory to address this and other issues. We certainly need to collaborate to ensure that we have the right tools and the right messages to pass on to Yukoners but, as Minister of Health and Social Services, I certainly have trust in the doctors to prescribe the appropriate medications to their patients as they see fit.

What this government is doing on a move-forward basis, and being planful, is the creation of the new Sarah Steele Building. We certainly look forward to the doors opening in the fall to that facility and providing the number of Yukoners who require that level of support a new facility with programming rolled out to provide that level of support as they are going through that treatment process. We are proud of those investments that we have made, and this Yukon Party government will continue to make those investments.

#### **Question re: Tourism statistics**

**Mr. Silver:** Over the weekend, the Tourism ministry gathered to take a look at the upcoming season. They also took a look over their shoulders at last year's season as well. For the longest time, the Government of Yukon monthly tourism stats were unavailable. Nothing past July was on the government's website until last week. The new stats do reveal some interesting information, Mr. Speaker. For the second

year in a row, border crossings are down across the board — Americans, Canadians and Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the annual border crossings were down four percent in 2015?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all say that our visitation estimates for any given year are really derived from a number of key indicators ranging from border-crossing statistics to air-passenger arrivals, highway traffic counts and data from the private sector as well.

A number of those data sources used to inform the overall estimation of visitation encountered a number of reporting challenges in 2015, which contributed to the delay in reporting. I just wanted to put that out for the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the department was able to finalize that visitation report for 2015 and we were very pleased to post the information online as it is in keeping with previous years. We continue to work with the Tourism Industry Association to strengthen our tourism numbers, to strengthen overall tourism business revenue. Certainly, based on the information that we continue to receive from the industry, they are very pleased with the working relationship and the investments in support of Yukon's tourism sector, which includes the single-largest tourism marketing initiative and investment in Yukon's history — Yukon Now funding of just under \$3 million in supported domestic visitation — and the list goes on.

**Mr. Silver:** It's good to know why those numbers hadn't been reported. The first day of this Sitting, I did ask why nothing past July had been made available to the public and it is true that finally, last Wednesday, there was some updated information.

It does show for the second year in a row that the border crossings in the Yukon are down. Land crossings are down. Air crossings are also down. This is the second straight year that border crossings have declined. In 2013, the number was 350,000; in 2014, it was 342,000; and in 2015, the number dropped again to just 327,000.

Can the minister explain, when it comes to border crossings, why this trend is happening?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned just recently here, we recognize the importance of having relevant, up-to-date, accurate tourism visitation information. That is, in fact, why I met with the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon just last week to discuss a go-forward basis — in terms of review of our visitor tracking program and certainly the indicators that feed within that particular program that has become so valuable to industry and was directed for us to move on that program a number of years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that, despite those reporting challenges that we experienced last year — that, I might add, were external to the Yukon government — Yukon's tourism industry has indicated that 2015 was a good year for tourism overall and a number of those tourism indicators do support that perspective.

Mr. Speaker, that is, in fact, why this government continues to invest in product development, visitor services,

and research and marketing initiatives such as Yukon Now, the largest single tourism investment in Yukon's history. Yukon also continues to invest in highway improvements and airport upgrades, waterfront investments, as we've seen in Whitehorse and Carcross, in Yukon museums and cultural centers and in new campgrounds — all of which the member opposite continues to vote against.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, so just for the record, I am wondering if the Minister is saying that it's a reporting challenge that indeed is why the numbers are down or is it that the numbers are just down. Despite what we heard, it looks like they are down for the second straight year in a row. The picture that the minister is trying to paint doesn't seem to back up the government's own numbers. The full year-end stat report is usually released by the annual TIA conference in the spring. I didn't see anybody talking about it and I do not believe that it has been tabled yet.

When will the full year-end report be available so Yukoners can see all of these numbers for themselves?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, as I just articulated, the department has been working to finalize that visitation report for 2015 with the information that we had on hand. I articulated that there were a number of reporting challenges that were external to the Yukon Government that we experienced last year. In fact, since we have been able to confirm that information with the information that we have, we have posted that report online. All the indicators are up with the information that we currently have.

Mr. Speaker, as I articulated, we have just recently met with TIA as of last week to discuss the very importance of continuing to have accurate information, up-to-date, relevant indicators that continue to feed within the program that was developed with industry back in 2012. We are certainly committed to ensuring that we have the best information available for businesses to help maximize their revenues to help return the best return on investment for our businesses, and we are currently working with industry to strengthen that information made available.

We are very proud of our record-level investments in tourism industry — again a \$3-million increase in our tourism marketing budget over three years. We're very proud of those expenditures as we are with the partnership with industry.

#### **Question re: Whistle Bend continuing care facility**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Highways and Public Works awarded Partnerships BC contracts for Whistle Bend continuing care procurement services in the amount of \$875,000. This month the Minister of Highways and Public Works championed Partnerships BC as one of Canada's leading procurement advisors who bring required expertise to procure specialized projects like Whistle Bend continuing care facility, which has enabled Yukon government to deliver this project in a way that ensures costs and schedule certainty for Yukoners. For cost certainties, the Minister needs to know the operation and maintenance costs before approving the capital expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, did the Minister of Highways and Public Works ensure that Partnerships BC provided operation and maintenance costs to the government as part of the Whistle Bend facility procurement study?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I've indicated before, we do not have an approved budget yet for the O&M costs for running the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility. That's a couple of years out. However, we do have an idea of the order of magnitude of the cost for operation and maintenance for this new facility.

We currently operate a 96-bed extended care facility at Copper Ridge Place and we do know that the staffing model and support services costs will be relatively similar in the new facility, so we're doing this just on a cost comparison.

In 2015-16, the O&M costs for Copper Ridge Place were \$18,489,000. Of this, \$16 million, or 86.7 percent, goes toward payroll for nurses, therapies, dietary, housekeeping, administration, maintenance, laundry and so on. Food and nursing supplies account for approximately \$922,592, or around five percent, and \$890,000 goes for heating and electricity and that's approximately 4.8 percent. Pharmacy and medical costs were \$294,203 per year — 1.6 percent of the budget — while repairs and maintenance make up about 0.6 percent or \$113,210.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, we're trying to determine if the Minister of Highways and Public Works did his job managing the procurement according to law for this controversial project. Maybe that's why he doesn't want to answer the question.

Management Board Secretariat instructs departments on their budget submissions to meet the *Financial Administration Act* requirements when they submit their five-year capital expenditure plans, which are updated annually. The *Financial Administration Manual* requires all departments to include in the expenditure plan: "the total estimated capital cost of the project and the financial and human resources required to complete the project, including the resulting O&M impact of the project;"

Mr. Speaker, did the minister make sure that Highways and Public Works' Management Board submission met the requirements of the *Financial Administration Manual* by including the O&M costs?

**Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** The need for a significant number of new care facility beds in Yukon was certainly confirmed through two needs assessments and a business case conducted for the Yukon territorial government.

This government recognizes that it is expensive to care for seniors. Even so, we are committed to providing our seniors with the care that they need and that they deserve.

Currently when this care is provided at the Whitehorse General Hospital, we pay over \$2,400 a day. By comparison, at Whistle Bend, we will pay just over \$500 a day per bed, or approximately \$28 million per year as forecasted in the budget before us.

We have included those O&M costs in our long-term fiscal plan. All of those costs are inclusive. They cover medical staff, ancillary staff, janitorial, food and other costs, as I have indicated with my reference in my first response on Copper Ridge Place.

Building a facility of this size also helps us keep those costs in line, which is another reason for the approach that we have taken. I ask the members opposite: At what point will they not provide this level of care to Yukon seniors?

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, it seems that, with the minister opposite producing his rough estimates, they have not done their work ahead of time and they have failed to obtain the operation and maintenance costs before they approved the capital infrastructure project.

The five-year capital financial plan must be approved by the department's deputy minister and minister before submissions to Management Board Secretariat. Departments must obtain approval of estimated operation and maintenance cost before a project is approved by Management Board Secretariat and become part of the capital financial plan. The *Financial Administration Manual* is clear: operation and maintenance costs are required before project approval.

Again, Mr. Speaker, did the Minister of Highways and Public Works make sure the procurement contract met the budgeting requirements to determine operation and maintenance costs before approving the Whistle Bend care —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. In my previous response, I indicated that this government has done work through two needs assessments and a business case that were conducted, determining the need for this facility. Also as I mentioned, this government recognizes that it is expensive to care for seniors, but this Yukon Party government is prepared to do that.

Even so, we're committed to providing our seniors with the care that they need and the care that they deserve. Currently, as I mentioned in my previous response, if we were to continue caring for seniors who need this facility in the Whitehorse General Hospital, it comes at a cost of over \$2,400 per day. We know that the costs at the Copper Ridge facility are just over \$500 per day per resident, and we are estimating that the cost will be very similar to that in the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility, taking into consideration that we certainly will have some specialized care for Yukon seniors in that facility, such as the palliative care, the mental health area and dementia area.

We've included those costs — the O&M costs — in our long-term fiscal plan and, as I indicated, the costs are all-inclusive. Building a facility of this size also helps us keep those costs down. This Yukon Party will continue to invest in Yukon seniors.

#### **Question re: Yukon species at risk**

**Ms. White:** If there's one thing Yukoners can agree on, it's that we're lucky to live in a territory with such rich biodiversity. Whether it's the moose and the caribou in our wildlands or the plant life that we encounter on the trails

around the territory, Yukon is a unique place when it comes to our natural world.

However, all is not rosy, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon is also home to numerous species at risk, like the peregrine falcon, polar bears on our North Slope, Baikal sedge and Dolly Varden trout, all of which aren't being given proper protection by current federal laws.

This government has tabled its last bills before we head to an election later this year, and there is still no species at risk legislation on the table. Mr. Speaker, why has the Minister of Environment failed to table species at risk legislation during this last Sitting of the Legislative Assembly?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the member opposite for the question. It gives me an opportunity to highlight some of the work the department does. Our biologists continue to contribute to the federal species at risk assessment and recovery planning, as part of our commitment under the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. The department manages and monitors species of plants and wildlife that are at risk and tracks all species of conservation concern. We put a lot of time and effort into it and there's money in our budget every year for that.

**Ms. White:** The Yukon Party was quick to act when the federal government cancelled tax credits or when asked for input on Bill S-6, but they were nowhere to be found when their friends in Ottawa gutted our federal environmental protection laws. In 2003, 2005 and 2009, this Yukon Party government was brought species at risk legislation, and in 2003, 2005 and 2009, this very same government chose not to act. Yukoners are asking themselves, "Why the double standard?"

This government can attempt to pass the buck for its inaction, but I have stood in this Legislature and called for strong species at risk laws more times than I can count. Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister of Environment decide that strong regional protection of Yukon species at risk isn't a priority for his government?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the member opposite again. It just gives me the opportunity to talk about how, in the spring of this year, barren ground caribou, including the Porcupine caribou herd, would be assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. We're actively engaged in the national assessment process led by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada for species that live in the Yukon. We'll continue to work with our partners — the First Nations, local resources councils, Yukoners and all those who care about the Yukon — and we'll continue to do a wonderful job.

**Ms. White:** I guess I shouldn't be surprised by the lack of leadership from this Minister of Environment. The National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk committed Canada — our provinces and territories — to a national approach to preventing species from becoming extinct due to human activities. That accord involves doing four things, one of which is the creation of local species at risk legislation. Other jurisdictions are meeting their national accord commitments, but Yukon, under this Yukon Party

government, is still dragging its feet when it comes to species at risk legislation.

Mr. Speaker, why hasn't the government, under this Minister of Environment, fulfilled its obligations under the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I would just like to add that the Yukon is very active in the general status of wildlife when it comes to species at risk. I have said it before: we will continue to work with our federal counterparts, our local resources councils, and First Nations and our department staff — the good work that the department staff does. The Department of Environment will continue to manage and monitor species of plants and wildlife, and work with our partners.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing line-by-line consideration of Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** We will take a 15-minute break.

*Recess*

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

### Bill No. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is continuing line-by-line debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

We were on page 8-8, Public Schools.

#### Department of Education — *continued*

**Ms. White:** I left this off on Thursday asking for more information about the planning of the francophone high school. Some of the questions that we have discussed loosely

over other years are, for example, the level of consultation with the City of Whitehorse.

There was the commitment by the current Minister of Education that the skateboard park would be relocated. There was a conversation that had to be had with the City of Whitehorse about where that spot could be.

What I'm looking for from the minister is just an update on the planning for the francophone high school in all ways, if I could, please.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I know I have mentioned previously in the House that we have an agreement with the francophone school board that we will not make any announcements other than those that come as joint announcements from that school board. I can't confirm or deny that we're making further or additional progress, but I can assure members opposite that the francophone school board and the Department of Education will be putting out a news release — hopefully later this week or very early next week — with respect to additional progress made on the French school — to be located wherever it's located.

I suspect we'll have an announcement next week.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for the answers and appreciate that, at this point, they need to be vague, which makes it just a bit harder to ask more pointed questions about.

I guess the last part that I would ask about the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the planning there is: With this most recent line item toward the planning, is there any kind of timeline that we're aiming for, for the completion of a school?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We are following along with the procedures established by the committee. I can tell you that we plan to do it as quickly as we can. This funding will be for actual drawings. The previous funding was for a concept. We've had that discussion with the French school board. Now the money will be for the actual design, and we're still aiming for that school to be opened by September 2018. There is no reason that we can currently see that it won't be ready by that time.

**Mr. Tredger:** I have a question on the technical education wing of F.H. Collins. Can the minister tell us the anticipated source of heating and what the annual heating costs for that and the weight room are anticipated to be?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We're not certain exactly what heating system will be installed by HPW, but perhaps we'll defer that one until such time as Highways and Public Works comes forward. We have an anticipated heating cost for that wing, but the member should know that part of the contract was to improve the insulation quality, it was to build a new Arctic entry, as well as do other renovations with the technical wing to upgrade the wing itself.

We have some anticipated numbers but, as to the exact heating source, I'm not sure.

**Mr. Tredger:** Is the Department of Education advocating for using the geothermal heat source that we have invested \$1 million in drilling the well? It would be a wonderful opportunity for the Department of Education to show the students that we're taking a lead into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

in terms of energy production and conservation. The anticipated savings in terms of fuel costs, as well as in terms of carbon production, are quite significant. Can the minister tell me whether the department is advocating for geothermal and use of the existing well?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** No, unfortunately we are not. We did not believe that the volume or the size of this project, probably, supported the continued work on geothermal.

I will just throw out that, in addition to the extra interior insulation, we are also building a barrier-free access, we are completely replacing the exterior siding, and we are removing the overhead walkover that connects the current school to the tech ed wing. All of those things are being done, as well as washroom improvements. They will be done, hopefully, by this summer.

In answer to the first question, no, we did not push for geothermal.

**Ms. White:** I think one of the things my colleague was alluding to is that we have this industry, or these industries that are kind of blooming around not just the country, but hopefully in Yukon. We have a lot of photovoltaic businesses that are springing up and doing work like that. I wonder if it wouldn't make sense, within things like the technical wing, to look at embracing those kinds of technologies because that could be like a module of learning. The ability to do the work around geothermal, photovoltaic or any of those kinds of things — it seems to me like it's a missed opportunity not to include those in the tech wing because that is an industry that is generating a lot of jobs and a lot of interest across the country right now, as Canada looks to separate itself from a carbon-based economy.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I'm going to take the question under advisement and I'm going to pass it along to the Department of Highways and Public Works — because they have an energy management group within the department — and we'll get them to take a look at the potential for building the new French language school on the existing education reserve in Riverdale. It seems to be quite high. There's a potential that this could be done, but we would have to take a look and determine the relevant cost-benefit ratio, but it's something that should be looked at.

In answer to the first question, it's going to be a propane boiler heating the tech ed wing, and it will be installed this summer.

**Mr. Tredger:** While we are talking about energy, there used to be a program a number of years ago where each school monitored their electricity use. At the end of the year, if it had dropped, the schools were reimbursed some funds in terms of saved energy. It had the advantage of educating students about how to save energy. It kept their minds working and they came up with a number of innovative ideas in different schools.

Can the minister tell me what the state of that program is, whether it is still in place and how widely is it being used?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Amazingly enough, that program, which probably ended 10 to 15 years ago — actually there was a modified version of that in the original F.H. Collins

Secondary School when I was a student there. The reason I know that is because we learned all different kinds of things about electricity, and one was that turning a light on and off — and we had the number of minutes between switching the light on and off — and if we left the light burning for 11 minutes, it was cheaper to let it burn for 11 minutes than to turn it on and off once. Even back then we were very energy conscious.

In talking to my department, I found out that program has lapsed and we have no intention of bringing it back, but we are bringing changes to the recycling programs and other programs within the school in terms of green programs, I guess we call them, in the school system. I will be able to bring the member up to date on that more as plans advance, but that is planned for the fall semester.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for his assertion that he will have the conversation with the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

I am a bit disappointed, honestly, to hear that propane is going to be the fuel source for the technology wing. I think that there is great potential to do other things like what we were just talking about as far as learning opportunities. At the biomass conference that took place a couple of months ago, there was a lot of discussion around how we could be looking at that kind of technology, similar to what Corrections has with their pellet stove. I will also put the plug in again: I think that as an emerging trade, green energy would be a fantastic thing that could start in high schools. I thank the minister for saying he will have that conversation.

The next question I had was around the planning for the Burwash school. I have had the good fortune of visiting Burwash Landing numerous times. As far back as 2012, the conversation was that they were really looking forward to having this school in the community. Can the minister please tell me more about what that planning is for?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I am happy to inform the House that just last week we had a number of staff from Whitehorse go to Burwash Landing and look at sites for a potential school, but there are a number of discussions that will be required before we actually get into construction of a new school in Burwash.

Part of that discussion is about community uses for a school and what we can do in cooperation with the First Nation to build a truly community school. As members know, Burwash is a very small area and it seems ridiculous to build a school and not incorporate all the community's needs into that school and look for funding from a number of different sources. That will be part of the discussion with the First Nation there. The funding that we have in this budget is only for the functional plan. So what will be in the school, where it will be located, what is the contribution of the various partners is to the school — those are the kinds of discussions. We don't anticipate that this will go ahead and be constructed within the next year or so.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the minister's answer, and it's our understanding too that it's really important in rural communities that the school be more than just a building

that's open from 8:00 to 4:00. Just as a separate pitch about renewable energy — Burwash Landing uses a district heating source with biomass, so hooray for the Kluane First Nation.

On Friday, I got to do a tour of YuKonstruct, which was really fantastic. One of the things, in conversation with the people who had that as the brain child, was that it would be a really phenomenal opportunity for communities across the territory that have shop wings within the school system if there was a way to take the idea of a makerspace or a community space. YuKonstruct, for people who may not know, is accessible to the public — in this case, because it's a private thing and it's not through government. There is a \$54-a-month fee, and then people have access to all this fantastic equipment, including a full wood shop and metal shop and things like that. What they were talking about was how that kind of space builds community and it allows people who don't have access to those kinds of tools and those kinds of facilities to come in and utilize the equipment that's there, including the training. One of the things the group was lamenting is that we have shops in rural schools where sometimes there may be shop teachers, sometimes there may not be, but the fact is that this equipment has been paid for by the Department of Education and it exists in the communities.

Has there ever been a conversation within the Department of Education about allowing those rural schools to allow access to the community for that kind of equipment?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** It's interesting the member opposite would bring this forward, because during a recent tour in a number of rural schools, we had that discussion with people in the education system. What we do have, at the current time, is an agreement with Yukon College to utilize our facilities for instructional purposes when Yukon College is providing a program or a course in a community where we have a school located. Other than that, we don't have any agreements. We just had this conversation, and we talked about liability and insurance and qualified instructors and all those other difficulties that usually can be surmounted or overcome if we have enough will. It's something that perhaps we should be looking at in the department because, as the member opposite said, we have these facilities out there and they should be utilized.

One of the other things that was brought up to me by school employees themselves is the fact that the equipment doesn't last anywhere near as long and they have difficulty getting replacement equipment in some of the schools, so there are a number of other difficulties. But, like you say, difficulties are only challenges to be overcome, aren't they?

**Ms. White:** I thank that minister for an answer that was open and it wasn't a straight-up "no". I think there is a lot of potential there for what it could do for building communities.

The last pitch for me right now in general debate on public schools is that if the minister gets the opportunity to do a tour at YuKonstruct, it is well worth the time. If he would like to go, I would be happy to take him to see what the potential is for rural communities through that makerspace. I think it would fuel the "no" into a "possible" and hopefully into a "yes".

I thank the minister for his willingness, and thank you very much.

**Chair:** Does any other person wish to speak in debate on public schools?

***On Public Schools — continued***

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

*On Administration*

*Administration in the amount of \$330,000 agreed to*

*On Program Delivery*

*Program Delivery in the amount of \$94,285,000 agreed to*

*On Learning Support Services*

*Learning Support Services in the amount of \$10,678,000 agreed to*

*On Student Support Services*

*Student Support Services in the amount of \$2,892,000 agreed to*

*On First Nations Programs and Partnerships*

*First Nations Programs and Partnerships in the amount of \$1,678,000 agreed to*

***Public Schools Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$109,863,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Replacement*

**Ms. White:** Can I please get a breakdown of that?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** The whole funding is to demolish the old school and complete the sitework. The demolition will include both the demolition of the building itself, plus the remediation, removal and disposal of any hazardous material present in the old building.

I am informed that discussions are now underway because the demolition contract was proposed to be a Yukon asset construction agreement with Kwanlin Dün, and negotiations are underway between YG and Kwanlin Dün with regard to the whole project. It will be done in two main phases. The first will be the remediation, removal and disposal of any hazardous materials. We understand that it includes several projects including removal of asbestos and then some others that include removal of lead-based paints. Those are almost complete now, and the actual demolition of the building and remediation of the site are intended to take place over the summer this year.

**Mr. Tredger:** Can the minister inform me where the asbestos and lead-based materials are going to be disposed of?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I am just drawing on my experience as a city councillor. It would probably go to the landfill. They have special hazardous waste cells that are permanently sealed, once the cells are used. I would anticipate that is where this will go, but I can't be 100 percent certain, but that is how it was handled in the past.

**Ms. White:** Understanding the size of the old school that will dismantled and disposed of — will all of that be going to the Whitehorse waste management facility? Have conversations been had about making sure that there is the available space and that it's not going to overwhelm the facility with the amount that size of building would bring?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Fortunately, I have been getting advice here as the member opposite has asked the question. First of all, Highways and Public Works is working with the City of Whitehorse to discuss what can be done with the building. We understand that if Kwanlin Dün and YTG come to an agreement with respect to the YACA, then they will have rights of salvage. What is being done at the present time is to ensuring that the minimum amount of waste possible goes into the landfill, which is why YTG and the City of Whitehorse are having those discussions. We would like to keep as much out as we possibly can.

**Ms. White:** This just gives me an opportunity to say that the biomass heating system at Raven Recycling would recycle this kind of wood. Wouldn't it be a fantastic heating source to have in the tech wing? I'm glad that it is going to be disposed of in the proper ways and I hope that it has a second life either as a heat source or as construction material.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Every time somebody says "biomass" to me, I have to interpret that in my own head and say that we used to call it burning wood.

But it's an interesting concept and we'll make sure that as much of this facility that can be recycled will be recycled.

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Replacement in the amount of \$2,980,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Technical Education Wing*

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Technical Education Wing in the amount of \$3,000,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Prior Years' Projects*

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — F.H. Collins Secondary School — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Francophone High School — Planning*

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — Francophone High School — Planning in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Burwash School — Planning*

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — Burwash School — Planning in the amount of \$40,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Modular Classroom*

**Ms. White:** Can I please get a breakdown in the amount of the modular classrooms and where they are going to be located?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We just were able to provide some additional information in this. This was part of our discussion with CSFY earlier this year when we saw an increase in enrolment at EET. We gave a number of options to EET that we could utilize to handle this increase in enrolment. We offered a wing in Porter Creek Secondary School, a portable to house students, and either a portable for elementary school children or a portable for the high school. In October of last year, the CSFY board made the decision and asked us to

purchase a portable classroom for the elementary school children. The tender was awarded. The bid price was a little bit less than \$110,000. It will be delivered here hopefully in June, and the rest of the funding was to set it up and to put in the equipment and other resources needed to have that portable available. The good thing about this portable is that it will be movable. Once a French high school is built, this portable will be able to be taken away from EET and moved, if it's needed, in another location.

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — Modular Classroom in the amount of \$600,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — School Initiated Renovations*

**Mr. Tredger:** That's a significant drop from the actual amount that was spent last year. I know that school-initiated renovations are very important to the individual schools because it allows them to have say over projects that go on in their schools. Have the amounts of requests dropped substantially? Why has that gone down? I know that last year they estimated \$125,000, and it went up over double that to \$267,000. It is now back down to \$125,000 as an estimate. Are the number of requests down or has it been a monetary decision?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** No, the way this fund works is that \$125,000 is budgeted each year. It is distributed to various schools for small renovation projects, and there is a formula that is used that is based on school enrolment, floor area, the number of classrooms in the school, the grade level of the school and, usually, the age of the building as well. Then management decisions at the various schools are made to determine where the money would be best spent. What happened last year is that money had piled up in number of schools because they had one larger project that they wanted to do, so they piled up their funding for a number of years and then in one year spent three years' allocation. Last year, there was a lot of money spent, but the exact same amount of money — the \$125,000 — was budgeted and allocated to the schools. It is just that they managed to spend it all in one year.

I have one other comment that was brought to my attention. One of the big projects that happened last year was at Jack Hulland Elementary School, where they replaced school lockers throughout the school. They had saved for a number of years to do that project.

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — School Initiated Renovations in the amount of \$125,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Capital Maintenance Repairs*

**Mr. Tredger:** This is a significant drop from the amount spent last year. It looks like about one-third of it. Given the needs around upgrading the buildings to be seismic-ready, is there a reason that the maintenance has significantly dropped?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** These are projects — it is kind of a proactive system of facility repair where we try to anticipate which building components may fail and repair or replace them before they do. Last year there were a couple of big projects that were considered to be urgent. One was



Del Van Gorder School repairs, and there were a couple of others that were larger projects but were considered urgent. Ross River School, for example, is where we did over \$2 million of repairs in order to bring the school back up to standard.

This year, none of the projects outside of the Watson Lake Secondary School are big-ticket items. I will just run through them: Watson Lake Secondary School has a roof replacement for \$600,000; soccer goal replacements are all being done this year, but it is only \$150,000; Christ the King Elementary School has a boiler replacement/heating system replacement for \$150,000; Teslin School has fuel tanks replacement for \$120,000; Tantalus School, fuel rehabilitation — as we've talked about that and I agree with you that it's well past the point where it should be done — Vanier Catholic Secondary School has a fuel tank replacement as well for \$120,000; École Émilie Tremblay office renovations for \$106,000; school revitalization plan, which is a number of schools' small repairs, for \$100,000; Nelnah Bessie John school handicapped access for \$92,000; Holy Family School light fixtures for \$75,000; Del Van Gorder School has additional structural remediation for \$75,000; J.V. Clark School has a boiler room ventilation study for \$70,000; Teslin School window replacement for \$60,000; Teen Parent Centre fire alarm panel replacement and then there are various repairs throughout the territory and in a number of schools for just under \$700,000 for the total. Those are all of the projects that are planned for this year.

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — Capital Maintenance Repairs in the amount of \$2,910,000 agreed to*

*On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Prior Years' Projects*

*Facility Construction and Maintenance — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

*On Instructional Programs — School-Based Equipment Purchase*

**Mr. Tredger:** That is a significant drop from the amount spent last year. Can the minister explain why?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** This fund is similar to the school initiated renovations fund, where funding is set aside each year for school-based equipment purchases. What was discovered is that, in the past few years, the money that was being budgeted to replace equipment — especially shop equipment in various schools — wasn't needed, so that it was decreased this year because the money that we had thought would be spent last year wasn't spent on shop equipment. It just simply wasn't ordered, so it was decreased because that money is still in the system. The schools are holding on to it so that they can spend — well, not holding on to it — but it is in the budget so that it can be spent in the year coming.

*Instructional Programs — School-Based Equipment Purchase in the amount of \$300,000 agreed to*

*On Instructional Programs — School-Based Information Technology*

*Instructional Programs — School-Based Information Technology in the amount of \$1,852,000 agreed to*

*On Instructional Programs — Prior Years' Projects*

*Instructional Programs — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

*Public Schools Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$12,207,000 agreed to*

*Public Schools Total Expenditures in the amount of \$122,070,000 agreed to*

*On Advanced Education*

**Ms. White:** There was an announcement made recently about YuWIN funding carrying on for a year and the minister was great this winter when he gave me an entirely large stack of information about YuWIN — the questionnaire that had gone out the second time and the responses from the community, the evaluation process and the rest — so can the minister just tell us more — understanding that YuWIN has been given a year reprieve — as to what the expectation is to continue on with YuWIN?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I wasn't being kind to the member opposite. There were about 250 pages of dense information that she had to go through to glean the information she wanted, and I appreciate the fact that she actually did it.

Madam Chair, YuWIN and Advanced Education have signed an agreement — it's a two-year agreement by the way — and it will support the transition of employers from YuWIN to Canada's Job Bank. It will create an employer liaison service to improve employer involvement in Advanced Education's labour market programs and services because we see from time to time that a number of Yukon employers don't liaise with Advanced Education's labour market programs like we believe they should. We also see and appreciate that YuWIN has a very special relationship with many of these employers, so what we have agreed to with YuWIN is that they will provide the employer liaison service to Advanced Education. In other words, they will be a go-between. They have established a relationship with employers and we hope that relationship will continue.

We signed the agreement and it began April 2016 even though I think it was signed after that date. It was backdated to April 1, 2016. YuWIN's job board will be converted to a casual job and volunteer board, which does not compete directly with the Canada Job Bank. In that way, Yukon Education continued to support it. If it competes directly with the Job Bank, we would not be able to do so. It will be run independently of this agreement if and when YuWIN is able to provide other resources to do it. We hope that by providing the funding for an employee liaison service, we have provided the base funding for YuWIN to keep going. We believe we have.

We also believe they have the ability and the resources to continue the YuWIN job board as a casual and volunteer board without the funding that we have provided in the past. In any event, the YuWIN funding specifically for the job board will end on March 31, 2017 and YuWIN's board and the people associated with it are well aware of that, and they believe that they can continue to operate after that time.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that answer. I'm glad that, after the initial conversation was had, in my opinion — and I think the opinion of others — there was a value in the

services that YuWIN was offering, and that the department and the minister have figured a way to bridge what those services were. I'm looking forward to figuring out or learning how the liaison will work between the labour market programs and people.

I think it was last year — the minister can correct me if I'm wrong — we had a lot of conversations about the nominee program and Advanced Education's role and responsibility within that. After a meeting that I was invited to at the Department of Education, there were some things that changed. One of the things that changed was, instead of just waiting for a complaint — it wasn't so much to be a complaint-driven process any more — there was going to be site checks, where someone within the department was going to go around to businesses that hired nominee employees. I just wanted to know the status of that and what the department has learned since they started doing that.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We are doing that; we are carrying out those site checks. We find that employers are well aware that we're going to be doing those site checks. I think we've had less difficulty and fewer complaints since we began doing those site checks.

We believe that most of the employers in the territory are really trying to make the system work. There are a few that don't, and we will be ensuring that those employers are sought out and won't be able to participate in the program. That's one of the reasons we also said that we will continue to make it known publicly when an employer is banned from the program.

Since we've instituted these new rules, we haven't had that many additional employers that are in difficult situations, compared to what we had previously.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister and the department, because I feel like that is the resolution I was looking for. I feel like that is successful, not only for my conscience, as an elected person, but others'. Just realizing that there's the human face on the employee and knowing that there's that oversight — I feel like that has really done what I was hoping it would do. I'm happy to hear that's working that way.

We have spoken to different new Canadians at different times who wanted to start businesses. One of the limitations they said was the proficiency level for English. So if they are coming in with a financial investment and they wanted to start a business in Yukon, because they wanted that as the opportunity to start the immigration process, one of the limiting factors is — I believe it's level 6 English. I can stand corrected — level 4 English.

Could the minister just kind of elaborate on how we came to that standard, if it was about investing money within the community and starting a business?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** It's completely ironic that the member opposite would ask this question.

In the last two or three weeks — perhaps as long as a month — the Minister of Tourism and Culture, others and I have met with potential investors as well as others on this particular subject. One of the issues that we brought forward to the Government of Canada is that we would like to have an

exemption from the language requirement in the territory. This morning we had a tentative response, and what I have asked the department to do, as of 11:30 this morning, is to communicate directly with Canada because it would appear right now that Canada is not interested in giving us an exemption. In fact, we believe that Canada is moving in exactly the opposite direction to require a higher language requirement. We do not believe that is in the best interests of the territory, and so, with the support of the member opposite — because we agree with her — we can build parameters around the language requirements so that, once these people move to the country, they have to have a progression. We can do all of those things, but we agree that we should not require them to have a specific level of English if they are foreign investors who want to come to the territory and make their home in the territory. That is the important part.

We agree with the member opposite and we are just now waiting for a formal reply from Canada.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for definitely catching that last point. We are not just talking about investment without the actual investment of a lifestyle change. We are actually looking at people who want to live in the territory. That is a worthy thing to point out because we are not just talking about bringing in money and earning money; we are talking about building a life in Canada. Based on the research of the Department of Education, are there any other jurisdictions in Canada that have exemptions from that language requirement?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** There are. In fact, I would say that the majority of other jurisdictions in Canada do not have a language requirement, and we wanted to join that group. That is when we found out that Canada may request all of us to enact some kind of minimum language standard when coming into the country. This is one of those issues that really goes beyond our political differences, and we would be happy to keep you up to date because this is something about which we will let everyone know as soon as we get an answer back from Canada. There are other jurisdictions in Canada that have no language requirement at all right now for business investors.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the offer from the minister and that would be good to be kept updated.

Before I move on to a different aspect, I would like to congratulate the department on the website. It is a lot easier to navigate than it was last year — hugely easier to navigate. Congratulations to the people within the department who have changed the layout and made it easier to understand.

One of my other favourite things in Advanced Education is obviously trades and trades training. Before we have talked about the statistics on the number of Yukoners registered. I was wondering if the minister could let us know — maybe not by industry at this point, but if he could let us know how many apprentices are registered in the territory and, out of that number, how many of those are women?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I get those statistics every month. I don't have them with me right now. In fact, they provide all that information and I think it is public information as well. I don't see any reason why it shouldn't be public information. It

simply lists the apprentices by industry — male and female. I don't see any reason why we can't make that information available, maybe even do it online.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that. There's the distinct possibility that it's available online right now and I just don't have the Googling skills with which to find it.

I have a couple of final questions. One of the challenges of being a business that hires people within the apprenticeship program is that you require a journeyman-level person to sign off on the hours. It's interesting, because sometimes it's perceived that, when you hire an apprentice, you're gaining one more body. I would say, from my experience, when you hire an apprentice, you're actually losing a body. The reason I say this is that, as a journeyman baker who worked within shops and things, my job was to make sure, with the apprentices coming through the ranks, that I walked them through everything, understanding that, in my industry, there was a lot less risk to life and limb, but there still definitely were things that had to be followed as far as safety protocol, both working with equipment and also for final products.

In my opinion, I would say that you don't really gain a body, but you kind of lose a body in that process. One of the difficulties, I think, that apprentices find in the territory is that it's hard for them to get placements because there is funding by the territory, but it sometimes isn't adequate to recompense the business for the loss of time for the journeyman. I wonder if there have been ongoing discussions with the trades community or if government has realized that it is sometimes a limitation for those apprentices to be able to get work where they can get their hours overseen by a journeyman.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** This is also an issue that's very close to my heart. I'll just throw in, in advance, that as members opposite know and I've probably mentioned before in this House, we did an evaluation of the Yukon's apprenticeship and tradesperson qualification program. We received the draft last week. I haven't read it myself yet, but I know the issue the member opposite talks about. In fact, she knows that my father, who taught a number of trades — he taught automotive, heavy equipment and welding programs over the years at the old Yukon vocational school and then again at the college. This was one of his issues as well.

I can remember him telling me, time and time again, when he worked in the trades and he had young fellows working for him — in those days, you used to be able to have more than one — and he said that when you have one young fellow working for you, you have an extra man. When you have two young fellows working for you, you have half a man, and when you have three young fellows working for you, you have no man at all. His point was that all his time was spent with the apprentices, and he got absolutely no work done in his business whatsoever. His point was, "I should be able to have somebody who works with the apprentices and I just sign off on their time."

I know what the member opposite is talking about. It is a difficult one to work through because we have agreements with the rest of Canada under which we have an apprenticeship program and a red seal program. We will

continue looking at it. I will read the evaluation and we'll either put it on the website or we will put a summary on the website as quickly as possible.

**Ms. White:** My understanding, and again, if I am wrong, please correct me. Does the Yukon government pay a portion of an apprentice's hourly wage? If they do, is there a percentage? Or is it Canada that pays or does that not even happen at all anymore?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** To the best of my knowledge, no, we don't pay anything in the salaries while they're actually working. What we do is pay when they go for their training, so each year when the apprentice goes away for their training or takes their training at Yukon College we pay, not a replacement salary, but we pay them for every week that they're in school. We don't pay their salaries while they're working for an employer.

**Ms. White:** I guess the next question is: Has there been conversation with industry at all as to whether or not a portion of that hourly wage that an apprentice was earning within their shop for example was covered by Yukon government — would they be more likely to hire apprentices?

The reason I ask this is that I have met people who have gone through the first year electrical program — for example, at Yukon College — and we're talking about incredibly motivated people who are knocking on all the doors of all the electrical contractors in town and what they're being told essentially is that they just don't have the time or the resources to take on an apprentice at the time. The reason why I ask about offsetting the costs for an organization is based on even the minister's father's lesson, which is that when they do have an apprentice they definitely gain in the ability of sharing knowledge, but sometimes you lose in the ability to actually get the job done.

Has the Department of Education had those conversations with industry or would there be an interest in having those conversations with industry?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We really, to the best of our knowledge, have not had that conversation. Of course we hire apprentices. We have a certain number of apprentices we hire as part of Yukon government each year. Other than that, we haven't had that conversation with industry, but it's something I'm sure that industry would leap at. I'm not sure if it would increase the number of apprenticeships seats that are currently available in industries — and by industry, I mean everything from baking to heavy equipment mechanics and welders to hairdressers. I don't know if that would increase the number of apprentices that would be taken in. I would hope it would.

**Ms. White:** Based on the minister's last comment, I hope that maybe this is a conversation that they have.

The minister just mentioned that there are certain numbers of apprentice spots within the Government of Yukon. Could he let us know how many spots there are and within which trades they exist?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I'm always very cautious about making commitments because then I find out I can't produce the information or my department can't produce the information that I've promised. We will take a look and see if

we have that information available. If that information is available, we don't have any problem sharing it, that's for sure.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the Minister's caution because previously I've asked about how many apprentices were hired within Yukon government and at the time it was a sad, low number — because from my perspective, trades only really live on if the knowledge is passed from one hand to the other. It's interesting — from my trade's perspective, there are times where people hold on tight to secrets until they realize that if they die then so do the secrets. Not all the trades are quite so secretive with their information, but kitchens sometimes are a little bit uber-competitive because it's just not necessarily the skill, but it's also the imagination that got it there.

I'll just leave this for a future conversation, but I would really like to know how many apprentices are hired by Yukon Government and in which trades.

*On Administration*

*Administration in the amount of \$460,000 agreed to*

*On Labour Market Programs and Services*

*Labour Market Programs and Services in the amount of \$9,600,000 agreed to*

*On Training Programs*

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

**Ms. White:** Although I don't have officials sitting right next to me, I have been asked to make sure that my statement isn't taken out of context.

When we have apprentices working within the shop, it's not that we're losing the man hours, it's just that there's a certain amount of hands-on that's required from the journeyman. I think that needs to be taken into account when we're talking about training programs and the reason why I asked the minister to maybe have those conversations with the industry. To be clear, the more time we put into an apprentice the quicker they learn, and the quicker they learn the more they have to offer the building or the business community. I do very much appreciate what happens in a relationship between an apprentice and a journeyman. I just hope to see more in the territory to make sure that the people we have going through the apprenticeship programs at the college — whether it's through carpentry or the electrician; whether we're looking at mechanics — that they all have an opportunity to work in the territory. Whatever way government can do to help facilitate those placements I think would be fantastic, so just a plug to continue on with maybe the conversation with industry about what government can do to better support them in their hiring of apprentices.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I fully agree and I guess I should clarify too — I think I did, but my dad's saying was that when he had one apprentice, he had still his full-time to teach, when he had two apprentices, he only worked half-time and when he had three, he didn't work at all on his normal job as he was with the apprentices all the time. I'm sure they got work out of them.

It was interesting to me because I had just moved into my parents' family home. One of the sad things I had to do was demolish his old garage in the back. A few guys came by as

they saw the garage going down, and they said, "My goodness. We spent a lot of time in that garage with your dad, both while we were students and while we were apprentices too." As a consequence, many of the things that we retrieved and salvaged from the garage went to various businesses around the City of Whitehorse — to apprentices who had worked through with my dad. It was really gratifying to me to see that all of those apprentices really remembered the journeyman whom they had worked through. Like I said before, it is a program very dear to my heart and we will do everything we can to improve it.

*Training Programs in the amount of \$6,690,000 agreed to*

***Advanced Education Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$16,750,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

*On Prior Years' Projects*

*Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

***Advanced Education Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil agreed to***

***Advanced Education Total Expenditures in the amount of \$16,750,000 agreed to***

***On Yukon College***

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I would like to ask the minister if he can tell us whether the grant to Yukon College was forwarded to the college on April 1, 2016 so that they have the ability to manage and use those funds throughout the year or whether the amount is provided in installments. Could the minister give details on that?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** As of April 3 or April 4, one-quarter went to Yukon College and one-quarter goes, each quarter, in advance of that quarter to the college.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Has the government considered the request that we have brought to its attention fairly regularly of providing the full amount up-front to the college?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I knew even before getting any advice from my colleagues here that we had requested this funding when I was an employee at the college as well — any number of years. We discovered back then, and things have not changed, that it violates the *Financial Administration Act* and that the Department of Education simply could not pay out the full \$25.5 million at the beginning of the year each year.

**Mr. Tredger:** I have a question for the minister about Science Adventures. It is a fabulous program, and we have discussed it in the Legislature before. We have often done tributes to people who have been involved, and I know the minister had said that he would work with them to ensure that the program continued.

When I look on their webpage, I see Science Adventures coordinates hallmark events and activities such as: sci-tech girl — cancelled, all-girls science club — cancelled; Yukon/Stikine regional science fair — that went ahead; annual bridge building contest — again, that went ahead and both with quite success; and then the stay-a-day at Yukon College was cancelled. Those are pretty critical programs. I know a number of parents were calling me about them and

why they weren't being offered. I know the minister has said that he would look into it. Can you give me an update on where we are with Science Adventures and why the programming has been cancelled?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** We have worked under contract with the college innovators in the schools and other programs, and we feel at the present time that, while we're in negotiations with the college, at the present time none of those programs should be cancelled due to a lack of resources that are being transferred to the college.

What we will do is, again, subject to negotiations with my department — but my path is fairly clear. If these programs cannot be done by the college with funding that's being given to the college, we will take the funding back and we will offer — because we believe those programs are essential to young people and we think they need to be offered.

Now this is not to say that absolutely everything that has been offered in the past will always be offered in the future because we evaluate programs on an ongoing basis, and some may be dropped and others added but we think these types of programs are so important that they can't be dropped.

**Ms. White:** We have discussed previously the importance of empowering young women in things like trades, technology and the sciences.

I think it was last year that I had an opportunity to go into the All-Girls Science Club as a guest instructor and we were talking about pulleys and things while using a bicycle as a demonstrator. I can tell you that, on a Saturday morning, the room was full to capacity and the young women were super engaged in what they were doing. They had fantastic instructors. I do echo the minister's thoughts that it's something that is important and should continue so I thank him for that commitment.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Just to make sure that the members opposite are aware, currently Yukon College gets \$57,000 a year for the innovators in the schools program and it also forms part of their base budget. They receive \$75,000 for the trades expedition camps and \$6,000 for the science fair adventures. We also provide, for the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, about \$117,000. I realize that's not part of the funding intended for the public schools but it just gives you an idea of the amount of money that is going for those various projects.

We also contribute about \$8,500 a year to the Stikine science fair and we will continue doing that as well. These are the funds that we're talking about. We think that we have to offer the programs.

**Mr. Tredger:** I guess my big concern about this is that I have watched the program and Science Adventures grow over the years, and it's built on relationships, it's built on connections to the business and the scientific community. When programs start to be cancelled, or we change personnel or move from one institution to the next, we can lose that momentum and basically have to start over again. I guess that's my concern on that.

I will leave that one and I would like to go on to dual credit. The minister mentioned that they are looking at some

dual credit in Watson Lake. I know that dual credit has been operating in Whitehorse for a while. Can he give me an update on the number of students who have participated in the dual-credit courses? Are there primarily academic dual credits or are we starting to see some of the students taking part in dual credits for some of the trades?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I don't have those numbers available, but that is something that we can obtain and will send to the members opposite. Primarily, at this time, the dual-credit programs are all academic. Our first experience with the trades programs is the program that is now happening in Watson Lake, where we have Watson Lake high school students as well as adults participating in a trades program there. We intend, with the college's cooperation, to expand that as well because we feel it is a very valuable experience for these students — not only the high school students, but the trades students as well as the adult students. It's something that we are looking forward to continuing and expanding in the next while.

**Chair:** Does any other person wish to speak in debate on Yukon College?

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

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

*On Yukon College*

*Yukon College in the amount of \$25,509,000 agreed to*

***Yukon College Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$25,509,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

*On Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining*

*Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining in the amount of \$1,123,000 agreed to*

*On Prior Years' Projects*

*Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

***Yukon College Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,123,000 agreed to***

***Yukon College Total Expenditures in the amount of \$26,632,000 agreed to***

*On Revenues*

*Revenues cleared*

*On Government Transfers*

*Government Transfers cleared*

*On Changes in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization*

*Changes in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization cleared*

***Department of Education agreed to***

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Graham 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. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, 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.  
Government bills.

## GOVERNMENT BILLS

### Bill No. 202: *Act to Amend the Education Act* — Second Reading

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 202, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I move that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I rise today in the Legislature to introduce amendments to the *Education Act* during second reading. These amendments are related to school councils and school boards within the territory.

School councils play a very important role in shaping our schools and we appreciate their contributions to the Yukon school community. These amendments address how the numbers of guaranteed representatives are treated when it comes to determining minimum and maximum numbers of school council members and school board trustees. Section 67 of the *Education Act* requires the minister to specify the numbers of members of a school council and trustees of a school board, subject to fixed minimums and maximums. Section 68 provides for the guaranteed representation of Yukon First Nation people on councils and boards by agreement between the minister and Yukon First Nations.

Since 1991, the number of members of school councils has been established by ministerial order, in particular ministerial order 1991-02. Since that time, by tradition, the ministerial order refers to elected members only. Guaranteed representatives from Yukon First Nations have not been listed on those ministerial orders nor have their numbers counted toward the minimum or maximum number of school council members as set out in the act. Mr. Speaker, this is not to say that the guaranteed representatives from the First Nations themselves are not valued members of these individual school councils — in fact, in many areas, they are the majority. It's just that during the calculation of minimum and maximum

numbers of school council members, the guaranteed member's numbers have not been included. Uncertainty during this election as to whether these guaranteed representatives are to be included in the number specified by the minister or in the overall maximum has led to inconsistencies in school council numbers. This has not been an issue for school boards, since there are no guaranteed representatives on the Yukon Francophone school board.

The Chief Electoral Officer has raised a concern to me and department officials by letter about guaranteed representatives not being counted toward the minimum and maximum numbers. To resolve this, new subsection 67(4) explicitly excludes the guaranteed representatives from the meaning of "member" and "trustee" for the purposes of calculation under 67. This makes it clear that the guaranteed representatives do not count toward either the act's maximum number or the numbers specified by the minister, but are in addition to those numbers. New subsection 68(4) confirms that the guaranteed representatives remain members or trustees for all other purposes under the act. These amendments preserve the status quo and current practice of Yukon school councils. No changes will be required to either the existing number of elected members of school councils or to the number of guaranteed representatives on school councils.

No changes are being made to the election process, how school councils are constituted, the duties and powers of school councils or the numbers and roles of guaranteed representatives. Guaranteed representatives will continue to have the same duties, powers and responsibilities as elected members. There is also a grandmother clause that confirms the lawfulness of previous school councils and their decisions.

The act states that the number of school councils must have between three and seven members. No school councils have more than seven elected members; however, five school councils have more than seven members when guaranteed representatives are included in the total. These five are: F.H. Collins Secondary School, which has seven elected and four guaranteed representatives; Ghùch Tlâ community school, five elected members and three guaranteed representatives; Porter Creek Secondary School, seven elected members, two guaranteed representatives; Robert Service School council, six elected members and two guaranteed representatives; and the Watson Lake school council, which has seven elected members, three guaranteed representatives.

We are making the amendments at this time to ensure that the upcoming school council elections run smoothly. Mr. Speaker, just as an addition, school council nominations ceased last week. Unfortunately, there are not a huge number of school councils that will have elections; however, the changes to this act — I promised the Chief Electoral Officer — would be introduced and passed this session and that they would be made retroactive in the area of previous school councils with more than the allowed number of representatives where those decisions were made.

Mr. Speaker, it's because of this that we're bringing forward these amendments at the present time — no

substantive changes to the *Elections Act* whatsoever; no substantive changes to the composition of school councils. This is just to make sure that those school councils that have the maximum number of elected representatives are still allowed to have appointed representatives from the First Nations in their attendance area.

**Mr. Tredger:** I thank the minister for his introduction. I would also like to thank the Chief Electoral Officer, as well as officials from the Department of Education and from Justice, for working on this. By acting on the concerns from Yukon's Chief Electoral Officer regarding the separate, but equally important, role of guaranteed representatives from First Nation communities on school councils, Bill No. 202 supports a robust school system that ensures an ongoing role for First Nations and for school council representatives.

Originally the guaranteed representation was introduced into the act when we were planning the act to ensure First Nations had participation in their local school councils and, in some communities, that they had a shared voice or equal voice so they could maintain some control. Because of that, Yukon school councils include two types of members: councillors, who are elected and guaranteed representatives, who are appointed. For all practical purposes, as the minister mentioned, they fulfill the same role. However they got there, they are treated equally. I was pleased to see that was ensured in this act, because it could quite easily be misconstrued.

I guess it was the ambiguity regarding the size of some school councils that led to the request to clarify the language surrounding the minimum and maximum numbers of elected council members. Since guaranteed representatives are not elected, they do not count as part of that question. While the NDP does support the bill, as it was presented, I do have a number of questions that I will raise in Committee of the Whole and seek some assurances.

I think the clarity is important when it comes to ensuring that First Nations are represented. A robust education would allow First Nation and non-First Nation communities to work collaboratively to improve the quality of and access to programming at our territory's schools.

A couple of questions I had are around the election process and whether or not there was an opportunity to have the elections held concurrently, should a First Nation decide that their appointed representatives could, should or may be elected. Another question I had was around — this is just from my experience on school councils and maybe this has been resolved by the decision to give the school councils \$100 for each child — but it has been an ongoing concern of school councils to meet requests from the schools for funds. Quite often school councils would forego their per diems so that they could put that money into school activities — or if people were absent from a meeting, they wouldn't get a per diem.

I am wondering if the minister has given any thought to the amount that school councils would collect per diem. Will that be changed if indeed we end up with boards exceeding 11 or 15? The other question I would have is: How do we ensure parity if school councils can have three to seven members? Is

that established per school, or will it be established per school, so that then when a First Nation is negotiating the number of guaranteed reps, they can ensure that there is an equal number? I know that quite often school councils don't fill their full number at the beginning, and so when a member of the public comes to the school council meeting and expresses an interest, they are immediately seized upon and encouraged to become members of the school council. If there is not a limit per school or a determined number, sometimes that could grow and it could cause some concerns.

Those would be my questions when we go to Committee of the Whole but, by and large, the NDP does support this bill. It looks like an excellent one.

Again, I would thank the minister and the Chief Electoral Officer as well as the departments of Education and Justice for their work on this. Hopefully it brings clarity to the situation.

**Mr. Silver:** I will be very brief on this second reading of Bill No. 202. I am very happy to rise to speak to the amendments proposed in the *Education Act*.

I do as well have a couple of questions for the minister for Committee of the Whole. We do understand that these amendments are to clarify the school council or board membership by differentiating between a member, a trustee and a guaranteed representative and that this clarification has brought all school councils and boards to within the council membership limits.

From the initial speech by the minister for second reading, he did talk a bit about limits. We were wondering if there are current limits set on the number of guaranteed representatives for each school, council or board, but have these changes affected the way members, trustees or guaranteed representatives are voted in or appointed as well?

Just clarification items — but other than that I am in total agreement that these are great changes to be made. We will be supporting this amendment to this act and we are looking forward to discussing it further in Committee of the Whole.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I would be happy to answer a few of the questions now, but I look forward to continuing this discussion in Committee of the Whole.

As for the election of First Nation representatives by the First Nation, we're told by First Nations across the territory that it's absolutely not needed.

They will choose their representatives within their own First Nation and just give us the names. In fact, the system has worked fine up until now. We placed no limit on the number of guaranteed representatives on any one school council. We are open to negotiation and we have negotiated — in fact, just recently I met with one First Nation and said: "Are you happy with the number of guaranteed representatives?" They laughed and said: "Well, we probably don't even need them because all of the elected school councillors are First Nation

folks as well.” But for clarity, we have not restricted in any way the number of First Nation representatives in areas. I look at the school in my community, which is Porter Creek Secondary School. They have two guaranteed representatives, and we look to get one from Kwanlin Dün and one from Ta’an Kwäch’än, which are the traditional First Nations in this area. Those are points of negotiation that we have with First Nations, and we are always willing to be flexible.

As for funding, we sincerely hope that the additional funding given to school councils, or provided to school councils in the coming year, will address many of the funding shortages. I have to tell members opposite that when I look at school councils across the territory, it is much like municipalities across the territory. Some of them are very frugal; they look after their money and have extremely large bank accounts for the size of the school. Others spend every cent they get every year. It depends entirely on the members of the school council.

I use Mayo as an example. I know that, on a municipal basis, year after year, Mayo is one of the most frugal, well-run municipalities in the Yukon, and I can think of a couple of others that are nowhere near as frugal or well-run. School councils are exactly the same.

We continue to work with them, and we know that the additional funding that many of them are getting this year is going to be an interesting exercise. We are already working with them to set the parameters. We have set the parameters and have done a number of other things in a cooperative fashion with school councils and it is turning out to be an interesting exercise.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I commend the bill to the House and look forward to Committee of the Whole.

**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. Hassard:** 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 17 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 202 agreed to*

**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 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

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. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

### Department of Health and Social Services

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I’m pleased to introduce the Department of Health and Social Services capital and O&M budgets for 2016-17. First I would like to again thank my family, my friends and the constituents of Porter Creek South for supporting me, for believing in me and for encouraging me in my endeavours as a Yukon Party MLA and as a Cabinet minister.

My family, my friends, and when I’m speaking to constituents of Porter Creek South, all reinforce the importance of and recognize our stable and diverse economy, first-rate health care and high-quality education.

I would like to extend my thanks to the officials for joining me and providing support today.

Madam Chair, our Yukon Party government has done an incredible job at addressing a number of areas. The stronger the economy, the stronger our health care and the stronger our education systems will be. On the social side of the ledger,



I'm particularly proud of the investments we've made for those Yukoners living with disabilities or different abilities.

I have told colleagues in this house and Yukoners many times that since 2002, the Yukon Party government has stepped up to the plate to help kids like my son Jack and the issues they have facing autism, but also many other families and children who are affected by a number of other disabilities. My Yukon Party caucus colleagues and Yukoners know that without a functioning, stable economy to support it, a social safety net simply won't help anyone.

In this budget we are requesting \$348.363 million in operation and maintenance funding and \$112.148 million in capital for a total appropriation of \$460.511 million. This funding represents a projected increase of \$20.8 million, or six percent, in O&M funding over the 2015-16 main estimates and an increase of \$17.34 million in capital. The largest increase in the department's projected O&M increase mainly stems from a \$11.6-million increase in Health Services. Our largest projected capital spending will come from capital projects under three main areas: under Adult Services, they include the Sarah Steele Building replacement and the Salvation Army rebuild; under Continuing Care, it includes the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility; and under Yukon Hospital Services, it includes the MRI and Emergency department expansion.

Our projected revenue and recoveries are estimated to total more than \$41 million. Seventy-two percent of these projected recoveries are from Canada.

As I speak to Yukoners throughout the territory, I will continue to remind them that it is important to remember, in fact, where we came from. Most of us sitting here will remember that, prior to the Yukon Party taking office in 2002, Yukon was in the throes of a terrible economic recession. Our unemployment rate was double-digits. Our economy was far worse off than it is today. Both opposition parties did their best to euthanize resource extraction in the territory and our private-sector economy was in dire need of attention. These were the challenges before us when Yukoners elected the Yukon Party government in 2002 and re-elected us in 2006.

Moving forward to 2016, the Corporate Services division's capital budget will receive \$5.6 million, primarily to support the electronic health initiative, much of which is recoverable from Canada, and for the implementation of the e-health Canada Health Infoway system development projects. The electronic health project will eventually allow health care providers to access diagnostics, medications, treatments and other relevant clinical information for every patient in one location. This technological advancement will truly enhance the flow of information and increase efficiencies in our health system. Over the next year, the following three components will be implemented: a client registry, a drug information system and a lab information system.

We are also investing in the replacement of old IT systems used to administer social assistance. The new system will allow for all programs that administer income support services to be integrated and access necessary client information to support proper case management.

Madam Chair, it's not my preference to remind both opposition parties of the past, but I do feel it is incumbent upon me as a Yukoner and as an MLA to remind people exactly what their choices are and the harm the policy choices from the opposition parties have had on our economy and on our territory as a whole.

In 2016, for Family and Children's Services, we will be expanding early childhood and prevention services by adding a speech language pathologist and an assistant financial clerk. We will also be increasing funding for the Child Development Centre by \$174,000 to meet ongoing operational costs.

On the capital side, we have allocated a total capital increase of \$135,000 for the Family and Children's Services branch. This comes from an increase of \$135,000 to cover various minor capital expenses for the Young Offenders Facility as well as operational equipment. Under the Adult Services Unit, we will be increasing O&M funding by \$4.7 million to primarily support the operational costs of the three new facilities: Sarah Steele Building, St. Elias group home and the Salvation Army Whitehorse Centre of Hope. Over \$2 million will go toward operating the new Sarah Steele Building to support those struggling with mental health and addictions. This new facility will increase access to intensive treatment for all Yukoners by its new continuous intake model and providing simultaneous programs for both men and women.

Another large expansion is the introduction of youth addiction and mental health services, which will include a 365-day continuous four-bed residential treatment and withdrawal service program.

We are delivering on our party's platform commitment to increase after-care supports by enhancing post-treatment social work capacity and operationalizing eight transition beds to ensure that individuals are ready to integrate back into their communities. Operating the new St. Elias adult group home will require an increase of \$487,000. The St. Elias adult group home will have increased capacity from five to 10 rooms, four of which will be suited for more independent living. The facility will continue to provide a safe and supportive home for individuals suffering from mild to severe cognitive disabilities.

We have allocated \$25,000 to the Salvation Army's new after-hours social assistance program and \$170,000 to enhance the operations of the new facility opening this winter. Social assistance will receive an additional \$1.9 million to meet program demands. We will also be providing an increase of \$150,000 to provide day programming for persons with disabilities transitioning from Family and Children's Services to Adult Services. Teegatha'Oh Zheh will be receiving an increase of \$154,000 to meet the operational demands.

We have allocated significant capital spending of \$15.585 million under Adult Services to cover our key social service projects, including the replacement of the Sarah Steele Building at \$7.378 million and the Salvation Army redevelopment at \$8.207 million. We are very excited about the opening of the new Sarah Steele Building, which is expected to be opening later this fall. The expanded and

enhanced Salvation Army Centre of Hope is expected to open this coming winter. The purpose of this building is to serve our more vulnerable population in our community by providing emergency shelter and transitional housing options. The 20 transitional beds will be used to support individuals who want supportive services and are looking to make steps toward securing more independence. These two major capital projects reflect our commitment to supporting individuals struggling with mental health and addiction issues, and also to create more accessible and more diverse housing options for our more vulnerable people.

Not only has the Yukon Party been a tremendous steward of a strong, stable economy, but I have said before that the Yukon Party government doesn't give itself enough credit for the work they have done on the social side of the ledger over the last 14 years. Our clear vision for moving forward together and our solid leadership from the Premier maintains our path to support our commitments to all Yukoners. This Yukon Party government will continue down the path to improving upon achieving a better quality of life, building a prosperous, diversified Yukon economy, managing and protecting Yukon's environment and wildlife and practising good government.

The territorial health initiative fund continues throughout this fiscal year, and its funding is 100-percent recoverable from Health Canada. In 2016 under a Yukon Party government, there is an increase of \$4.3 million, which will be going toward mental wellness projects, chronic disease management, e-mental health supports and the Yukon telepsychiatry pilot project. There are seven term positions working on the fifth project. These will continue until March 31, 2017.

We are allocating \$228,000 in resources to the implementation for a preventive screening program for colorectal cancer in Yukon, and medical travel for Yukoners has increased by \$1.4 million.

The 10-year mental health strategy will receive \$1 million to support mental wellness community capacity building. This overall strategy and implementation plan provides clarity on how we are taking action to address mental wellness in Yukon and how we are going forward together.

This overall strategy and implementation plan provides clarity on how we are taking action to address mental wellness in Yukon. We are allocating a total of \$846,000 in capital spending under Health Services, which is distributed to various facilities and programs, particularly in the communities. I was very happy to announce, along with the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, that we will be spending \$250,000 on planning for the replacement of the Old Crow Health Centre. I certainly thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his advocacy in ensuring positive health outcomes for his community.

With respect to community and program support, we have increased regional support services by \$365,000 to enhance social worker services in rural Yukon communities. These efforts will help to improve mental health supports and increase access to social supports.

Social assistance administered through Regional Services will receive \$600,000 to meet program needs and the Yukon seniors income support will receive an increase of \$110,000 due to the growing senior population.

In regard to continuing care, the Sixth Avenue continuing care home facility opened this February and it is at full occupancy. The operational costs for this facility and programming will be \$1.7 million and will provide long-term care for its residents.

The Yukon Home Care Program will receive an additional \$244,000 as we continue to support individuals living in their own home for as long as possible. This program is continually trying to look at ways to support people at home with increasing levels of dementia and complex care needs.

The operational costs for phase 1 of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility are approximately \$262,000.

Under capital, we are proceeding with major capital projects under the Continuing Care division and have allocated over \$68 million for this year.

Our largest project is by far the Whistle Bend continuing care at \$67 million. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will begin construction this spring and will be completed within 24 months. The first phase of the project includes the construction of the 150-bed facility and all of the support space, including kitchen, laundry and a village for the whole facility. Currently there are between 65 and 70 individuals waiting for services — for a continuing care facility. This government has certainly committed to meeting the long-term care needs of Yukoners.

In Dawson, we have opened the new McDonald Lodge, which currently provides 15 beds instead of the previous 11, and has the capacity to have five additional beds added in the future.

The new Sixth Avenue continuing care home facility, or Birch Lodge, opened in February of this year and provides an additional 10 beds. As I mentioned earlier, it's already operating at full capacity. In the next 10 years, the Yukon's senior population will almost double. Twenty percent of the current Yukon population is in the 55- to 60-year age group. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will be critical infrastructure in helping us meet the current and future needs of seniors and other Yukoners needing continuing care services.

The Department of Health and Social Services has forecast \$28 million for O&M for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. This estimate supports operational costs in line with other facilities operated in the Yukon, at approximately \$500 per day per individual — quite a contrast from the \$35 per day the residents are charged.

McDonald Lodge in Dawson City has been completed and demolition of the old facility will cost approximately \$500,000.

Madam Chair, the Yukon Hospital Corporation will receive \$200,000 for an additional emergency room nurse and, to match demand, we have increased funding for blood products by \$205,000. I should note that the new MRI machine will receive \$16,000 to cover increases in operational

costs. We've budgeted \$22 million in capital for the new Emergency department expansion project, and we continue to support and observe the benefits of having our own MRI program north of 60.

Now moving on to the revenue side of the budget: as I mentioned earlier, revenues and recoveries for the department total over \$41 million. The largest component of federal recoveries is from the new territorial health investment fund, THIF, at \$13 million. We're also receiving an increase of \$999,000 for increased recoveries at Copper Ridge Place and for our new Sixth Avenue continuing care home, or Birch Lodge facility, from Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada. I should note that, when the Whistle Bend continuing care facility is open, it too will receive revenues from Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

These are some of the highlights for the Department of Health and Social Services for 2016. Madam Chair, I do have a few closing comments, but I see that my time is up, so I will sit down and offer the floor to members opposite, and I can continue on with my remarks when they're completed.

**Ms. Stick:** I welcome the officials from the department here. I'll be brief. I would like to get into the budget. I have questions in many areas to discuss and look for answers.

To me, it's just amazing how some things don't change in the last four and a half years. I think the number one thing that, for me, stands out is the lack of a mental health strategy. We're into day 10 of a 28-day Sitting in our last Sitting of four and a half years, and we still do not have a mental health strategy. This is something that goes previous to other Yukon Party governments in the past, where there was a call for a mental health strategy that would benefit all Yukoners in the communities and in Whitehorse, and still we don't have that piece — that document — in front of us that is going to show Yukoners and the people in this Legislature how this government intends to move forward on a mental health strategy, which is important when it impacts so many individuals and families in the Yukon.

We're back on another capital project — in particular the Whistle Bend project — and it really feels that due diligence has not been done. We received a report in 2013 — the final report, which happened prior to public consultation or even discussion about what people might like to see in terms of seniors and elder care in the Yukon. This growing need for senior care and continuing care we recognize and we agree that we need something. This shouldn't have come as a surprise to any government and planning should have happened for this long before now, when we have people waiting in hospital either in Whitehorse, Watson Lake or Dawson for a continuing care bed or room somewhere. This has been known to be going on for a long time and planning should have happened long before this. This government has been in power for just about 14 years and it just seems in the last two that we seem to have action on this.

With that, I will sit down and allow the member opposite to finish with his statements and then I have lots of questions.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Moving on with my closing remarks and then I'll try to address a couple of the issues that the member opposite has already brought forth, Yukoners selected the Yukon Party to lead the territory because this team has the vision, the energy and the experience to meet the challenges head-on with confidence. The Yukon Party government has again used the budget to make considerate and strategic investments.

I'll start with the Whistle Bend continuing care facility — what I can recognize is that since this Yukon Party government took office in 2002, we see more people staying in the territory including seniors and this Yukon Party government has done such an incredible job at governing the territory, we see seniors that had moved away from the territory moving back because of the exceptional services that are provided in the territory.

Madam Chair, the Whistle Bend facility will be a specialized care facility that will provide a safe and welcoming home environment for Yukon continuing care residents. This facility will be the resident's home, operated with a resident-centred philosophy. Within the plan for 150 beds, there will be two new programs for Yukon: a community hospice with 18 higher acuity rooms and a specialized, long-term care mental health house with 12 rooms, as well as five standard houses with an additional 120 rooms. Standard houses will be appropriate for residents with varying needs, including those with dementia and those who are dependant for all activities of daily life.

Important partners, stakeholders, staff and a team of residents and family members are certainly and have been involved in the planning process. The facility will be based on a village concept where the most private level of the spectrum is the house and will provide numerous communal and private spaces suitable for a variety of activities and interests. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will have a dedicated space for an adult day program for frail, elderly individuals and to support seniors and elders to remain in their own homes.

Madam Chair, as I've indicated previously on the floor of this Legislature, we do not have a formal, approved budget yet for O&M costs for running the new Whistle Bend facility and we expect those numbers to evolve over the next couple of years as the stakeholder groups continue to work out the precise details of the programming. We do have an idea of the order of magnitude of costs for the operation and maintenance of this new facility and there have been dollars approved through the Management Board process with respect to the forecasted expenditures for O&M.

As I indicated earlier in Question Period, we currently operate a 96-bed extended care facility at Copper Ridge Place and we know that the staffing model and support services costs will be very similar to the new facility, so we can expect similar costs. In 2015-16 the O&M costs for Copper Ridge were \$18,489,000.

Of this, \$16 million, or 86.7 percent, goes toward payroll for nurses, therapies, dietary, housekeeping, administration, maintenance, laundry and so on. Food and nursing supplies

account for \$922,000 or five percent; and \$890,000 goes for heating and electricity. That is 4.8 percent of the total budget. Pharmacy and medical costs are \$294,203 per year — 1.6 percent of the budget — while repairs and maintenance make up 0.6 percent of the budget at \$113,210.

As I have also indicated on the floor of this Legislature, this government certainly recognizes that it is expensive to care for seniors. Even so, we are committed to providing our seniors with the care that they need, Madam Chair. Currently when this care is provided at Whitehorse General Hospital, we pay \$2,462 per day. By comparison, at Whistle Bend and Copper Ridge Place, we pay — or will pay — approximately just over \$500 per bed per day or approximately \$28 million per year. I did indicate in my remarks earlier that the expectation or the fee that the seniors pay toward that \$500 per day is only \$35 a day here in Yukon.

We've included those O&M costs in our long-term fiscal plan. Those costs are all-inclusive; they cover medical staff, all ancillary staff, janitorial food and all other costs.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Building a facility of this size also helps to keep those costs in line, which is another approach for the reason that we've taken. I can add that, in my earlier remarks, I talked about recoveries from Canada and we expect, on the Whistle Bend continuing care facility, to have recoveries in the area of about \$7 million per year.

The need for a significant number of new care facility beds in Yukon was certainly confirmed through the two needs assessments and the business case that was conducted for government and the current patterns of usage of long-term care and the long, growing wait-lists for facility beds.

Acute care beds are also being used by patients requiring an alternate level of care and who should receive care in a facility rather than in acute care at the hospital. The government has been proactive — and has been proactive all along — in planning for the care needs of our seniors and elders and the significant number of individuals who will be living with dementia in the near future.

As has also been mentioned on the floor of this Legislature — our Premier indicated, and our party believes, that both parties opposite would halt the work on the continuing care facility if they were elected, leaving anywhere from 65 to 90 people on the wait-list for continuing care. I can also add that by 2021, it is expected that we will need 383 beds. We currently have 182. To halt this project would simply be doing a disservice to that large number of people on the wait-list, waiting for long-term care. To halt this project would be doing a disservice to Yukoners. To halt this project would be doing a disservice to the men and women working in long-term care who know we need this facility.

I believe that this Yukon Party government has done its homework when it comes to long-term care — despite the members opposite telling people that we are developing this project based on input and feedback from residents, clients, families, First Nations, staff of long-term care and key stakeholders and we will continue to listen to those important people as we move forward on this project.

We are fortunate to have an amazing home care system here in the territory, the largest, most comprehensive program — which is at a very low cost, if any, to Yukoners. Home care services include homemaking, personal care, nursing, social work and therapy services. Because we have increased our investment in home care by nearly 400 percent over the last number of years, there is currently no wait-list for home care. We provide a number of community supports to help individuals remain in their own homes as long as possible. We're proud of those services and we're proud that we invest in Yukoners' health care.

Moving on to mental health — I was very happy to make an announcement just a number of weeks ago, and that announcement was around the \$1 million that this Yukon Party government has invested in community-based mental health initiatives. I went on to say that this fund will support the principles and concepts of the Yukon mental wellness strategy, which will be released in the next few weeks and will help communities tailor capacity-building initiatives to meet their specific needs.

It certainly takes partnerships from First Nations, from First Nation governments and all levels of government and communities to provide those individuals with the help and support that they need. I was pleased that the chair of the Mental Health Association was very supportive of us moving forward with this \$1-million investment in Mental Health Services. He went on to say that Yukon communities will benefit from having access to more resources and this fund is one way of providing them with the support that they need.

Madam Chair, I am very happy that in the next few weeks we will be releasing the mental wellness strategy. I know our critics will say that it has been a long time coming, but we have one chance to do this the right way and so we will, and we have taken our time to ensure that happens. Right now, our partners and stakeholders — both within Whitehorse and rural Yukon communities — are reviewing the strategy with a team from the department. It is important to me, as the minister responsible for mental health and to the government as a whole, that we have these very frank discussions up front and ensure that the context for the strategy is certainly understood by everyone. I can tell members that this will be a strategy for 10 years — that it will feature the best practices from Canadian and international jurisdictions and builds on past and current work here in the territory.

The government is already doing a lot of work in the area of mental health services for citizens and I can't thank a number of our partners enough — both NGOs, governments and in the communities — for the incredible amount of work that they are doing.

Madam Chair, under Mental Health Services, as I indicated there are a number of programs that are up and running and I would like to name a few of them here. Under the territorial health investment fund, a community knowledge exchange workshop on mental health and addictions will be held in July 2016. There is the FRIENDS group, through the Bell funding and certainly very appreciative of Bell and Northwestel — Paul Flaherty and his team — for partnering

with Yukon government and other entities that provide support and services around mental health. There is also mental health first aid training and I have talked to a number of staff throughout government who have taken this training and they are very appreciative of it.

There is a living life to the full course through the Mental Health Association of Yukon. I just talked to Ray Wells two short weeks ago and met with a couple of other members from the Mental Health Association of Yukon and they are very excited to be able to provide this workshop throughout the territory. I think they have done 15 or 16 workshops. Don't quote me on that, but I believe that they have presented a number of workshops in that number range throughout the territory.

We are also providing the trauma-informed practice training through Yukon government, another piece that is certainly very important.

Under the national initiatives, I've already talked about Bell Let's Talk and our important partnership with Bell and Northwestel. The Kwanlin Dün First Nation national knowledge exchange gathering was on March 29. I just talked with Chief Doris Bill a couple of days ago, and we were all very excited about how that gathering progressed. The outcomes were very positive and we look forward to working with First Nations as partners on our mental wellness and mental health programs, as we move forward.

In the communities, there are community addictions programs; there are mental health nurses and child/adolescent treatment services workers servicing communities outside of Whitehorse. There are: the e-mental health apps pilot project with schools outside of Whitehorse; supporting Many Rivers to deliver the Flourishing program in two rural Yukon schools as part of a pilot project; and the telemental health pilot to increase access to counsellors in Carmacks, Carcross, Pelly and Mayo.

I've had the honour and privilege of creating a relationship with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection over the last number of years, and that's a relationship we will continue to foster, as they provide some exceptional material, particularly around young people who have found themselves in unusual situations and need that level of support. More importantly, their program really offers the preventive measures through online marketing — perhaps Facebook posts or other — so children know there are outcomes to their behaviour around sharing intimate images but, needless to say, there is support for them and, if they are experiencing difficulties as a result of providing such images, there are means and ways in which they can get that support.

Madam Chair, I think that's all I have, as you're indicating my time is up. I welcome and look forward to the questions from the members opposite.

**Ms. Stick:** I would like to move into actual budget questions. The way I like to do it is that I start at the beginning and I move through and have questions on the amounts, but I also have questions on a lot of the information that is prepared in the budget, which I find very helpful in terms of determining programs and what's happening in them.

At the beginning, I have a couple of questions around Corporate Services and the budget item. This is a question I'm always interested in. It's in the number of auxiliary-on-call employees who are hired by this department. That includes in continuing care, group homes and social services. I know many individuals who are auxiliary on call and have been for a number of years. Many work full-time and sometimes even more than that. For some it is a choice to be auxiliary on call — they like the flexibility — for others, they wish to be permanent because, without that permanency, they do not have the same health or dental benefits as permanent employees, they do not have paid leave or days off for sickness, vacation leave and that type of thing.

There is an amount in their pay that somehow is supposed to cover those things, but for many it has been years that they have been working as auxiliary on call in the same position. I am just wondering what the numbers are. How long is this going to carry on? Is there any move to change some of the auxiliary-on-call positions to permanent positions? I know we did it recently with St. Elias where those positions did become — or some of them — permanent positions. I am wondering if there are any other areas where they are considering auxiliaries on call to become more permanent than they are currently?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I certainly extend my appreciation to the member opposite for asking the question regarding auxiliaries on call. They are very important positions, especially throughout the Department of Health and Social Services when we are operating a number of 24/7 care or supervision-type of environments.

As Minister of Health and Social Services, I would like to thank all of those who are working as auxiliaries on call. I know that, as the member opposite had indicated, many of them work as auxiliaries on call because they choose that — perhaps it is a lifestyle choice or a number of other reasons. I would certainly like to extend my appreciation to those individuals doing that work. Certainly, there would be opportunities for them to apply for permanent positions through competitions as those positions come available, but what I can tell the member opposite is that, at this current time throughout the department, we have 80.68 on-call equivalent positions. Those positions are used to cover volume increases, sicknesses and vacancies. As I mentioned, in 24/7 operations, we will always need some positions to meet program demands and, again, on behalf of the department I express my thanks and gratitude to those individuals.

**Ms. Stick:** That is a big number. Is that the same equivalent as an FTE — the 80.68? If so, the other question would be: How many individuals make up that 80.68 FTEs, if that is what that is?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** The 80.68, as the member was asking, are FTE equivalents. As far as the actual number of people who fill those 80.68 positions, I can commit to getting back to the member opposite.

**Ms. Stick:** Just on the same line — and I imagine the minister would have to get back to me on this one also. I am aware of individuals who have been auxiliaries on call for

over 10 years. Again, I know they can apply on jobs that might come up, but I am wondering if there is any move to look at those positions and make more of them permanent. It may mean that they still need to be doing coverage, but they can be scheduled in. That's a lot of individuals, Madam Chair, who don't have the benefit of health or dental coverage or paid leave for vacations or sickness.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** As the member opposite can understand, those 80.68 equivalent FTE positions are certainly — that's a number at one point in time. That number can certainly fluctuate. Those individuals provide services at a number of different programs that aren't necessarily transferrable. For an example, the new Oblate Centre or the Birch Lodge on Sixth Avenue — if it had auxiliary staff there, those positions wouldn't necessarily be transferrable for those individuals to work at, like in the RYTS program or at the Young Offenders Facility. Certainly there are smaller numbers in each of the programs. I know 80 looks like a large number, but with the size of the Department of Health and Social Services, that 80.6 provides flexibility and services at a large number of different programs.

As I mentioned earlier in my response, the auxiliary-on-call positions are utilized for a number of different reasons, whether it be vacations or sick days or so on.

With respect to those individuals who are working on call, I would certainly encourage them to continue to look for other vacant full-time permanent positions and continue to apply on those. I can't speak to the hiring of full-time staff and the HR requirements in our department, but I just encourage people — if there's a position out there and they are interested in working full-time — to continue to apply for those.

**Ms. Stick:** I will move on. We see in Health Services a substantial increase of \$12 million, and I'm just looking for a better explanation of where the \$12 million is being spent.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Madam Chair, we'll have more information when we get into the line-by-line portion of the budget. We've seen personnel increases of \$49,000; there was an increase of \$110,000 and one FTE for a functional analyst position offset by a decrease of \$61,000 due to staffing vacant positions at a lower rate of pay and a decrease in fringe benefits. There's \$1.465 million for medical travel increase benefits — a lot of this is under THIF; \$4,050,000 for physician claims to address increased costs for physician services within and outside of Yukon; \$625,000 to cover the high cost of drugs for the chronic disease program; a \$1,277,000 one-time increase to cover the high cost for medication used for the treatment of hepatitis C; \$98,000, a one-time increase for health benefits administration annual increase to adjust budget for the medevac contract, as negotiated; a \$100,000 increase for costs associated with the claims process and registration systems; a \$475,000 increase to the Yukon Medical Association agreement; a \$200,000 time-limited increase to the Yukon Medical Association agreement for the collaborative care initiative, and that's offset by a \$700,000 decrease for one-time funding for

physician services in Watson Lake and a \$350,000 decrease for one-time funding for the collaborative care initiative.

**Ms. Stick:** I thank the member opposite for that. I am just wondering if I could have an update on the Canada Health Infoway — the electronic health records. We had estimated to spend more than \$4.5 million in the last fiscal year and more than \$4.5 million in the coming year. I'm just wondering if I could have a reminder, please, of what the total cost of this project is going to be and how many more years we are looking at for this particular project.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** E-health means the electronic linking of relevant information between physicians, pharmacists and other health care providers to support personal health care decision-making and health system sustainability. The vision for e-health is that, eventually, all health care providers in Yukon will be able to view diagnostics, medication, treatment and other relevant clinical information as one patient record.

The current e-health project has three components: a client registry, a drug information system, and a lab information system. These systems will be implemented over the next year. The lab information system phase is now operational in the community health centres and continuing care, allowing the flow of lab tests electronically between these programs and the Whitehorse General Hospital. Phase 2, connection to BC, will occur over the next fiscal year. E-health committees are working with various stakeholders and partners and subject matter experts throughout the implementation of these systems. There is a \$10-million allocation, \$6 million of which is recoverable from Canada.

Madam Chair, I don't have to tell you that Yukon is far behind the rest of Canada when it comes to an e-health system. Additional infrastructure is usually required in rural and remote regions, like the north, and Infoway money is not guaranteed into the future. I thank the member opposite for bringing this forward.

**Ms. Stick:** If I can just go back to the same question and ask again, we saw funding last year — a little bit the previous year — in 2014-15. We saw funding last year in this fiscal year. Will we continue to see further funding of this amount or similar amounts in the coming years?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** This project is to be completed by March 31 of 2017. We don't expect any funds to be in the 2017-18 budget tabled next spring.

**Ms. Stick:** A question again under Corporate Services and human resources. I'm just wondering if the department is continuing to use outside human resource companies in terms of hiring management positions. We saw that in the contracts last year, where there were, I believe, contracts out for \$75,000 in terms of hiring management positions in the department, instead of using our own considerable human resource staffing that we have in the department now.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** At this time, there are no recruitment agencies hired by the Department of Health and Social Services.

**Ms. Stick:** I'm going to move on to some of the Family and Children's Services information. When I was looking at the statistics for child protection services and family services,

we see that these numbers are continuing to rise both in Whitehorse and in the communities. Under family services, we're talking about counselling, prevention and support measures provided by personnel in the rural communities.

Are there regular visits to every community by the Family Services Unit and do any of the communities actually have permanent staff who provide those services in the rural communities?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I extend my thanks to the number of social workers who continue to work throughout the territory in a number of communities. We have a number of social workers based here in Whitehorse, but we also have social workers based in Watson Lake, Dawson City and Haines Junction who service the outlying communities of those areas.

On top of that, there are a number of other professionals who service the communities. Many Rivers travels to a number of the different communities and we have the workers at the Child and Adolescent Therapeutic Services who travel to a number of the communities, but I think primarily the increases that we've seen over the last couple of years have been attributed to some of the public awareness campaigns that we've driven through this department and perhaps through other departments.

I know the Department of Education has been a great partner in those campaigns, and following the family and children's services act and the implementation of those public awareness campaigns, we've definitely seen an increase since then.

I think that most of the increases, as I mentioned, can be attributed to the public awareness. Earlier I talked about the relationship we have formed with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and how that has — I know when we first signed the agreement with them and were speaking publicly about the relationship we had with them, the traffic to their website increased by 1,000 percent, or maybe even more than that. I continue to have dialogue with those organizations and with my government caucus colleagues on how we can look at doing future campaigns, promoting future campaigns with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, but also with a number of the programs that we are operating through the Department of Health and Social Services.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Nixon 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. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, 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:** Mr. Speaker, 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 5:25 p.m.*