



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 21

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, May 29, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
Don Hutton	Mayo-Tatchun

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
Kate White	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, May 29, 2017 — 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 at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Tourism Week

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise today on behalf of the Liberal government and the Third Party and pay tribute to Tourism Week, which will be celebrated throughout Canada from May 28 to June 3.

Spearheaded by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Tourism Week provides an opportunity for us to recognize the contribution that this vital sector makes to Yukon's economy. Tourism contributes to four percent of Yukon's GDP, which is the second highest in Canada. It employs 3,000 people and generates approximately \$250 million in revenues to Yukon businesses annually. The sector enables economic diversity and provides opportunities for capacity development, education and employment in all communities.

There are many tourism successes to celebrate this Tourism Week. At the same time, there are many exciting initiatives that this government is pursuing with the aim of growing tourism in Yukon. As the Minister of Tourism and Culture, my priority is to market and help grow Yukon tourism while protecting and promoting Yukon's rich cultural heritage, its history and diverse forms of artistic expressions. Growing tourism will mean building on existing partnerships and engaging with stakeholders like never before.

Working with Yukon First Nations, communities and industry stakeholders, we will make innovative investments in tourism. One area where we see great potential for growth is winter tourism. Later this year, we will be hosting a Yukon summit on winter tourism to help define opportunities and investments for sustained growth. The summit will be part of an overall stakeholder engagement initiative we will be undertaking on the development of a new strategy to grow tourism in the Yukon. This will involve industry operators, tourism-related non-governmental organizations, First Nations and their development corporations, other Yukon government departments, municipal governments and the public.

It is a fantastic time to be doing this work. So many Yukon tourism organizations, such as Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon and First Nations are embarking on strategic planning paths of their own. The federal, provincial and territorial governments have recently developed a national

tourism strategy. The federal government recently released its new vision for tourism and the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada has released its five-year plan as well.

I am very excited to be at the beginning of this government's tourism and culture mandate as we look forward to innovative ways of growing tourism in Yukon. We have a solid foundation to build upon and a growing number of community partners contributing their ideas, enthusiasm and creativity to the conversation.

One of the tourism areas with potential for growth is cultural tourism. There are so many amazing opportunities for Yukon First Nations to share their cultures and traditions with visitors. I look forward to more development in this area. With leadership from the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, we anticipate that great strides will be taken in this area of indigenous tourism.

Of course the entire sector benefits from the strength of its industry leaders, including the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, Klondike Visitors Association, the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, the Yukon Convention Bureau, our chambers of commerce, and others. Thank you all for your dedication, energy and commitment to Yukon tourism.

It is going to be a great year working together to build an even stronger tourism sector. I have really enjoyed my time meeting with all of the associations and all of the various sectors to hear their plans and their dreams for tourism in Yukon.

I would like to remind all Yukoners to get out and explore their Yukon. There are great incentives to be found at over 60 businesses, historic sites, museums and First Nation cultural centres, and more. Explore Your Yukon is a campaign that is happening from May 18 to June 18, so I encourage Yukoners to pick up their coupon books at Yukon visitor centres and also Canadian Tire in Whitehorse and just begin your adventure — become a tourist in Yukon and become an ambassador for Yukon. I think that's the strength behind that particular campaign that's going on.

In closing, I would like to invite everyone to attend an event at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre at 7:00 p.m. this evening to help celebrate this wonderful community facility and its 20-year anniversary. The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre was established in May 1997 to tell the story of the ice age in the Yukon and for many years has been a favourite destination for locals and for visitors. We are proud to be working with researchers and Yukon First Nations to share this long-ago world with visitors at this centre. So I really encourage people to come out and participate this evening. Thank you. Mahsi' cho. Günilshish. Shaw nithän.

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to national Tourism Week, May 28 to June 3. Tourism is very familiar to me and my family, as we operated a tourism business for many years. It was challenging hard work, but so very rewarding. As a front-line worker and business owner, tourism gives you knowledge of what is happening on the ground in real time. It is not about

the stats or campaigns at that point; it is dealing with real people from around the world and every walk of life. It is exciting and interesting.

The idea behind the national Tourism Week is to bring focus and attention to the economic impact that tourism has on the region. National Tourism Week raises awareness of our tourism industry. It is the hope that policy-makers will ensure that tourism is not taken lightly.

Travel and tourism is a huge component for Yukon as it has a significant economic impact and brings many social benefits. Visitor experience is of utmost importance, as no matter what we spend on ad campaigns, word of mouth is powerful. If a bad experience is had, it will spread like wildfire. In our region, we have a robust summer tourism season as it is most comfortable for the majority of travellers and, over the years, we have seen larger motorhomes and bus tours arriving. Our shoulder and winter seasons are also continuing to grow as well. Canada is considered a fairly safe destination, and with our known friendliness and courtesy, we will continue to prosper with visitors.

I was a board member of many tourism organizations, such as TIA Yukon and the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association. Later on, I sat as the aboriginal national representative of the Canadian Tourism Commission board of directors and vice-chair of Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada. I was always pleased to represent the Yukon and bring our northern perspective to these tables. I commend the Department of Tourism and Culture for the recent initiative of Explore Your Yukon. By getting locals to know their region or territory, it will help us become ready ambassadors who can be guides for our visitors. 2017 is a big year, as we celebrate Alaska Highway, 75 years — and Canada, 150 years. Today, May 29, marks the 20th anniversary of the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre. Our ice-age heritage is showcased and the centre has proved to be an integral part of the community, hosting receptions, films and notable speakers.

We always like numbers in tourism, as they focus on new and evolving trends and, if possible, these numbers tell us how to adjust our services and products. In 2016, we had 419,000 visitors to the territory, and of those, 72 percent were Americans, 11 percent were overseas visitors with the remaining being Canadians. With our low Canadian dollar, we can continue to encourage Canadians and other visitors to make that dream-of-a-lifetime trip to Yukon.

Sitting on those many boards, I have met many people across the country and around the world, and Yukon is of much interest. There are people who have family living here, people who had lived here, relatives who came, relatives who came during the stampede, who worked on the Alaska Highway, friends who moved and never left, and, of course, those who still want to come to visit.

Let's celebrate our wonderful territory as we share our bounty and beauty. Say "hello" or "welcome" to all of our visitors throughout the year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Telus Walk

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Liberal government and the Official Opposition today to acknowledge those dedicated individuals who organized this past Sunday's Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Telus Walk. While this group may be small in numbers, they are large in heart, working with others across the country — indeed, across the world — to create a world without type 1 diabetes.

Today, more than 300,000 Canadians live with type 1 diabetes or T1D. T1D is an autoimmune disease in which a person's pancreas stops producing insulin, a hormone that enables people to get energy from their food. It's an equal opportunity disease affecting both children and adults. Its sudden onset is unexpected and yet it leaves a lifelong disease that may be treated through insulin injections or pumps. The thing about T1D is that its causes are not entirely understood. Scientists believe that genetic and environmental triggers are involved in its onset and that it really has nothing to do with diet or lifestyle. The rate of T1D incidences among children under the age of 14 is estimated to increase by three percent per year worldwide. There is nothing we can do to prevent it, and at present, there is no cure. While insulin can keep people alive, it doesn't cure the disease. It never goes away, but at the same time, people with T1D serve as an inspiration to all of us, especially the young ones, by facing the disease's challenges with courage and perseverance. They don't let it stand in the way of achieving their goals.

Mr. Speaker, I thank and congratulate the organizers for continuing to make us aware of their work and for lobbying for individuals with T1D. I also thank all of those individuals who participated and those who donated. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Jill Nash, Christina Terpstra and Rachel Hrebien — and I may have said that wrong — for making this happen. There were approximately 126 walkers on Sunday who together raised \$11,825 with more money still coming in. It is these donations that will one day make a difference.

Mr. Kent: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 2017 Telus Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's walk to cure diabetes, which took place yesterday starting at Shipyards Park here in Whitehorse. The annual walk brings over 40,000 Canadians together to support friends, loved ones and each other in the fight against type 1 diabetes. The money raised is transformed into research with the goal of — and I quote: "turning type one into type none." The JDRF walk has over the years become an incredible movement to create a world without type 1 diabetes — or T1D. I have learned a little bit about type 1 diabetes lately. I have been fortunate to meet a number of Yukon families who have children with the disease. They have opened up to me about the challenges they and their children face on a daily basis, and I thank them for informing me and allowing me to better understand just how important this movement to end T1D is.

Dealing with T1D is a team effort and as your child grows, so does their team. Between parents, siblings, extended family, daycare workers, educators, health professionals and beyond, each child living with T1D builds an entire network of supporters. These people not only rally around them to provide support, but educate themselves to ensure that child is surrounded with the help they need to help manage this disease and intervene if necessary.

This year's walk, as the minister mentioned, raised almost \$12,000 for juvenile diabetes research and it is expected that \$3,000 more in donations will come in. Once again, Yukoners exceeded expectations, as the organizers had a goal of \$7,000 for this event.

I would like to also thank organizers Christina Terpstra, Jill Nash and Ms. Hrebien for their work in helping to bring over 125 people for this walk. Christina, originally from Dawson City, I believe, now making her home in Whitehorse, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes herself just shy of her 18th birthday.

I would also like to acknowledge a few of the young Yukoners who were at the event yesterday, who have been both the driving force and the focus of fundraising efforts in the Yukon. This year's ambassador — his name is Landon, along with Heidi, Emersyn, Sawyer and their friends and families, all took to the trail to walk toward ending diabetes.

Again, Mr. Speaker, a big thank you to everyone who came out for the walk and who supported, and continue to support, donations to this important cause.

Christina Terpstra is here in the gallery with us today, as well as constituents of mine, Jill Nash and her young son Lucas. Thank you for joining us.

Applause

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to pay tribute to yesterday's walk to end diabetes. I think it's a fascinating thing. I went to the bank on Friday for a bake sale and I said, "Isn't this ironic that you have a bake sale for diabetes?" They said, "Let me tell you — it's not about diet. It's not preventable." I said, "Wow — that is really important to know."

So the education part that this group has brought to the territory has been really important. They have been supportive of newly diagnosed children and families and it is a very tight network, so I want to thank them for what they have done. I want to thank everyone who donated to the silent auction because it was massive. More important than that is that the conversation now is becoming much more public, so it's not something that we don't have to talk about.

I appreciate that I got cookies and a little bit of information and I liked yesterday when I saw that the town was painted purple. Thank you so much for what you do and I look forward to next year's walk.

In recognition of Lions Clubs International 100th Anniversary

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of everyone in this House — the Yukon Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party — to pay tribute to the Lions Club 100th anniversary. Melvin Jones was born on January 13, 1879 in Fort Thomas, Arizona. As a young man, Melvin Jones made his home in Chicago, Illinois and became associated with an insurance firm and, in 1913, formed his own agency. He soon joined a business circle and a businessmen's luncheon group and was shortly elected the secretary. Melvin Jones, then 38 years old, a Chicago business leader, had other plans.

What if these men, Melvin Jones asked, who are successful because of their drive, intelligence and ambition, were to put their talents to work improving their communities? Thus, at his invitation, delegates from men's clubs met in Chicago to lay the groundwork for such an organization on June 7, 1917 — Lions Clubs International was born.

Melvin Jones' personal code, "You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else", became the guiding principle for public-spirited people the world over. At a 1919 convention, there was a move to change the symbol, but a young attorney from Denver, Colorado rose and spoke: "The name 'Lions' stands not only for fraternity, good fellowship, strength of character and purpose, but above all, its combination of L-I-O-N-S heralds to the country the true meaning of citizenship: liberty, intelligence, our nation's safety."

From time immemorial, the lion has been a symbol of all that was good, and because of the symbolism, the name was chosen. Four outstanding qualities — courage, strength, activity and fidelity — had largely to do with the adoption of the name.

This year, Mr. Speaker, 2017, marks the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International. It is the largest service, humanitarian organization in the world. Our 1.4 million members, with more than 47,000 clubs in many districts, perform community service in over 200 countries and geographic areas — all different in many ways, but they share a core belief: community is what we make it. Our members are a network of individual clubs, united in helping others and improving their communities. Becoming a Lions Club member gives you the opportunity to volunteer locally or internationally. You make a few new friends, professional connections, lead projects that make your community a better place to live, and have fun doing it.

Lions Clubs International's purpose is to organize, to coordinate, to create, to promote, to unite, to provide and to encourage service-minded people to serve their community without personal financial reward and to encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in commerce, industry, professions, public works and private endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, I will always remember one thing that the Lions code of ethics taught me: always to bear in mind my obligation as a citizen to my nation, my state, my community,

and to give them my unswerving loyalty in word, act and deed — to give them freely of my time, labour and means.

The first Lions Club in the Yukon was the Whitehorse Lions Club. It was chartered in 1950 but, over the years, we have seen many more. The St. Elias Lions Club in Haines Junction was chartered in 1964, the Lake Laberge Lions Club was chartered in 1969, the Grey Mountain Lions was chartered in 1979, the Fireweed Lions Club was chartered in 1993, and the Dease Lake Lions Club was chartered in 1994. These are the active clubs in the Yukon today, but in the past, we have clubs in other communities, such as Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, Northway, Destruction Bay — which was Mount Logan — Mayo, Elsa-Keno — which was Mount Haldane — Faro and the Nisutlin Bay Lions in Teslin.

In the early years of the Lions Club in the north, Alaska separated from district 19 to become district 49 provisional, which was north of the 49th parallel. In 1944, the Seattle Lions came back and sponsored the Anchorage Lions Club, followed in rapid order by Seward, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka in 1948, and Mount McKinley. In 1950-51, the Yukon Territories, Canada, became part of district 49. District 49 officially became an international district in 1951 when the Whitehorse club was chartered in Canada.

As I spoke to earlier, the Whitehorse club came to sponsor my club, the St. Elias Lions, and many others throughout the Yukon. The Lions Club grew to such a great membership in district 49 that we had to split into two separate districts, district 49A and 49B. I am very proud to say that my club has the largest membership in both districts — the St. Elias Lions Club.

You might wonder what we do in our communities and how we give back. Well, some of you who have lived here for awhile may remember swimming in the original swimming pool. That was the Lions pool. It was because of the Whitehorse Lions Club. It was always a highlight for me as a young fellow coming to town if we got to go swimming. There is the Whitehorse Lions Internet/TV Auction, the Fireweed Lions annual bosses' bash Christmas party for small businesses, the Grey Mountain Lions Club vehicle raffle and — something that happened just a few weekends ago — the Lake Laberge Lions Trade Show.

The Dease Lake Lions Club runs a campground. The St. Elias Lions Club has the Jorg Schneider Memorial Poker Run.

Other things that the Lions do — the skateboard park in Riverdale. That was local Lions members seeing the need to get youth off the streets so they partnered and worked with the City of Whitehorse to address this community issue. You'll see numerous warmup shacks around outdoor rinks and playgrounds, just to name a few more. We also sponsor many non-profit organizations, groups, youths and individuals through funding bursaries, volunteering our time and many more things.

Some of the things we do — it's kind of ironic that when the St. Elias Lions chartered in 1964, the first thing that they took on was building a fence at the cemetery. Ironically, at our last meeting on Saturday, we were talking about upgrading the fence at the cemetery.

That's pretty much the end of my tribute. I would like to mention a few Lions members in the gallery here today. From the Grey Mountain Lions Club — I have to say "Lion" or I'll probably get fined at the next meeting — so Lion Gary Doering; Lion Gerry Gerein, who helped me with this tribute — and I want to thank him very much; Lion Jim Miller; Lion Judy Miller; Lion Ed Sumner; Lion Danny Ansems; Lion Fergie Laforge; Lion Pierre Lacasse; and Lion Gord Sutton.

The backbone and the hardest worker in our Lions Club — the number one Lion from St. Elias Lions Club, Debbie Hotte, is here. From the Whitehorse Fireweed Lions Club — and I hope I get these names right — Tania Beaudoin is here — Lion Tania Beaudoin. There's a fine right there. Lion Tracy Brickner, Lion Lydia Oblak, Lion Helen Blattner, and Lion Maryse Sylvania are here.

Now, from the Whitehorse Lions Club, we have two members here today. We have Lion Steve Harris, but also we have Lion Bill Richardson. Lion Bill, if you could stand for a second please. Lion Bill Richardson is a member of the Whitehorse Lions Club. Bill joined the Lions on February 11, 1955 and remains a Lion member today — some 62 years later. Bill is the longest serving Lion in multiple district 49, which currently has a membership of 2,500 members. Bill served in pretty well every club position, including his term as a district governor for 49B. A district governor is the highest position attainable in the district hierarchy and Bill is commended for taking on leadership roles as needed. Bill continues to be active in the Whitehorse Lions Club and provides mentoring and archival comments to the newer members. Bill's service to his community has been unwavering and is looked up to by all who know him, especially by our Lions. I want to thank you, Bill, and I want to thank all the Lions members who came to the House today. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. White: I thank my colleagues in the House. I'm lucky that there are three people in the audience who collectively, I think I've known for about 90 years. I think at times growing up I'm not sure that Gerry Gerein or Gary Doering would have maybe expected me in this role, but they taught me that volunteering was really important with community playgrounds and the work that they've done in their communities, so I thank them. Of course, we have Angela Salé also in the gallery. It's always really fantastic to run into you.

I thank the three of you for coming. I thank you guys for supporting me in the weird things that I take on. Who would have guessed? Thank you for being here.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide hemodialysis services in Yukon for all Yukon residents requiring this health care service.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This brings us to a Speaker's Ruling.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Prior to Question Period, the Chair will provide rulings on points of order raised during Question Period last Thursday.

During Question Period, the Premier twice used the phrase "not true" and once used the word "misleading" when referring to statements made by and information provided by members of the Official Opposition caucus.

The Official Opposition House Leader and the Member for Lake Laberge each raised points of order in response to the Premier's use of these terms. In doing so, the Member for Lake Laberge cited Standing Order 19(h), which says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member... charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood." The question for the Chair, then, is whether the Premier's words constituted a breach of Standing Order 19(h).

In their submissions on the points of order, the Official Opposition House Leader and the Member for Lake Laberge cited rulings by the Chair or previous Chair occupants with regard to the use of the same or similar words and phrases. The members are correct that characterizing another member's statement as untrue has in the past led to interventions by the Chair or points of order that were sustained by the Chair.

However, it is also the case that the phrase "not true" is not always ruled out of order. Here — trip down memory lane — for example, are five instances of the use of the phrase from the 33rd Legislative Assembly. On April 16, 2012, a member said, "On Thursday — and I'll quote — the minister said, 'Providing these draft regulations — in the spirit and intent of good comradeship here in the House — itself is debate and public consultation.' That's not true." Then further, on April 24, 2013, a member said — quote: "The minister's statement — it does a disservice to Yukoners and it just doesn't hold water. It's just simply not true." Then, on May 14, 2013, a member said, "The members opposite seem to think we're going to cut funding for a huge number of groups in the upcoming budget — that's simply not true."

Then we move on to November 12, 2013 when a member said — and I quote: "For the member opposite to characterize this as that we are 'plowing ahead' with the Atlin campground is simply not true." Also, on November 12, 2013, a member said, "But for the member opposite to characterize the government's actions to date as not respecting the final agreements is simply not true and I have to take issue with

that." None of these statements gave rise to a point of order or drew the intervention of the Chair.

The situation is similar to the word "mislead" and its variations. Again referring to the 33rd Legislative Assembly, here are three examples where the use of the word was ruled out of order. On April 2, 2012, a member said, "Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister this: Why did she mislead this House?" On April 18, 2012, a member said, "... the member opposite has made a number of incorrect statements, or statements I take to be incorrect, that might be misleading the Legislature..." On November 4, 2013, a member said, "The government has been trying to mislead Yukoners..."

However, at other times, the use of the word has passed without notice. In responding to the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader, the Chair spoke of the importance of context in determining whether a particular use of a word or phrase is unparliamentary.

The second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* says the following at page 619 — and I quote: "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day. The codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical as it is the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used. Expressions which are considered unparliamentary when applied to an individual Member have not always been considered so when applied 'in a generic sense' or to a party."

The challenge for the Chair is to determine whether the phrases "not true" and "misleading facts", in the context in which they were used last Thursday, constitute "charging another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood" or whether they constitute an expression of disagreement about the accuracy of statements made and information provided.

After reviewing Thursday's Blues, the Chair concludes that the Premier did not, in either case, charge the Member for Lake Laberge with uttering a deliberate falsehood. Had the Premier said that the Member for Lake Laberge had knowingly made an untrue statement or had provided information he knew to be misleading, or with the intent to mislead, the Chair would have likely ruled differently. However, the Chair will reiterate the point made by the Chair of Committee of the Whole on May 11 of this year that members should avoid the use of words like "true" and "untrue", as they are likely to give rise to points of order, regardless of the intent of the member who utters them.

On another matter — later in Thursday's Question Period, the Government House Leader rose on a point of order regarding a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition who asked whether the Minister of Highways and

Public Works might be thrown “under the bus” by a Cabinet colleague.

The Government House Leader in her submission on the point of order alluded to Standing Orders 19(g) and 19(i). Standing Order 19(i) says: “A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member... uses abusive or insulting language, including sexist or violent language, in a context likely to create disorder.” As the Chair ruled last Thursday, Standing Order 19(i) does not apply in this case as the words of the Leader of the Official Opposition constitute a well-used turn of phrase and were not meant as an actual threat of bodily harm.

The Chair committed to return to the House regarding the Government House Leader’s reference to Standing Order 19(g), which states, “A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member... imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.”

Having reviewed the Blues, the Chair concludes that there is no point of order pursuant to Standing Order 19(g). The Chair does not believe the words of the Leader of the Official Opposition included the attribution of an unworthy motive to either the Minister of Economic Development or the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention to these rulings.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Education assistants

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, today we have heard from the Yukon Teachers’ Association that the government is looking to reduce the amount of education assistants by around 40. This follows the recent intervention by the minister to shut down the development of a Montessori education program at Hidden Valley School. It also follows her decision to throw school councils under the bus for her inability to get school calendars out on time.

These are all concerning moves by the minister, and now this report about a reduction in the amount of education assistants is also concerning. Education assistants are an important part of our education system as they directly support some of the most vulnerable students.

Can the minister please tell us which schools will be seeing a reduction in the amount of education assistants?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is unfortunate that there has been some misinformation, and I am happy to have the opportunity to clear it up this afternoon.

Each spring, the Department of Education allocates a number of education assistants to a variety of schools across the territory — to each and every one. The first step in that process is for each school to assess its needs and to submit a request to the Department of Education, which has been done. The second step in that process is for the Department of Education to review all requests and determine the allocations to each school based on the needs that are put forward by the school. The third step in that process is for principals to assign EAs based on the needs of the students who are in the school.

This year, 210 education assistants have currently been allocated and they will be distributed between all of the schools in the territory. The number of EAs will be adjusted over the summer and in the coming school year based on enrolment and need. So far, 210 have been allocated.

I have reached out to the Yukon Teachers’ Association about this issue directly. I have been unable to speak with the president, but I have met with her previously and asked her to contact me with any issues. I look forward to speaking to her very soon about this.

Mr. Hassard: Clearly, the Yukon Teachers’ Association is under the impression that the amount of education assistants is about to be reduced. They even said that the department told school administrators as much. This government’s general approach to answering tough questions is to point fingers at someone else.

Last week, they blamed the media. This week, it sounds like they are blaming the Yukon Teachers’ Association.

Can the minister tell us — is she saying that the Teachers’ Association is wrong on this?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Actually, there has been a misunderstanding, and the Yukon Teachers’ Association is under the misapprehension that education assistants have been cut. I think the number mentioned was 40. That is not the case — 210 education assistants have been allocated to all the schools across the territory. They are always allocated based on the number of resources needed for each student and the individual needs of the schools.

I can indicate that there are different kinds of EAs, which is an important factor in this determination. There are EAs who provide continuous assistance to each student or who are assigned to a particular student to be with them all the time. There are EAs who provide frequent assistance — they may be assigned to one or more students to help them — and then there are occasional assistants and classroom-based assistants. There are a variety of things that are available to students in schools. They are assessed by the principals and by the department, and then education assistants are assigned.

As I’ve said, I do have every intention of speaking with the YTA president about this so that I can clear up the misunderstanding. The fact that education assistants are not being reduced will be clear at that point.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you for that answer. Just to clarify what I believe I heard the minister say — will she confirm to this House that there will be no reductions in the amount of education assistants for this upcoming school year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: What I can confirm is that 210 EAs have now been allocated and that assessments continue over the summer period and then get reassessed at the beginning of the school year. They are also assessed throughout the year, because students sometimes come to school and they sometimes need an education assistant for a particular period of time and then don’t need one. They may come to school not needing one but then have some issues and need them. So it’s a continual assessment process, and it’s required to be done by the department throughout the year. Students who require educational assistance — which sometimes comes from EAs,

sometimes comes from counsellors, sometimes comes from learning assistant teachers and from administration — will all have the opportunity to have the help they need to do their very best in school.

Thank you for the question.

Question re: School supplies funding

Ms. Van Bibber: Last year, the previous government introduced a program that allocated \$100 per student to school councils across the territory that were able to use that money to purchase school supplies for students. This was not only to assist families financially, but also to help relieve the stress on parents trying to organize their children for the coming school year. This was a very popular and successful program, particularly in rural Yukon. Can the minister tell us why they chose not to include this in their budget?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I thank the honourable member for her question. The amount noted by the honourable member with respect to last year's budget was a one-time allocation only. It was noted at that time to be one-time only. There was, at the time, no consultation with school councils, with school communities or with the administration of schools. The announcement was made.

While it was beneficial to some families, it was certainly a complicated process for school councils, as well as for school administrators, and, frankly, the Department of Education. The member opposite may recall that last week, in answer to one of her questions, I noted that the department actually had ADMs doing some shopping.

I can reiterate that no student will ever come to a Yukon school and not be provided with the supplies they need. I'm told this is a common practice in rural schools as well as here in Whitehorse — that if a student needs certain materials that they don't have access to, they are provided by the school.

While this one-time amount has not been put in this year's budget, it certainly won't affect any Yukon students to their detriment.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's disappointing to hear that this government planned to cut the program, but they didn't feel inclined to ask or tell parents and students first. In fact, I think many parents would be surprised to find out that this program has been cut. Not everyone is affected the same way.

If the minister is saying now that there are too many school supplies, then maybe, before cutting it, the minister should have conducted a review. Maybe the funding level could be adjusted or maybe some schools needed more than others. The only way to gauge how successful a program was is to do a thorough review of it and speak to school councils, parents and students.

Will the minister commit to doing a review of the program for its effectiveness before she cuts it?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. That's not possible at this time.

I guess I want to clarify. This government hasn't cut anything. They didn't reinstate a one-time cost item that was in last year's budget placed there by the Yukon Party during an election year at the last minute. It caused quite a bit of

havoc. Certainly there are families and students who benefited from having those supplies. I have noted that those supplies will still be available to them. Many schools ended up spending some of the money on items other than school supplies and, as a result, it simply wasn't reinstated this year — or continued the expending. It was announced as a one-time cost. Parents knew that, and teachers and educators knew that.

I should also note, however, that on my desk upstairs is a notification to parents because the school year is ongoing still, of course, and there was notification that, when the budget came out, this item would not be in there and we will be specifically talking to parents, school councils and administrators to make sure everyone is under the same understanding that it doesn't exist in this year's budget and won't in fact be put there.

Ms. Van Bibber: Cutting a program that provides school supplies for children makes us wonder what the priorities for this government are. The school supply program was a good program, and removing it will certainly have an effect on families trying to buy all the things needed prior to the school year. Will the minister complete a review of the program and, if proven to be effective for students as told by the parents and school councils, will she consider reintroducing it in future years?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, it would be important to reiterate that the Department of Education is keenly aware of the requirements to teach students and to provide a broad-based education for every Yukon learner from infancy — if I can say that — right until old age. That's the priority for the department.

This was a one-time item put in last year's budget. It was somewhat effective on occasion for providing some school supplies to some children. I have no question whatsoever that, if evidence comes forward that this was a widely spread benefit to schools — although that has not been the information I've received. I've met with school councils. I've asked every school council I've met with or been in touch with about this particular program and made this very same explanation to them. It was not well-planned, it was not well-thought-out, it was not a good use of taxpayers' money, and we didn't put it in this year's budget for that reason.

Question re: Yukon Energy Corporation general rate application

Ms. Hanson: Last December, the current president of the Yukon Energy Corporation met with the former president of the Yukon Energy Corporation — that individual is now the Premier's chief of staff. One of the issues discussed at the meeting was the Energy Corporation's general rate application for this year.

The general rate application to the Yukon Utilities Board is a process required for the Energy Corporation to increase electricity rates for Yukoners. At that December meeting, the Energy Corporation brought forward a proposal for a 14.7-percent electricity rate increase. Can the Premier confirm whether or not the government has reviewed this proposal?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Under the current circumstances, we at the Yukon Development Corporation and with oversight of Yukon Energy Corporation — and this item was actually talked about here when the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation attended. There was a question — I believe it was from the Official Opposition — that just asked where the process is when it comes to looking at rates.

Under the current circumstances, the Yukon Energy Corporation continues to analyze. The change that has happened is that now we've seen an extension in the mine life of the Minto mine. We actually see that we have to take that impact into consideration as the Yukon Energy Corporation finalizes its process and application.

Of course, the Energy Corporation hasn't been to rate in over four years. It continues to spend money but doesn't right-side that, so that's the good work that's being done at Yukon Energy Corporation.

Ms. Hanson: Indeed, the Yukon Energy Corporation did say two weeks ago that they will be presenting a general rate application in the next month or two. As noted by the minister, the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation has stated that, since their original projections, the extension of production at Minto mine and a particularly cold winter improved the corporation's finances. Hopefully this is good news for ratepayers.

We also know that at the December meeting between the Energy Corporation president and the Premier's chief of staff, the Energy Corporation committed to develop an analysis of options to reduce the rate increase below the suggested 15 percent. Will the minister table the analysis developed by the Energy Corporation, at the request of government, regarding the proposed 15-percent electricity rate increase?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think there has been a tremendous amount of analysis done on expenditures and taking into consideration the effects of outside industrial use and things such as that. At this point — in the documents that I have read through, I'm not aware of things that happened previous to us being in government and in the fall. So I'm not aware of anything. I think there has been a lot of conversation that has happened between Yukon Energy Corporation and industrial users and Yukon Development Corporation. Certainly I am not privy to all of those conversations. Other than that, I don't have an analysis to table.

Ms. Hanson: That is kind of disappointing because, in fact, this government promised to do things differently and they promised transparency to Yukoners. That meeting occurred in December 2016, well after the election of this new government. The question is: Why would the minister refuse to make this analysis public when it can have a direct impact on individual Yukoners' bottom line? We understand that the situation has changed since the December meeting where the Energy Corporation suggested a nearly 15-percent increase. We are not asking the minister to defend the number that may no longer be on the table. We simply want the minister to be open and transparent about what kind of rate increases Yukoners should expect. Will the Premier commit to making

public the options considered by his government to reduce the electricity rate increases in the Energy Corporation's upcoming rate application?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What I will commit to is reaching out to Yukon Development Corporation and, in turn, Yukon Energy Corporation. If there is any analysis that has been tabled that we can bring forward, then certainly I will do that. All I am saying is that I am not aware of some sort of formal analysis that was executed.

I think there was a great opportunity when Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation came here to the Legislative Assembly to ask a lot of great and pointed questions. If there is a formal analysis, certainly I will make that commitment to the Leader of the Third Party. There is nothing to hide here in going through a process and trying to get the right numbers in place as we go to a rate hearing.

Question re: Hemodialysis care

Ms. White: Today in the news, we heard about another Yukoner who cannot return home because he would be unable to receive the medical care that he requires. This individual requires hemodialysis three times a week — a service not provided in Yukon. The government response is that Yukon doesn't have the critical mass of 10 people to justify this service. Apparently only seven people have needed it since 2000. That is seven Yukoners and their families who had to quit jobs, sell their homes and permanently move away from family and community, unable to even return for a visit to Yukon. Can the minister confirm whether these seven individuals who have been forced to move away include First Nation citizens covered by the federal non-insured health benefits program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The question from the member opposite is very specific in nature, and I am not able to respond specifically about whether those potential clients or citizens are receiving services from the non-insured health benefits program or from the Yukon care program. I can't answer that question. I will get the information that the member requires, but at this moment I am not able to respond directly to that very specific question.

Ms. White: The problem is that those statistics about dialysis use in Yukon aren't collected. Previous health ministers have indicated that Yukon didn't have access to the statistics regarding patients covered by the federal non-insured health benefits program. We do hope that the minister can confirm whether these people were included as it may very well bring the tally of the department's magic number up to 10 people.

The Auditor General in 2011 found that Yukon doesn't collect enough community-based diabetes data. We know that individuals with diabetes have a 50-percent chance of developing kidney disease. We also know that diabetes rates are on the rise across Canada and in the Yukon. Cases of end-stage renal disease have doubled between 2002 and 2011, and all the evidence points to a need for dialysis services in Yukon.

When will Yukoners who need hemodialysis be able to stay in Yukon and not have to leave their home permanently to receive what is a pretty normal standard of care in other jurisdictions?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I completely appreciate and I recognize that there is a need for that specific care. Clearly, I have received the information with respect to dialysis. We spoke about the challenges this morning in our tribute. What we have committed to is we want to ensure that all Yukoners have access to primary health care services in the Yukon. We are looking at a collaborative care model. We're ensuring that all Yukoners are being given fair, equal supports they require for the medical pressures that they have encountered. There are significant challenges and costs for medical travel and medical care, recognizing that we are taking that under advisement and looking at options available to us.

Ms. White: Collaborative care in Yukon would include hemodialysis. This isn't a new issue. Yukoners should not have to literally pack up their lives and move away from Yukon to receive the medical care that they need, especially when this type of care is available to most Canadians in their home province or territory. Our neighbours in the NWT have access to hemodialysis not only in the capital of Yellowknife, but also in community health centres. We have three hospitals in Yukon, but zero access to hemodialysis.

Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to plan for the increasing number of individuals requiring hemodialysis, or are they waiting until we reach the magic number of 10 people to begin planning?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With ongoing consultation and engagement with the service providers in the communities, working with the health centres, working with the Hospital Corporation as well as the physicians and the Yukon Medical Association, we are looking at trying to solve some of the major challenges that we have currently in our medical system — trying as best we can in a timely fashion to address the needs of Yukoners and ensure that we don't send our patients outside of the Yukon. I think what we really want to do is keep people at home — keep our Yukoners where they are happy.

I have had to deal with this personally, having my dad spend nine months in a Vancouver hospital for care. Is that appropriate in uprooting families? It is not appropriate and we will do everything that we possibly can to ensure that Yukoners stay at home and get the services they require in the Yukon. Working with the Hospital Corporation, working with the physicians and working with our service providers, we hope to address and eliminate some of these barriers that we are confronted with.

Question re: Diabetes programs

Mr. Kent: There are a number of Yukon families with small children suffering from type 1 diabetes and they all share a common goal — that is to ease the stress and burden the disease has placed on their family through the use of constant glucose monitoring, or CGM, which reads and

transmits glucose levels from a wearable device to a smartphone or other electronic device.

As children can often not verbalize when something does not feel right in their bodies, especially with diabetes, this equipment has been invaluable to parents and guardians. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it is also very expensive. The families have asked the minister and I also have asked the minister to consider funding options for CGM, to which we have received negative responses.

So I'll ask again: Will the minister of Health and Social Services provide some form of financial assistance to these families when this equipment has been successful in managing type 1 diabetes in their children?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I will commit to is to look at all options. We will look at the options presented to us in the previous question and with the Official Opposition House Leader speaking currently about pressures. I think it has not gone unnoticed and we are looking as I indicated earlier to provide the necessary supports to Yukoners.

If there are new innovations to eliminate some of the medical pressures and concerns — and certainly if it's something that we've not considered historically — then most definitely we will take that under consideration and implement the new innovative approaches to managing diabetes in children that the member opposite describes. The department will certainly take that under advisement and look at those options.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister because this is definitely a departure from what she had sent me in a letter which was essentially a “no” to any sort of funding for CGM.

When I did write to her in February, I presented the idea of initiating a pilot program for children to use CGM. The benefits would be twofold. The pilot program would alleviate the financial stress on these parents funding CGM out of their own pockets and it would also allow the generation of local first-hand data supporting the benefits of CGM to inform the decision of the working group of whether to fund CGM equipment under the chronic disease program.

Since this government is partial to evidence-based decision-making, will the minister reconsider the idea of initiating a pilot program to provide data showing this equipment is beneficial to the children and to their families?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The response really, I think, as we were going through our budget exercise in trying to define the priorities for this government in working with the agencies and working with the Department of Health and Social Services — our approach is really to take the best practices that are out there, look at all the evidence as described by the Official Opposition House Leader. We want to make sure that we're not reacting to the pressures that come at us, but that we make good faith decisions and good decisions that will result in long-term care and elimination of some of these illnesses that we're confronted with and some of the challenges. We will make the best decision possible, take all of the information we get under advisement and provide the best strategic plan possible with the resources that we have available to us.

Mr. Kent: I believe the pilot program that I suggested to the minister in my February letter would help in acquiring some of that information and data that she is looking for to help make the decision.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday one of the parents at the JDRF walk mentioned to me that they were in discussions with the previous Minister of Health and Social Services and felt that they were making good progress toward having this equipment covered. The Yukon Liberal's ran their election with the tagline "Be heard" but many of these parents don't believe they are being heard on this request.

Can the minister commit in this House today to scheduling a meeting with these families to discuss their concerns?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Granted that the Yukon Liberals have been in power now for eight months, we've gone through our first budget cycle. Nowhere did I see this in the previous budget and the commitments in the previous budget. What I'm committing to today is that we will look at the options. We will look at perhaps a pilot project. Who knows? We want to look at eliminating and providing the necessary supports and we will do it with good evidence and good decisions, but we will not react. The members of the Official Opposition have had 14 years to implement — we aim to implement. We aim to provide the supports necessary for all Yukoners and for children, in particular.

Question re: Fish and wildlife population management

Mr. Istchenko: For the past few decades, we have seen a decrease in population numbers for animals traditionally harvested for food in the territory. Hunting and gathering are part of our territory's history and remain the cornerstone of the traditional way of life in the Yukon. The first option by the department is to put hunters on permit in areas limiting hunting opportunities and putting pressure on other areas of the Yukon. For example, the Premier said he has seen an increase in moose hunting pressure in his riding.

Does the minister believe that the permit-hunt system is the only option for managing populations of animals?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Well, my preference really doesn't matter. In response, I think the preference, the opportunities and the consultation and engagement process that we go through when we implement regulations really has to be done in a transparent and open way, and in a process that has open dialogue with the Yukon Outfitters Association and under the self-government agreement. The member opposite well knows that chapter 16 defines how we manage our resources in Yukon. We have a legally binding obligation to go through a consultative process to define regulations around wildlife management in areas that are threatened or on species that are threatened.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, more and more, we are hearing that the department needs to not only manage hunters but to also focus on managing fish and wildlife populations. We are hearing this from First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, renewable resources councils,

local hunting and trapping organizations, trappers and outfitters, as well as resident hunters and fishermen.

We see issues in the media and in the Legislative Assembly around access to areas because hunters are looking for new areas to access animals.

Will the minister commit to asking her department to work with all those parties that I referred to and to look at options other than permit hunting to increase our animal populations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm happy to say that I've consulted with and I've met with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. I've met with First Nations. I've met with the Outfitters Association. I will continue to do that in a way that's open, transparent and so they feel well heard and their opinions and views are validated and are taken into consideration.

Mr. Istchenko: There are many success stories in other jurisdictions with regard to their recovery of low populations in wildlife traditionally hunted for food. Organizations exist to provide funds to those with creative solutions or projects to address these issues — whether through habitat enhancement, trapping or hunting incentives, or pilot projects such as the three-year Alsek moose management plan. The previous government looked to find a balance in managing harvest as well as animal populations.

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has a trust that allocates money toward specific conservation and management projects. Each year, we gather around \$350,000 in hunting and fishing licences, outfitters' fees and fines, among other things. Instead of these funds going into general revenue for the government, could the minister or would the minister commit to creating a fund for these revenues that could be managed much like the trust that can be applied toward projects to help rebuild our animal populations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to just state that, at this point in time, we are currently not seeing a lot of pressures. We have elk management plans in place. We are now in consultation on grizzly bears. We are looking at domestic and wild sheep management in consultation with the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, renewable resources councils and the respective First Nations. We will take all their input into consideration, so that's what I'm committing to.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. McPhee: 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

Deputy Chair (Mr. Adel): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Bill No. 201: *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18* — continued

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Department of Highways and Public Works

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Good afternoon, Mr. Deputy Chair. I have a couple of officials coming in, and I will just wait for them to take their seats.

I have with me this afternoon Paul McConnell, who is the Deputy Minister of Highways and Public Works, and Allan Nixon who is an assistant deputy minister of the Transportation division.

This afternoon, I am pleased to present to you the Department of Highways and Public Works 2017-18 budget. Before I start, I will provide a quick overview of my department and what it does.

Highways and Public Works is a big, diverse machine with lots of moving parts. Many are public facing, and many operate 24/7, 365 days a year, often behind the scenes. We provide other departments with procurement support, risk management, insurance services, and asset management services such as fleet vehicles. We also maintain the critical information technology infrastructure that so many of us rely on in government and outside.

The department builds, operates and maintains the roads, bridges and airports that link our communities and bring people food, medicine and other supplies from down south. In a harsh climate, the people of Highways and Public Works keep all these things working and buildings open year-round.

The department staff numbers more than 800 people. They are spread across four divisions. In the few months I have been minister of this department, I have met many of them. I have been out to Haines Junction and to the highway weigh scales. I've been to the department divisions here in town. I have seen a commitment and the pride many of these people take in their work. It's truly something to behold.

They're doing this important work as best they can, often with aged equipment. On the transportation front, there are

people in the department's maintenance garages and camps whose job it is to fabricate new parts because some of the equipment is so old we simply can't buy those parts anymore. I've met them and they pride themselves in this hugely important work.

This government is going to invest in such things as the equipment we depend on to keep our transportation routes safe and operational. Much of it, as you know, is very old, fragile and increasingly expensive to maintain. I'll talk more about this later.

This is not just a transportation issue however. Aging or outdated infrastructure in our building portfolio and in our Information and Communications Technology Division is a growing impediment to this government's ability to effectively serve Yukon citizens.

My department operates and maintains more than 540 government buildings worth more than \$1.6 billion. Each year, we also design and build new facilities to help meet the growing program needs of departments. We understand that maintaining these buildings is an important piece of providing critical services to Yukon citizens. Managing this large and diverse portfolio is always going to bring with it a wide range of pressures and challenges and we do our best to stay ahead of the curve.

We are also focused on reducing energy use in our buildings through energy retrofits and energy-efficient new construction. These investments pay back quickly through cost savings while also helping to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

On the procurement front, Highways and Public Works, through the Procurement Support Centre, is tasked with supporting departments procuring fairly and openly while getting good value for money. Government purchasing should derive benefits for Yukoners and we are working to ensure that. We are focused on improving quality and consistency in procurement across government, developing standardized training and implementing a post-project evaluation program. We are also making changes like adding standard clauses in our construction document templates for fair-wage schedule reporting, developing standard clauses for value-based procurement to support First Nation recruitment, training and subcontracting opportunities and to secure Yukon benefits. Collectively, we issue a massive number of contracts and services each year valued at about \$340 million, just to give you an idea of the size and scope of this operation.

We recognize government procurement's importance to Yukon and First Nation businesses. We want a diverse and vibrant economy where businesses have the investment they need to grow, both in Yukon and Outside. We recognize that large capital projects are an important part of Yukon's economy in creating jobs for Yukoners. Whistle Bend continuing care is one such project, where approximately 70 percent of the project to date has been staffed by local workers.

On the information management front, this department provides leadership across government for how we collectively manage all information and how we safely make

it available to the public, while protecting the most sensitive bids from prying eyes.

Highways and Public Works also operates and maintains all of the information and technology equipment that connects government departments with each other and with the public. I cannot emphasize how important this is, Mr. Deputy Chair. Without my team's information highways, many of us wouldn't be able to communicate with each other or with our citizens.

Many of our IT systems are antiquated and at risk of failing. Systems that handle our social services files, our justice records, our land titles — I could go on — they are no longer sufficient to handle the job they are supposed to do. They don't track information well enough for us to adequately serve the public or our public policy goals.

Under this government, this will change. Modernizing and repairing these systems will cost money and yet fixing them will save us money. An emerging area for our government is in the online services. We are beginning to work with other departments to identify opportunities and create new paths going forward.

Highways and Public Works is committed to supporting departments and filling their program needs through e-services. Making these services accessible online helps us create sustainable communities, lessening the gap between Whitehorse and other communities. This is a vast territory and we have to make it more convenient for our citizens to access the information services this government provides. Dollars spent on this department and by this department consistently yield a very strong return on investment in ways that generate positive impacts for both Yukoners and the public service.

Recently, the Public Service Commission automated leave forms, in concert with the crew in Highways and Public Works. This \$1.2-million system is rolling out successfully. So far, more than 90,000 leave forms have been submitted electronically. Eventually, 50,000 paper time sheets will also be eliminated. Processing all those paper forms took an estimated four full-time positions across government. That is horsepower this government can now use for other more important tasks — maybe hiring some EAs.

Highways and Public Works has completed core business assessments within all branches of the department to evaluate current business processes and identify priorities for review and improvement. The Transportation Maintenance branch and the Property Management Division are at the forefront of these changed management and process improvement initiatives. Last year, the Property Management team met with all departments in a series of focus-group sessions where feedback was provided on a broad range of service and management issues. Based on the feedback, Property Management has developed a service improvement action plan that is closely tied to the department's broader goals of innovation and continuous improvement. They will also be producing an annual report of these efforts in the coming months.

In the transportation realm, Transportation Maintenance's business modernization initiative — now in its third year —

also supports this critically important continuous improvement mandate. Efficiency improvements are desperately needed to give Yukon government the flexibility it needs to deal with budget shortfalls and the changing labour market.

That is a brief overview of this department. As you have just heard, Mr. Deputy Chair, the challenges my team faces are extreme. This budget reflects the need to meet these challenges. The Highways and Public Works budget provides \$7 million for capital building and maintenance projects, \$72 million for transportation and \$4.5 million for information and communications technology. Now let's get into the details. Mr. Deputy Chair, I have never been more hydrated.

Property Management Division of Highways and Public Works builds and maintains government buildings to provide safe workplaces for Yukon government employees and public access to government services. We support the building portfolio by delivering planning, design, project management, maintenance, custodial and groundskeeping services across the government. We employ tradespeople, architects, engineers, labourers, administrators and other technical specialists to help us complete this important work. What does this mean? It means that last year, the Property Management Division managed 23 major capital projects worth more than \$115 million. Projections for this year are for 19 projects worth almost \$90 million. Almost all of these projects are delivered on behalf of other departments, so they do not appear in the Highways and Public Works budget. Even though this department doesn't hold the budget, we are responsible for successfully delivering these projects from early planning right through to design and construction.

We work closely and collaboratively with each government department through every phase of the process. As we have said on this side many times, we are working collaboratively to try to break down some of the barriers that have arisen in this civil service over the years. Some recent examples of this collaborative approach include the new Sarah Steele treatment facility for Health and Social Services and the new Carcross fire hall for Community Services. We have allocated \$1.1 million in capital overhead to support the planning, design and implementation of the Property Management capital development program — that is a mouthful. This will be done through support, project design and equipment purchases.

Much needed new equipment will be purchased at \$225,000 for Property Management staff in our communities, including Dawson City, Mayo, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin, Faro and Whitehorse. Many of their tools are antiquated and past their life expectancy — they need fixing. For building maintenance, the department will see \$2.8 million go toward Highways and Public Works building maintenance. This includes buildings and facilities that meet common needs shared by program departments and general office and warehouse space. In this budget, each department is responsible for a portion of the building maintenance envelope, while Highways and Public Works delivers on all of the projects.

Building maintenance is done to ensure that our buildings meet current safety standards, are energy efficient and are operating effectively. Yukon government recognizes that we need to do a better job of coordinating and sharing information when it comes to radon management. We heard this loud and clear from the Auditor General of Canada. Radon testing is already underway in many government buildings, including all buildings under the control of Highways and Public Works. Highways and Public Works will remediate any government building that shows radon levels that exceed Health Canada's standards.

Building development — \$1.2 million is allocated to replace the chiller at the main admin building. I'll be cooler for it, Mr. Deputy Chair.

This year's space planning budget of \$680,000 will be used to address tenant improvements to the Public Service Commission and Department of Finance spaces on the second and third floors of the main admin building, as well as renovations to the Motor Vehicles space to improve service delivery.

Energy improvements — we have hired two energy managers to staff a new energy unit within Property Management Division. We are investing \$200,000 in energy retrofit projects. This will help plan, design and implement energy retrofit projects in Yukon government buildings. In doing so, we reduce operating costs, increase local economic benefits and reduce greenhouse gas emissions — three things we can all get behind.

Climate change brings with it many challenges in the north, including permafrost degradation. The Yukon government needs to do a better job managing permafrost risk within our building portfolio. This was another key recommendation from the Auditor General of Canada. Buildings that are already known to have issues, such as the Ross River School, continue to be monitored and any problems will be addressed. We continue to assess the condition of our buildings. We also will be incorporating additional data related to permafrost concerns in these assessments. This will ensure that we have a complete picture of where it might be a concern and a plan in place to manage those concerns where necessary. We are working to be more proactive about managing permafrost. The energy unit is assessing 60 buildings at risk of permafrost degradation and is developing a long-term monitoring and remediation plan for permafrost.

Transportation — we plan to develop and manage transportation infrastructure systems and programs for Yukoners and visitors alike. We also regulate and use the transportation systems and infrastructure as well as maintain transportation-related equipment. Chances are that no matter how you arrived here today, you used the transportation network that this team built or that they maintain and operate.

In the living quarters of several of our highway maintenance camps, they have been in desperate need of improvement for some time. This year, we will commence replacement of the Stewart Crossing living quarters and we will finish work on the Drury Creek and Swift River quarters

for a total of \$2.7 million. We have allocated \$260,000 for environmental mitigation at highway maintenance camps to ensure that the best management practices and mitigations are in place to reduce environmental liabilities. We have also allocated \$175,000 for power source generators at various maintenance camps.

When it comes to airports, the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport will see several critical improvements this year — some of which are already underway. The department has allocated \$1.2 million to the airport improvement project, which includes reconfiguration of the boarding lounge, additional seating areas, and new washrooms. The washrooms in the public area across from the check-in counters will also be renovated to provide barrier-free accessibility. A new comfortable seating area will be located on the second floor mezzanine.

The passenger screening security area will be expanded to allow space for a second walk-through metal detector. The improvements also include a chiller replacement, which will provide air conditioning in the boarding lounge area as well as in the public areas. \$4.5 million will be spent on the full-length milling and paving of the centre 100 feet of the runway 14R-32L. Keep that in mind — 14R-32L. These repairs to the runway keep the airport operational and safe.

The Whitehorse airport development plan will seek \$250,000 to provide a long-term guide for our aviation team into the year 2040. Whitehorse airport sand storage building is at the end of its useful life and must be replaced. We have allocated \$600,000 to have this building replaced.

Major projects planned for community aerodromes this year include resurfacing at Carmacks and Dawson and the application of dust suppressants and miscellaneous lighting and navigation aid upgrades at various other aerodromes. The department is assigned \$1.2 million for these projects.

Currently there is no airfield maintenance facility at the Dawson City Airport. This means that critical equipment is subject to our northern elements and there is no place to adequately service or repair equipment. We have dedicated \$250,000 to design a maintenance facility and to continue planning for the future development of that airport.

George Black ferry, due to federal regulations governing ferry operations and the need to ensure continued passenger safety and operations — replacement of equipment is required. We are allocating \$108,000 to replace the marine gear and the life jackets on the ferry.

This government has also committed \$150,000 for electronic equipment such as electronic message boards, portable traffic lighting. This equipment will improve efficiency and safety of both our Transportation Maintenance branch team and the travelling public.

We're going to get through a few more of these, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Support equipment — the Transport Services branch will see \$385,000. Of that funding, the weigh stations will receive \$240,000 to go toward the replacement and installation of new equipment such as weigh-station scales, vehicle height

detectors and scoreboards. Motor Vehicles will also see \$145,000 for support equipment.

Finally, just before I wrap up this section of this presentation, an additional \$430,000 is also allocated for Transportation Maintenance branch equipment such as glacier control generators, plate packers, sanders and water pumps. How cool is that?

Thank you very much. I await questions from the honourable members.

Mr. Hassard: I would also like to thank the officials for being here today. I know they love being here.

I don't believe that the minister was done with his opening remarks so I could just wait and let him finish his opening remarks in case he answers any of the questions. There is no point in asking if he's not done.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the member opposite for that grace. I will continue for a few minutes. I will try to speed it up a bit so I make the best use of this time.

I think I left off with glacier control generators, plate packers, sanders and water pumps.

In transportation planning and engineering, integrated asset management — we have committed \$900,000 for the continued development of an integrated asset management program that will develop the tools and procedures required to monitor the condition and performance of transportation infrastructure. This information will support efficient investment decisions across all transportation asset classes, roads, bridges and aviation.

Business modernization — we have allocated \$800,000 to modernize the business processes and systems I spoke about earlier. Modernization includes the review and update of branch policies and procedures and the creation of a branch performance management plan. This is a multi-year continuous improvement initiative aimed at delivering services more efficiently and effectively within the department.

\$1 million is being assigned to engineering support and highway inventory management. This project involves several activities that support the delivery of a transportation capital program, including engineering surveys, geotechnical investigations, traffic studies and safety evaluations, technical equipment — such as computer-aided drafting hardware and software — traffic count system components, geotechnical and survey equipment, and training.

Planning and engineering support for aviation is allocated \$625,000. Work includes surveying and zoning, mapping, industry analysis, geotechnical investigations, planning, future projects and technical support.

We have dedicated \$450,000 for land and granular resources. This project encompasses all activities related to the land interests of the Transportation division, including acquiring new lands, disposal of lands no longer required for transportation purposes, and allowing access and use of lands. This budget also accounts for the granular resource planning and development required to maintain and manage the Yukon highways network.

We have committed \$150,000 toward intelligent transportation systems. This project involves the development of computer systems and services to support transportation system operations.

We are allocating \$100,000 toward research and development in the Transportation division. This item provides a funding source for employee-generated research and development initiatives. These initiatives must address the safety needs, service delivery and improve efficiencies or infrastructure.

Highways and roads — pavement rehabilitation and highway safety improvements will take place across the territory for a total of \$4.7 million. Shakwak — we spoke about this last week. Initial expenditures under the Shakwak agreement were focused on reconstruction of substandard highway grades throughout the project area. With the grade improvement work nearing completion, the project can now begin to address paving the road that has been rebuilt in previous years.

There is a Shakwak agreement between Canada and the United States, which funds the reconstruction of the Haines Road and the Alaska Highway. This year's repair costs of \$6.7 million will be 100-percent recoverable from the United States of America, but this is the last year of available Shakwak funding. It is now done. Major Shakwak projects in 2017 and 2018 are highway restoration in Beaver Creek for \$6 million, and administration and design costs at \$650,000.

The Alaska Highway will see a total of \$10 million in repairs and improvements this year. Of that total, \$5.8 million is allocated for Alaska Highway upgrades at the south Klondike Highway intersection. Essential items included are upgrading the roadway to ensure properly laid out intersections, major road crossing points, consolidated access, establishing proper traffic control, et cetera. All this work is being done to bring this stretch of road to a uniform adequate standard but, more importantly, it is being done to keep Yukoners and those using our highway systems safe.

Several locations on the Alaska Highway continue to suffer from permafrost degradation at a restoration cost of \$3.8 million. Alaska Highway rehabilitation work will see \$400,000. This project involves reshaping long sections of reconstructed highway that have moved and been distorted due to changes in deep permafrost.

The Klondike Highway — some of us drove it last week during the gold show — will see \$1.3 million in repairs and improvements. Erosion and drainage repairs on the Klondike Highway are allocated \$1.1 million, while repairs and improvements that will also be made to Pelly hill are valued at \$400,000.

The Haines Road — Datlaska Creek was diverted from its original course when the road was first built in the 1940s. We have allocated \$285,000 to protect the Haines Road from continued erosion from this historic creek.

Campbell Highway — \$9.2 million will be dedicated to the Campbell Highway this year. Of that budget, \$7.4 million is allocated to finalizing this key segment of the long-standing road reconstruction program. Completion of this work will see

the Campbell Highway fully reconstructed to a BST surface between kilometre 10 and kilometre 114. I am sure my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, will be very happy to hear that. The remaining \$1.8 million will be dedicated to other areas of the Campbell Highway and will be used for highway rehabilitation, subgrade improvements, safety improvements, drainage, structure replacement and aggregate production — so much work.

The Dempster Highway will see improvements of \$2.1 million. Work here will include the placement of protective rock blankets — not very comfortable, but necessary on that roadbed. This is also known as rip-rap. It is used on the side slopes of the Dempster Highway along the shoreline of the Blackstone and Ogilvie rivers and Engineer Creek. Other work includes quarry site investigation development, production of suitable armour and filter materials by drilling and blasting as well as placement of these materials. This is part of ongoing preventive maintenance. Work also includes the replacement of undersized and severely damaged culverts. The Dempster Highway rehabilitation budget of \$400,000 includes restoring and rehabilitating the highway's infrastructure, including the driving surface, the road's subgrade safety barriers and adjacent drainage structures. Aging and failing road infrastructure is creating unsafe conditions and increasing operation and maintenance costs. These infrastructure deficiencies are located throughout the Dempster.

Roadway restoration and rehabilitation — we have committed \$300,000 toward the improved management of vegetation control along Yukon highways. There is \$500,000 allocated to the resource access road program. Work in these areas includes upgrading industrial and secondary roads across Yukon.

There is \$200,000 allocated for the rural road upgrading program. Rural road upgrading is an ongoing project that allows the department to react to small-scale projects and minor road upgrading requests as they arise. Transportation Engineering staff coordinate the planning and construction of these projects with local contractors and First Nations to carry out the work. All projects are proponent-based and therefore reflect local needs in the rural communities.

My department has allocated \$15 million for the bridge portfolio this year. Of that funding, my team is set to work on four large bridge projects this year. One is the Yukon River bridge at Carmacks at \$3.8 million.

The work is well underway. I think some of us crossed it on the way to the gold show last weekend recently. There is the Klondike River bridge at \$3.5 million, the Clear Creek bridge at \$2.5 million and the Nares River bridge at \$3.5 million. Many Yukon bridges were built in the 1950s and 1960s and are at an age where major rehabilitation efforts are required to keep them in service.

There is a need to improve the Nares River bridge in Carcross from a timber bridge deck to a concrete deck. This project will recover some costs from Canada through the Building Canada fund. Engineering analysis shows that the

existing structure cannot support heavy loads on an ongoing basis. It needs work.

The southern part of the Klondike Highway is an important link in the Yukon highways system because it serves the mining, logging and tourism industries and Yukoners alike. There is also a secondary road bridge rehabilitation going on. These needs can vary from simple replacement of wear strips on timber decks to relatively complex substructure repairs. The more complex projects require significant environmental assessment and engineering design input. We have allocated \$450,000 for bridge work on the Aishihik Road and the Rowlinson Creek bridge on the Mount Nansen road at \$360,000.

We are also funding \$1 million for the inspection of bridges and other drainage structures across the transportation network. On average, each structure is inspected every second year so that the structural condition assessment is always available. Inspections are carried out by Transportation Engineering branch staff and the information they collect is used to update the annual report for the bridge and culvert management system.

Mr. Deputy Chair, then there are computers. Our Information and Communications Technology Division provides services related to computer accounts and workstations, telephones, mobile radio systems, ATIPP — that's access to information and protection of privacy for those who don't like acronyms, like myself — information management, software development, network and security just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 million of the Information and Communications Technology branch budget is allocated for network infrastructure. It primarily consists of: providing capacity growth of our application servers and data storage in our data centre to accommodate the needs of government services; improvements within our data network to ensure government services have the connectivity they need at Yukon government locations throughout the Yukon; provision of enterprise-wide productivity tools to enable Yukon government employees the means to do their jobs and to collaborate effectively; and upgrades to our network security infrastructure to keep our citizens' information safe from bad actors. We have all heard the news out of Washington. We don't want those bad actors creeping into our servers here in the territory.

Cyber security is an area of growing concern for governments, businesses and citizens everywhere. We are collaborating with other governments and working to understand the resourcing and investments needed to keep up with this evolving threat. We know that continuing to invest to ensure that infrastructure and applications are up to date is part of this picture to keep our citizens' information safe and secure.

As well, \$1.4 million will be used for systems development. Our team works with other department service teams to understand their business processes and needs to help them find solutions that improve their business. This allocation consists of \$735,000 for project management that

enables ICT staff to work with and on behalf of department clients to deliver services to Yukoners.

We also have allocated \$170,000 to Geomatics Yukon for the enhancement of Yukon's land information, which is used by both the private and public sectors.

Corporate financial management systems will receive \$150,000 to ensure our users have the system they need to support their work.

Yukon government's human resource management system will see \$60,000 toward ongoing support of user needs. E-service is an area of great interest and opportunity for Yukon government. I mentioned this earlier. We know that it promises citizens and businesses increased access to government services at greater convenience, especially for those in our communities outside of Whitehorse — the ability to improve transparency and offer new ways of engaging with the public, all while offering a more efficient channel for service delivery.

We have allocated \$100,000 for the creation of a publicly available online open data repository. This will create a place for Yukon government to begin its journey to provide the information it holds on behalf of all Yukoners in a safe and secure way. These services' licensing and permitting platform will see \$85,000 to support its users throughout the Yukon government. Our future website platform, Drupal, needs \$75,000 to ensure it is secure and up to date as we start our website modernization initiative. We have allocated \$73,000 for the purchase of new workstations for department staff.

In order to continue to improve public safety through meeting the needs of emergency responders and the RCMP, we have also committed \$320,000 toward the support of the mobile radio system. Public safety communication systems are essential to the well-being of all Yukoners and vital for effective program delivery.

Telecommunications infrastructure is allocated \$355,000. This funding provides the underlying physical infrastructure necessary to support government program operations as well as critical radio and broadcasting services throughout the Yukon. It includes broadcasting and tower equipment as well as capital projects to replace, upgrade, or enhance existing systems.

Mr. Deputy Chair, those are the highlights of the Department of Highways and Public Works. I'm proud of the people who make up this department and the work that they do. They keep the roads clear, buildings safe, airports operating and personal information secure. Thank you all for your patience and thank you to the member opposite for allowing me to finish that presentation.

Mr. Hassard: I think the minister missed the two most important pieces and those were to fill potholes and clean outhouses — not to be forgotten.

In his opening remarks, the minister talked about replacement of sand storage at the Whitehorse airport — a building for sand storage. I don't see that on the tender management system or in the forecast, so I'm just wondering if maybe I misunderstood or if Highways and Public Works does in fact plan on building a sand storage facility this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That project was actually started under the previous government and is just going to be finished this year.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you for that, Mr. Deputy Chair.

The minister talked about replacement of equipment in regard to the *George Black* ferry. Can he elaborate what equipment the government will be looking at purchasing or are they in fact looking at a new ferry?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I am happy to report that the *George Black* ferry is still in good shape. It is not slated for replacement any time soon. It is doing its job as well as can be expected; however, the same can't be said for the heritage-like life jackets and lifeboats on the ferry. Those are slated for replacement to meet the regulatory requirements that we must meet federally.

Mr. Hassard: In terms of ferries, are there any planned upgrades or any work this year for the ferry in Ross River? I know that they had the doghouse torn off last year and were doing some work. I'm just curious is there is an update on that work.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The ferry in Ross River has been upgraded. The upgrades to the drive system were completed and the ferry is ready to go in the water. As soon as it is able, it will be deployed with a brand new drive system.

Mr. Hassard: Since we're talking about Ross River, I know that the functional plan was done by the previous government. During the briefing, when I talked to Mr. Nixon, we talked about this functional plan. The minister spoke of engineering that is underway with regard to the section of highway between Faro and Ross River. I am just wondering if we can get some clarification on what the engineering is and what it is regarding.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been informed that we are currently prioritizing projects in the functional plan. Once we have done that triage, we will begin doing the planning, proper permitting and engineering work needed to do the work on that stretch of road.

Mr. Hassard: You said in the Legislature during Question Period that there was engineering underway. Does this mean that there is no engineering underway?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The functional plan is a starting point of the engineering process. It is an engineering process in and of itself, so yes, we are doing engineering on that section of road. Those of my colleagues who have travelled that road know that the state of the stretch from Faro to Ross River is not the best. It has great need of some attention. There is a community along that road, so this government is now looking at that stretch of road. We are doing the preliminary engineering work to prioritize the functional plan so that the community's access gets a little bit of love.

Mr. Hassard: I actually think that the piece of road between Faro and Ross River — other than the three sections that the government has tried to fix in years past — is actually in quite good shape. I think the maintenance crew up there does an incredible job with what they have, and they have done a very good job. With the exception of days with tremendous amounts of rain, the road is in quite good shape. I

am curious if there is any — apparently somebody disagrees — plans — and I know I have spoken with the ADM in regard to this before. There was talk a few years ago about using a product that one of the previous ministers of Highways and Public Works really enjoyed talking about. That product was, of course, rhino snot — true story. I know that the ADM has told me that this product didn't turn out to be all that it was hoped to be. Are there any other options that Highways and Public Works is looking at using since BST doesn't seem to be a highly recommended option by some? I still disagree, but we won't argue that point today. Is there anything in the works in terms of a dust-control product or a surface hardener that Highways and Public Works is currently looking at for that stretch of road?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. Really, what the member opposite is driving at is innovation and the need to think outside the box — to be open to new ideas, to be willing to try new things, to lift your head up a little bit and look around and say, “My, how the world has changed. Maybe there is some new material beyond the tried-and-true methods to get the job done.”

Anybody who knows me knows that I am more than willing to try new approaches to old problems. I think that is important. I think it is important to keep our eyes and our minds open and actually look for new ways to do things, be it in the technology field, in airports or highway maintenance. That entrepreneurial, innovative thinking is what led to the widespread BST projects across the territory now.

I know that in talking to the departmental staff, they are constantly coming up with new ways of doing things — new ways of clearing snow from between highway barriers, new ways of applying products to the roads, new ways of actually marking the roads so that people are safe when they are driving, and new ways of presenting budgets. There are all sorts of things being tried within the department and I think it is tremendous that they feel empowered to try to come forward with these new ideas.

As for the member opposite talking about something to replace BST, I was at a recent meeting of — I think it was probably an owners and pilots association. I've been at several of those lately and it's hard to keep them all straight. At one of those meetings, I had an individual come up and pitch a new product that he swore up and down was marvellous and would help keep the dust down and help reduce our maintenance costs on runways. The material costs a little bit more up-front, but down the line, it did these marvellous things to keep dust down — would harden and we would have a lot less maintenance in the future. People are pitching these new ideas all the time. I'm more than happy to listen to these things.

What this government will do is pass the information off to our officials, who know what works and what doesn't. If the item seems like it does have some merit in use, we will probably try a small pilot project to see how it works. Does it increase costs at the front end, but does it decrease them at the end? We will gather the evidence we need to make these decisions and then go forward with them.

We haven't got anything to the member's question. At this point, we have nothing yet identified that works better than BST on this stretch, but with permafrost and climate change manifesting itself throughout the territory, we're going to have to keep our minds open to new ideas so we actually start to address some of these problems we face with permafrost across the territory — flooding and all sorts of other things.

Mr. Hassard: In terms of the Ross River School, my understanding in the past has been that when the school was built, there were levelling devices built in so that the building could be levelled as needed, or on a regular schedule. I'm curious — is that correct information?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been informed that, yes, in 2015, with that \$2-million project — \$1.9-million project — levelling equipment was part of that construction project and that those gadgets, those gizmos — those mechanisms to actually level the school — some sort of levelling device is in place for the Ross River School.

Mr. Hassard: So if they are in fact there from the previous contract, why would we be looking — maybe this \$1.2 million number that we've heard recently isn't correct, but if the levelling devices are there, why would that number be so high if it needed to be readjusted or relevelled?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. His questions mirror some of the ones that I have, actually. It is an expensive proposition to perform the required releveling of the school. I have seen and I think the media has now seen the reports on the problems there — the cracking, the doors that don't close. The facility is safe. It's safe for the students and staff, which is the most important thing, but the member opposite is correct — it is shifting on its foundation and it needs some remediation.

The cost for that project, I have been told, is estimated at \$1.2 million at the moment. I am looking at that and saying that, personally, I have misgivings about spending another more than a million on a facility, but the staff and students at that facility require a safe place to learn. That's a very important part of this equation. We want to make sure that the education of our children — it's a motherhood statement, but you have to say it — is an important part of our communities and we are looking to make sure that we get the best facility in place for the staff and students of Ross River.

We're working with the First Nation. We're working with the community. The department is working with me to try to come up with a good option for the people. At this stage, the engineers have said that the levelling will buy us some time. As the member opposite I'm sure knows, the site location of that school is not great. These problems seem to be cropping up far too often. So we're dealing with it. We will find a solution to this vexing problem and we will move forward from there.

Mr. Hassard: I agree — the schools are very important, especially in rural Yukon, where they're kind of the heart of the community in many cases. They're not just a school; they're so much more.

Is the minister considering at all the possibility of building a new school then — in regard to misgivings about spending this money on an existing building?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We come to the rub, don't we? I thank the member opposite for the question and for getting to the point. I have a responsibility to the community of Ross River and to the staff and students of that school. I also have a responsibility to my colleagues on this side of the House, to the Minister of Education and to others to have a facility in place in Ross River that meets the needs of the community. To date — before this most recent levelling that has been identified — the Yukon government has spent about \$3 million on that school, so this adds to that cost. The replacement cost of the school is — whatever it is. You can back-of-a-napkin it. But when you start to get up to \$5 million for maintaining the school, it tends to be quite a bit of money. The department has tools to assess the ongoing costs of these facilities, and what we're currently doing is looking at what can be done with the existing structure. The bottom line is that students of Ross River and the staff need a place to learn and to have these things. Even if we did decide — and that's a totally hypothetical situation — to build a school, it would be years before there was a school in this community.

We are going to have to plan around that and make some hard choices. We're looking at our options and trying to make sure that the staff and students of Ross River have a place where they can learn safely in the immediate future.

Mr. Hassard: Just one last comment — not a question on that. I would just encourage the government to definitely have lots and lots of open dialogue with the community if they ever did decide to go the route of building a new school.

Energy retrofits — in his opening remarks, the minister mentioned that this budget will spend \$200,000 on energy retrofits this year. I'm curious — can the minister tell us how much, if any, greenhouse gas emissions this expenditure will reduce?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. It seems like such a simple question, but of course these things are never quite so simple. The money identified in the budget this year is identified for planning for individuals who will work within the department identifying the buildings that are necessary for retrofits. On the surface, you could say that not much in the way of greenhouse gases are going to be saved. These two individuals, if they ride their bikes, will be saving greenhouse gas emissions every day going into work. If they drive cars, there could be a cost. Those two individuals will identify areas where this government can possibly save quite substantial amounts of energy, which would then help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I have every confidence that these civil servants will do a tremendous job identifying areas where energy retrofits would be most useful and could, through that important work, substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. As I said, it's not so black and white.

Mr. Hassard: I wasn't expecting that for an answer. It led me to another line of questioning. Is this new staff? Will they be under HPW? Are these permanent positions or are

they temporary — just long enough to determine what you need to know for the energy retrofits?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: You are throwing curves at me this afternoon, but I will try to keep this all straight. What we are talking about — yes, we are talking about two new positions. Again, these things are never as clear-cut as all that. There were positions within the civil service that were doing this work, but they were not really accounted for.

We have been doing this work. The secondary sales program with Yukon Energy — permafrost review — these were to review all capital maintenance projects to identify design solutions. There's tracking of YG's performance on energy saving and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reporting to the Energy branch and the Climate Change Secretariat, providing verified information of government's utility consumption and energy-saving projects, and working with departments to pilot innovative solutions to reducing energy.

These public commitments have been made in the past, but not actually financed or resourced. When looking at this, we realize the importance of this work. It can't be done off the sides of somebody's desk, and so this government has put the resources into these two positions to actually do this work.

Mr. Hassard: Last week, we talked about the project upgrades out near the Carcross Cut-off. The project is currently being assessed by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, and the tender, as we see, is on the tender management system, so it is out there. I am assuming that we'll have a go/no-go decision come forward well into July, but the project is still tendered and closes on June 13. Can the minister tell us if he feels that the environmental assessment will interfere with this tender or not?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I heard and understand his concerns, but no, we do not think this project will have any effect. The decision document from YESAB is expected on June 23, right in line with our tendering process, so there shouldn't be any problem at all.

Mr. Hassard: The minister is saying that YESAB will have their decision in by June 23, but then the government has to do their decision document, so obviously it would be after June 23 and the project closes June 13 — so does he foresee any possible conflict there?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question.

Just to be totally clear, Mr. Deputy Chair, the decision document that will be ready on June 23 is our decision document. So it is the decision and it will be the decision. There should not be any problem or any hold up to the tendering process.

Mr. Hassard: That's very interesting. I wonder if the minister can give those kinds of assurances to any of the private sector people out there who have things going through YESAA. It sounds to me a little bit predetermined. In any case, if the minister happens to be wrong and if things don't

go as he seems to have predetermined that they will, would contractors be compensated if the tender is not awarded?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for his question, right off the hop. What he is talking about here is hypothetical. Really and truly, the department staff have an awful lot of experience with putting through YESAA projects, including last year with the Pioneer RV Park, which the members opposite navigated. If, in fact, YESAA did come forward with some sort of issue after the fact, we would have to address that through a change order, but there is no indication or suggestion that such would be the case with this project, which is a fairly low-risk project.

We have been in touch with YESAB throughout the process and will be going forward. We are fairly confident that this project is not going to cause us any concerns.

Mr. Hassard: So has Highways and Public Works received any recommendation from YESAB at this point or just ongoing regular talking as the process goes through?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The period of public consultation closed last week for this project. There were no surprises or substantial concerns that can't be mitigated or answered, so again we have every confidence that this project is able to proceed relatively smoothly.

Mr. Hassard: The minister compared this project to that of the project last year at the Pioneer RV Park, so I'm curious. The minister has talked about the previous government's contracting being "fast and loose" — so I'm curious: was the Pioneer RV Park job not one that was "fast and loose"? Was that a well-planned out one?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It's my understanding that it was a late tender, but I don't know if that would fall into the category of "fast and loose." If the member opposite would like, I could start talking about "fast and loose" — I was trying to keep it cordial and on point this afternoon. I will endeavour to do that.

Mr. Hassard: On F.H. Collins, the demolition was awarded to the KDFN as part of a YACA agreement. We have seen the scope and the costs increase fairly significantly on that project, so I'm curious, will the difference be applied against future YACA projects with KDFN?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I'm not going to make policy on the fly here on the floor of this budget discussion. To the best of my knowledge, that has never been done in the past. It's really a question for Aboriginal Relations. That's outside this department's purview.

Mr. Hassard: Okay, we'll move on then. Can the minister tell me: Is Highways and Public Works still the lead department on the Yukon Resource Gateway project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can tell the member opposite that, yes, Highways and Public Works is the lead on the gateway project. We are working very closely, however, with Energy, Mines and Resources and the Executive Council Office Aboriginal Relations on this project.

Mr. Hassard: Would BMC and their Kudz Ze Kayah project near Ross River — as they are working their way through the EA process, their intent is to truck ore to Stewart.

Would the government continue the upgrades for the Campbell Highway between Ross River and Watson Lake? I know there is money in the budget this year — the minister has talked about it — but will that be something they will continue throughout the mandate or is this the end of that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a matter that is going to require some investigation on the part of this new government. I know the members opposite have spent tens of millions of dollars on the stretch from Watson Lake up the highway, I think, to kilometre 114. I mentioned it today. But we really need to see evidence of the need to upgrade the road further — that whole stretch. I'm sure the members opposite were up at the gold show in Dawson City. They heard, I'm sure, from constituents of the Klondike about the state of the Klondike Highway in certain stretches. We have a lot of mining activity happening in the north Yukon up in the Klondike Valley. There are concerns about the weight restrictions on those roads. We have Shakwak, which, as I said earlier today, is no longer funded. We have no more money coming from Washington to upgrade the north Alaska Highway to the border. That is going to require some new funding on our part to try to manage that road and keep it serviceable.

The needs of our highways are great and broad, and we are going to have to make some hard choices about what roads need attention. The crew at Highways and Public Works has tools at their disposal to measure the state of the roadbeds and what condition they are in. We have tools — traffic counts and that type of thing — that will help inform our decisions and see which roads we keep open and which roads we put on a maintenance schedule, which ones we improve to a higher standard to accommodate new mining trucks and that type of thing. This is a very fluid field. There are mines saying that they are going to open all the time. We have to make decisions based on real information and we will do that.

Mr. Hassard: I mean, BMC Minerals is in the YESAA process — so to me that is pretty real. We have the functional plan done for that section of road, so I don't think that you can say that we need to study it too much more. Has the government been in contact or had any discussions with BMC Minerals in regard to what they feel they would need the government to do in terms of upgrades to the Campbell Highway to haul their ore to Stewart?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. During Roundup, I know that my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and others — the Hon. Premier — met with BMC Minerals. We had fulsome talks about a number of different things. Highways have not come up. Department officials have confirmed that BMC has not spoken to us at all about highways. They have spoken to us about the Finlayson airstrip and access to that but, as of yet, they have not approached us with any discussions about highways.

Mr. Hassard: In regard to the Finlayson airstrip, are there any upgrades planned for it?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is a good question. I am sure the member opposite has read and probably rereads my

mandate letter on a regular basis. The Premier's mandate letter to me stated that airports and our civil aviation infrastructure is very important to the territory's economic foundations, and we are paying attention to that.

The Finlayson airstrip is a fairly big airstrip. The company, in its talks with us, has asked how it can help upgrade that runway, and so we are working with them to see how we can actually work with the company to improve that airstrip and then come to some sort of long-term plan. As the members opposite know, it is important that we actually talk about maintaining the infrastructure we build as well as building it. We're working with the company, both in trying to find ways to upgrade and improve that airstrip in partnership with the company as well as finding a long-term method of maintaining that infrastructure in the future.

Mr. Hassard: I'm curious. Has the minister looked at or read the *Canada Transportation Act* review that was conducted by David Emerson? How does he feel it is relevant to the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think the member opposite's question, if I may restate it, is: Have I read the Emerson report? Yes, Mr. Deputy Chair, I have read a lot in this role in the last few months. I have read a lot on the transportation file. Sadly, Mr. Emerson's report is not something I have read yet.

That said, I am very happy to report that the department has studied the Emerson report in my stead. They have analyzed it in detail and they tell me that it is a very good report. It is very good for the north. It highlights northern concerns. We are now working with Transport Canada to move forward with the next steps of implementing the report. While I have not yet had the pleasure of reading that particular report — and now that I know of its existence, I will probably delve into it in the near future. I'll just add it to my summer reading list and I thank the member opposite for bringing that to my attention. The department, fortunately, is well aware of this report and we are moving forward.

Mr. Hassard: I'm sure you will find it a very good read, so I look forward to hearing what you have to say about it in the fall.

In regard to highway signage around Mount Sima, I'm curious if the government would commit to putting up signage at the entrance of the Mount Sima subdivision, similar to the signs at McCrae, Kulan and MacDonald Road?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Highway signage — we've come a long way in this territory from the days of the YLF and the miasma of signs that covered the highway from the kilometre outside of Carcross all the way to Whitehorse. You might remember those. Everybody had a sign. They all erected them on that highway stretch. It was a divisive issue in this territory as I arrived here in 1989 and to this day — that's 30 years — we're still dealing with highway signs.

As we know, highway signage — we're trying to make sure that our highways are clean and neat and that the tourists coming up to the territory by our roads can get the information they need in an easy fashion. We're trying to make sure that people driving our highways can find the businesses that are along our highways. I have dealt with the member opposite

for Copperbelt North. He sent me a letter. I have also spoken to some of the business people in the Sima area. They too have raised this issue with me. Winterlong Brewing is a phenomenal operation and it's drawing a lot of people to that neck of the woods.

We have been working with the chambers of commerce and with businesses in this area to improve the highway signage in that area. I have every hope we will be able to come up with a solution that meets the needs of our highway safety requirements and actually helps improve the fledgling business interests of the people who live out in that area.

Mr. Hassard: I think that what we're really looking for is just some kind of consistency in terms of the other industrial parks on the highway. You mentioned McCrae, Kulan and MacDonald Road.

Will the government be paving the multi-use trail that's along the side of the highway by the Pioneer RV Park?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As far as the trail is concerned, it is a long-term goal. The trail is proving quite popular from anecdotal accounts that I have received from constituents out there from representatives. They like it. They like the physical activity. It is another piece of infrastructure that brings smiles to their faces and helps promote an active lifestyle. That's the goal — to have a robust trail system along that highway corridor. We are working with our partners in the City of Whitehorse and others to make sure that these trails are built in a fashion that is consistent with a community plan and to work together. It is important that we work with our partners in an integrated fashion so that these things meet the needs of everybody and that's what we are doing.

Deputy Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: We will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Mr. Hassard: I have more of a comment than a question, but in terms of the multi-use trail, I think that paving it would be very beneficial also because it would get the bicycles off the highway. I think that would definitely be an advantage too.

I have one question regarding the passing lane at the Pioneer RV Park. I tried to find out from the previous government, so I am going to ask the minister. Do you know why or what the reasoning was for stopping the passing lane about 100 yards before it turns into the next turning lane at the Miles Canyon road? Was there a reason for not just continuing on through that last 100 yards?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the comment about paving the trail to get the bikes off the highway. Bike safety is something that I also hold near and dear.

The member opposite has stumped us. I do not know why the last 100 yards were not paved, but we will endeavour to get the member opposite an answer.

Mr. Hassard: There have been a number of requests from constituents for turning lanes and slip lanes on the Alaska Highway at Takhini and Mendenhall subdivisions, Alaska Highway by the Porter Creek Super A, the north Klondike Highway at Boreal Road, north Klondike Highway at the new Grizzly Valley and the north Klondike Highway at Two Mile Road. I am just curious. Is the department looking at any of these turning lanes or intersections? Do we see them in the future?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: To the member opposite's question: The intersections within Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway requires a lot more consultation and work with the city — a lot more collaborative care. We have upgraded the plan for the Alaska Highway from south Klondike right through to the north Klondike to assess all of the intersections in that section of highway for their safety. When assessing the safety concerns against a standard, we have now a ranking of the worst intersections in that stretch and are doing triage to address the worst offenders — the most dangerous intersections in that stretch of road. We also want to make sure that we have consistent speed limits across that highway stretch as well.

I have spoken at length with you, Mr. Deputy Chair, about the canyon intersection. There are others that come up all of the time that need addressing. We have a list that lays out the safety concerns. The one at the south Klondike where it is quite high on the safety scale — there was a fatality there. There have been several accidents so it needed to be addressed, and we have done that. There are others inside the Whitehorse city limits that also require attention and we will be addressing them according to their safety rating to make sure that we get the worst intersections fixed as soon as we can and in a methodical manner.

The other intersections, of course — there will be people who have concerns about the other intersections. We will assess them as those concerns are brought to us and have another look to make sure that those are also looked at. We are using the Transportation Association of Canada's standard for the assessments, so that's the standard we're using. It's a national standard, and, over the coming years, because these are not easy projects to get through YESAB, we will make sure that we do the planning, execution and engineering necessary to make sure that these are addressed.

Mr. Hassard: So only one of those that I listed was in that Whitehorse corridor, so I'm curious if the minister can commit to get back to the house regarding those other ones — and I'll mention them again just so he doesn't have to write too furiously — Takhini and Mendenhall, Boreal Road on the north Klondike, new Grizzly Valley on the north Klondike, and Two Mile Road on the north Klondike as well.

On the north Klondike Takhini River bridge, there were plans this year for a walkway to be added to the Takhini River bridge for pedestrians, cyclists, et cetera. I'm curious if the minister is moving forward with this? I haven't seen or heard anything about it in the budget, so I'm just curious. Obviously it's very important for people in that neighbourhood for the safety of cyclists and equestrians as well. There are many horse riders out there who would like to have the option of having that walkway along the bridge, so if the minister could update us on that too please?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have spoken to the Member for Lake Laberge on this issue. He raised it at an event we were at recently — it might have been the Northwestel phone book launch or something. Anyway, I had a good chat with the Member for Lake Laberge on this subject. It is in his constituents' riding and he brought it to my attention.

It seems so simple. These things all seem so simple. We'll put a sidewalk on the bridge and we'll fix it. Unfortunately, in execution these things are never quite so simple. This is on our radar. We are looking at an options study to figure out exactly how we can proceed with this — what the costs are, whether we widen it, or whether we realign it. We're going to have to look at a number of different things before any decision is made. Of course as members of this House know, everything we do comes at a cost. We'll have to do an assessment of the cost-benefit analysis, as well as an options study to find out how to move forward on this thing, but it is an issue in the community. It is something that I have heard about. The department is working on an options study to figure out how exactly we can best execute it — how it might be done.

Mr. Hassard: On brush and weed control, I believe the minister used the number \$300,000 this year for brush and weed control. I am just curious if that is correct and how that is in relation to what the brush and weed control budget has been for the past couple of years.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member has asked me about brush and weed control on the highways. The budget for this year is \$300,000. That is down from previous years — it's less money. We have had to reprioritize. We have a lot of bridge work this year and we have pulled some money from the department to do some of these capital projects. As part of the budgeting process this side of the House did, we looked very long and hard trying to keep our budgets as lean as possible. Of course when you do that, some things get reduced. In this case, it's brush and weed control. We did pull that back a little bit.

I know the members opposite have raised several times the concerns they have about our ongoing deficit, so we are actually working to keep those numbers down. One of the sacrifices we had to make this year was on brush and weed control, which is still getting done. There is still a substantial amount in the budget, but it is down probably about \$500,000 from what it was last year.

If there are savings on some of our capital projects, we may be able to make amends and actually increase and do

some of that work that's necessary but, at this moment, that's where we're at.

Mr. Hassard: I think it might be the same for the rural road upgrades. I believe the minister said \$500,000, and I think last year it was \$1 million. I'm just wondering if he could also confirm that please.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So many road programs, so little time. The member opposite was asking about the rural road program. That actually is stable. It hasn't changed; it is still at \$200,000. The resource access road program is the one that has changed. It was at \$500,000 and was bumped up to \$1 million last year, just prior to the last territorial election. We have returned it to its historic level of \$500,000 and have listened to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. They were doing a lot of the work, and we have committed to dedicating about \$300,000 of that \$500,000 to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association so placer miners can upgrade the roads, as they have done in the past.

I'm pleased to say they were quite happy with that commitment we made on the resource access road money over the next three years for them to do the work, but that fund has dropped down to its historic level of \$500,000 per year.

Mr. Hassard: I apologize for the error but thanks for the clarification.

I'm curious — was there not enough uptake on the resource access road to use the whole \$1 million, or was it just decided by the government, in cost-savings, to reduce that from \$1 million back to \$500,000? I'm also curious — if \$300,000 of it is allocated strictly to the Klondike gold roads, does the minister feel that \$200,000 is an appropriate number to look after the rest of the resource access roads throughout Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: In previous years, the fund often wasn't fully subscribed. Last year, we actually had lots of applications for the \$1 million and it was fully accessed. This year, with the burgeoning economy, we're seeing it oversubscribed, but it is at historic levels and, in truth, when we sat down in this budgeting cycle to actually crunch the numbers and try to rein in the budget, this was one of the ways that we decided to do it. The compromise we made was to reduce it to its historic levels but actually reach out to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

Again, as with the brushing, if we see cost-savings in some of our other capital projects, we may be able to come up with some extra funding for those projects that have applied for this funding — these worthy projects that have applied for this funding that won't make the cut this year. At the moment, that's where we're at.

Mr. Hassard: Of course it is certainly not just the placer miners in the Klondike who access this money, and by essentially only allowing \$200,000 for the rest of the Yukon, it just seems like they are being penalized to a certain degree.

Just a thought or a comment — would the government consider — I don't want to say this with any slight to the bridge-building contractors in the Yukon, but there aren't a lot of bridge-building contractors in Yukon. We see a lot of these larger bridges go to Outside companies.

Would the government consider doing one less bridge and doing more brush and weed control or resource access road funding? I would bet good money that just about every dollar of it stays in the Yukon, whereas the bridge-building industry — maybe not so much. I am curious if the government would reconsider that at all.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite has hit upon some of the pressures that this government is feeling. We have departmental officials who are assessing on an ongoing, fluid basis the work that needs to be done. In this budget, we have hit upon several bridge contracts that need to be done. We are actually proceeding with that important work to get some of these bridges repaired and up to standards. We have 133 bridges and 248 culverts throughout the Yukon. When the bridges or the culverts aren't maintained — we see it down at Nares — you start to have weight restrictions on them and we are impeding the flow of goods and services into the territory. It is not an ideal situation.

The member opposite has raised procurement and getting jobs out the door and doing these things. These bridge works are large capital projects, and I am not going to pull the rug out from underneath any of these capital projects that have gone through a fairly rigorous budgeting process this winter with my colleagues to come to the decisions that we have made.

That said, I totally understand and hear what he is saying about keeping money in the territory and making sure that local companies — local people — have an opportunity to bid on and do the work. This government has been nothing but clear on our stated objective to make sure that we keep that money — that government money — in the territory working for the people of the territory. We on this side of the House take that very seriously. We have had these discussions in the House — the member opposite and I. Modernizing that whole procurement piece is part of my mandate — making sure that the money stays in the territory and locals have an opportunity to do that work. That money then multiplies. The multiplier where that money stays in the territory is enormous. We are very serious about trying to make that happen.

I understand the member's point very well. I thank him for the question and assure him that this government takes local employment and this local work very seriously.

Mr. Hassard: One of the other things we have seen in the past — and I'm not going to say it's happening this year. Sometimes with the limited number of bridge contractors in the Yukon, if we get too many bridges out in one year, the local capacity isn't there to actually do all of those bridges, and that just encourages more Outside companies to come into the Yukon to get those jobs.

I'm curious — I believe you mentioned \$3.5 million for the Klondike River bridge. Is that bridge in an imminent state of disrepair or would it not be fine for another year or two, according to the bridge engineers and the assessments they have done on the bridges throughout the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. The assessments that we have done on the Klondike River bridge the member opposite was talking about are

pressing. They need to be done. They are not something we can push down the road another mile. That work needs to be done so we're not putting weight restrictions on the Dempster Highway. We're making sure that we have those things. To avoid those weight restrictions that I was talking about earlier, the work has to be done.

Mr. Hassard: I was just curious if there was some way that things could have been reconfigured, but I appreciate that.

Some municipalities — Haines Junction and Teslin, in particular — have a contribution agreement with HPW in terms of brush and weed through the municipality. I know there are some unincorporated communities, such as Destruction Bay, Burwash and Beaver Creek, that also have indicated interest in this type of thing.

Can the minister update me on what communities — I believe Watson Lake as well — will continue to get funding for beautification and brush and weed control within the municipality boundaries?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. We are actually working with communities on their beautification efforts.

We are more than willing to work with other communities if they come forward and want to assume some of the work. We will engage in those conversations. I'm sure my colleague at Community Services will help facilitate that conversation.

It gets trickier in the unincorporated communities, as I'm sure the member opposite is well aware — who do you deal with in those communities? But we talked about innovative solutions to vexing problems that we face. If members of the community have solutions that work to help further the goal of some of these community improvement projects — beautification, weed control and brushing — we are more than happy to hear them out and try to come up with a way to work with that unincorporated community.

Mr. Hassard: Does Highways and Public Works work with Yukon Energy or ATCO Electric when they are planning out their brush and weed control so that maybe they could work together and utilize monies from ATCO Electric as well as Yukon Energy to maybe get more bang for their buck when it comes to brush mowing?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been informed that, yes, we have explored opportunities with the utilities to improve our brush clearing and get better bang for our buck. It makes sense from our perspective, and we have endeavoured to work closer together and to try to work as one government. We're one government, but Crown corporations are another beast in and of themselves. It adds another layer of complexity, of course, but we are more than willing to do that. I have been told that, in the past, synchronizing our schedules has been a trial but, from a philosophical point of view, we see it as a good idea and we would certainly explore it.

I thank the member opposite for bringing it to my attention.

Mr. Hassard: Kind of along those same lines, Yukon Energy currently does not use the tender management system that is used by Highways and Public Works. Would the minister commit to working with the Minister responsible for

YDC/YEC on moving forward with getting Yukon Energy tenders listed on the tender management system?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Highways and Public Works and Public Works' tender management system is something that I have spent some time mulling over. This is a piece of infrastructure we have within government that, on the surface, seems tremendous — one tender management system to rule them all. The issue, of course, with procurement across the government is consistency and how you get departments to use the tools that are available to them. You have mentioned Yukon Energy as not using this tool — that's true. There are other departments not using it to the full potential. It comes down to ease of use, even thoughtfulness — how do you get process, how do you get them in there, how do you get them using it? It's something that I have thought quite a bit about in the last few months. As part of the modernization of our procurement process, that tender management system is something that we have to improve the use of it and we have to increase the consistency of its use across this government so that it actually becomes the tool it should be, which is an easy place for everybody to see what's being tendered and how it's being tendered — and actually managing the tenders.

There is a subcommittee that has been struck. The Yukon Energy's deputy is part of that subcommittee. The subcommittee is meeting to try to foster and pull these units together and start getting them to work as one government toward one goal on the procurement file.

I think it's reassuring and it's good that Yukon Energy is part of that process, and one of the things that I am pushing for is having that system used consistently across all government departments and Crown corporations. I think this subcommittee and the renewed interest in that subcommittee and getting it going will help foster that adoption of a tender management system.

Mr. Hassard: It's encouraging to hear that because I think it has been too long that Yukon Energy has been left out of the picture. I realize that not everything from every department goes through the tender management system, but I think it's utilized by most departments — but absolutely not at all by Yukon Energy, so it would be nice to see them beginning to use it and hopefully carry on and have all of their projects on the tender management system.

We've heard from many local residents and highway crews at local grader stations that they feel that the department makes decisions on the maintenance in their sections without involving them as much as they would like. Will the minister commit to having the planning people work more closely with the local foremen or the local crews when looking at doing work in their particular areas?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a big, big department. It's a big territory, and over the last several months, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, I have had some opportunity to get to the rural communities — not all of them and not enough of them, but I do plan to get out more and to talk to the people who are living and working in rural Yukon.

The reason I'm doing that — it's nice to get out in the territory and meet, but it's also nice to touch base with people

on the ground in these grader stations — the workers and the foremen who know the regions around which they've been working, and some of them for a long time.

When I was out in Haines Junction, some of the corporate knowledge in that area is enormous and I'm sure that it is the same throughout the territory. Talking with those people and hearing their stories and hearing their trials and tribulations or successes informs me as a minister of this government about how things work.

It's the same for the department itself. Listening to that local knowledge is important for the success of this department, for this government and for our communities. All communities matter — we have said it, but it's true. That knowledge is essential to feed in to help make successes happen. It's part of the innovation that we spoke of earlier. It's people — line staff in these departments who are doing the innovative things and coming forward with some of these ideas that are changing the way we manage our highways, our roads and our infrastructure across the territory.

This is a longer answer, I suppose, but I wanted you to understand where we're coming from as a government and where I come from as a minister about these things. That information — I spent my working career listening to the stories of people, listening to what they do and trying to work that into a narrative that helps things run smoother.

The department has opened up that communication. It has been happening for awhile now with the engineering branch and Transportation Maintenance working together and trying to get that information up. It's a large department. There are a lot of silos. There are a lot of people who perhaps haven't started to embrace this new way of doing things. There's probably a lot of legacy, a lot of history, a lot of old employees, all of whom know the — change takes time, I guess is what I'm trying to say. The department is willing to, understands and acknowledges the value in that information that is held by our legacy employees throughout the territory — legacy, not old. Old isn't a good word. I fall into that category myself.

I am sure that the instinct that I have is also something the department is embracing in trying to bring that information into the engineering — cross-pollinating and trying to break down some of those barriers so we can do some of those innovative things and think differently about the vexing problems that face us all and make things better.

Mr. Hassard: The previous government had plans in place to have a generic design done for grader stations that needed replacement throughout the Yukon. I think there are definitely a few of them that are pretty much timed-out, let's say. I'm curious if this new government has any plans on following through with that commitment.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have good news for the member opposite — my colleague. There is a no-name, generic, President's Choice design for grader stations that has been created. It does exist. That is the good news. The bad news is that in this budget there is no money for the implementation or building of said generic grader stations in the territory. We are in the process, as we always are, of assessing needs and

putting dollars where they have to go. Once we do have a grader station identified as a project that we are going to proceed with, we have a generic design we can use to build said building.

Mr. Hassard: Would the government consider lease options when looking at grader stations that are at end-of-life rather than building new? Would there be any consideration given to leasing in any of the communities that might have someone who was willing to build and lease to Highways and Public Works?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is a good question. I am new to this game, but I do know that in this government we have been discussing the merits of whether we build capital projects or whether we lease capital projects. I don't think we have come to a decision yet, and I am not about to announce one on the floor of this House at 5:00 p.m. on Monday afternoon. But I thank the member opposite for the thought. I am sure that when we are developing our budgets, if there is a good case to be made for a certain approach to financing, we would be more than happy to consider it and its effects on our long-term finances.

Mr. Hassard: In terms of the Shakwak funding, the minister spoke about the Shakwak funding coming to an end in his opening remarks. I am curious if the minister would commit to an all-party briefing on the government's position to Shakwak prior to the Premier's trip to Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will consult with my colleagues about whether or not such a briefing prior to the Premier's trip to Washington commences. Time, of course, is of the essence and I think all parties in this House have endorsed our stance as far as Shakwak goes. I know the Member for Kluane has been vocal in his support for the project. I know that the members opposite — like us — have advocated for restoration of the funding that has now run out.

I know that the Member of Parliament for Yukon has been very active on this file, promoting the Yukon's interests in Washington on this and also on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I will explore whether or not an all-party briefing is something we can execute before the Premier's trip to Washington.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that. If I can jump back, I have a couple more questions regarding the grader stations that I overlooked.

Carmacks — I know the grader station in Carmacks is definitely one of the ones that would be considered at end of life. Carmacks, I know, has asked to have their grader station moved. It's right in the middle of what could be a very beautiful part of town. I'm curious if there are any plans for the government, in their five-year-plan, in terms of moving the grader station in Carmacks?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I know that the previous government had raised this issue. They were active on this file on the grader station. It is not an issue that I know about, admittedly, at this stage. This is not one of the issues that have crossed my desk in recent months, but it is now on my radar and I will do my utmost to bring myself up to speed on this issue of the grader station in Carmacks.

Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

Mr. Hassard: Speaking of Carmacks, the Carmacks bypass has been talked about over the past few years, and it was given an alternate route for industrial traffic off the Freegold and Mount Nansen roads to avoid the residential areas.

Does the current government have any plans — or would that fall in their five-year plan as well — to move forward with the Carmacks bypass road?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The bypass was included as part of the Gateway submission. It was part of that, and this government is preparing to proceed with an environmental assessment for the bypass. That process is expected to be submitted in mid to late summer for the bypass.

Mr. Hassard: I have about four more hours of questions, but I'm confident that we're going to go back into Highways and Public Works, so I will just ask one final question so that the Member for Whitehorse Centre has an opportunity to get into some of her stuff too.

Stations of choice — I'm curious. I know that, in the community of Teslin, there are two gas stations and they have always in the past worked with Highways and Public Works, and they offered a discount and did six months each, which was decided on by the station owners and it worked very well. I can attest to that.

I know that this year, the gas station owners were told that, no, it didn't line up with AIT, et cetera, and it has to be done in an open and fair process. There are problems with it, and I have discussed it with gas station owners over the years when I was, in fact, a gas station owner. The problem is that it is based on a price-per-litre discount. If Mr. Deputy Chair owns a gas station and offers a 10-cent-a-litre discount, whereas gas station owner B only offers five cents, the government may in fact be paying more for their fuel but, according to their rules, they have to go with Mr. Deputy Chair because his discount is larger.

When I was in the business, I argued at great length, and so we had an agreement for Teslin where it worked that everyone was on an equal playing field. I'm curious if the minister could shed some light on his thoughts or, if he doesn't have any thoughts — which I understand because this is probably not one of the things that has come rushing across his desk — but if he could commit to looking at options for smaller communities where there are two or three gas stations — maybe they could do something collectively among themselves. It's just an option that I'm putting out there for the minister, and I look forward to continuing debate at a future date and again I thank the officials for being here today and enjoying our company.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, there have been a number of issues — things that I never would have thought a year ago that I would be learning about. This is another one. At this point, I don't have a good answer but I will look into and I will try to get an answer for the member opposite. I thank him for bringing it to my attention, but I don't have a good answer for him on that but I will look into it and strive to get an acceptable answer your way.

Ms. Hanson: I would just like to go back. The minister made reference a couple times to his mandate letter. One of those — and it sort of touches on what the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin just raised a moment ago. I quote: "As Minister of Highways and Public Works, your overarching priority is to make the most of government investments to support economic activity and... better access to government services across the territory... not just in supporting others' efforts, but also in... how it does business."

One of the questions I have with respect to the whole issue of tendering and contracts is that, when we look at the Yukon public contract registry and just do a quick search, we see that, as of today on a Highways and Public Works contract registry search, there are about 412 contracts listed worth about \$10.7 million. More than half of these are direct awards. My question is: What percentage on average annually of Highways and Public Works contracts are invitational tenders? How many of them are direct awards? How many are public tendered, and what's the rationale for that if we're looking at having fair, transparent and accountable management of contracts and procurement that is going to help the local communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. It's nice to talk with her this afternoon on the Highways and Public Works budget.

She has asked about percentages. I thank her for the research of 412 tenders at \$10.7 million. I will answer her question this way: Since December 1, 2016, Highways and Public Works has put out 120 tenders. There are currently 46 public tenders out and five more waiting, so that's 51. Yukon Housing Corporation isn't included in these numbers. Apparently they have another five themselves. The total contract value for all Yukon government since December 1, including change orders and Yukon Housing Corporation contracts, is \$93 million. That's a big number. The total contract value for Highways and Public Works since December 1 is \$31 million.

We can talk percentages and numbers and these things here, but the stated goal — as the member opposite has stated — from my mandate letter, is to make sure that we have a fair and open process and that contracts are procured in an efficient way. I have had many, many conversations with business people since taking on this role. I have heard their complaints about procurement; I have heard their complaints about many different issues on how we actually buy goods and services within the government. We do have thresholds for purchasing — sole-source thresholds and procurement thresholds. If we're buying Kleenex for the department, we may not go to tender for that if it's 15 boxes for a single office. We may send somebody out to do it.

I will assure the member that the goal of this government is to have an open and transparent procurement process so that people have fair access to bid on the work, goods and services that we're putting out.

Ms. Hanson: We are actually talking about numbers and percentages because this is a budget debate. When I asked the question about if more than half of the contracts — I was

just referring to the contract search for Highways and Public Works, because that is the budget area we're debating today. I was curious as to why more than half of them were direct awards, as opposed to — I understand they have put out 126 public tenders since December and that's great. The question is — if we're looking at the various ways that government will spend its money and the various ways that it can provide access to that public source of funds for territorial expenditures, I was curious as to why more than half of them to date are direct awards.

The other area that is of particular interest in terms of following up, because there is a carry over and a continuity of legislative requirements — the minister made brief reference to the mandate letter that speaks to his requirement to increase the amount of information available to Yukoners by preparing amendments to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. I have a couple of questions. Last year, we were told that there was \$120,000 spent on this. The Yukon Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner submitted a brief to government in October 2015 where she outlined her comments with respect to the ATIPP act, which were quite comprehensive.

There are 35 recommendations made by the Yukon Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner. Those of us who were around — and certainly the general public and, I would imagine, the minister and the current Minister of Justice — will recall that there were some serious concerns with the amendments that were made to the way access to information legislation was crafted. If I recall correctly, the Ombudsman of the day said that it made us the most secretive jurisdiction in the world in terms of government. I am sure that is not the objective of this government to maintain that.

Can the minister outline what the process will be? What is his target date for completion of that legislative review?

Are the 35 recommendations that were made in October-December of — actually, she did identify in April 2014 some serious concerns about the issue of public interest override, but then in her 2015 review, the details that she set out are broad in scope and take into consideration the changes that were made to the health privacy information act and other digital issues. The amount of money that's going to be committed, the timeline for introducing these amendments and whether or not — has the minister reviewed the 2015 recommendations, and does he find himself in agreement with the recommendations made therein?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This Yukon government is committed to amending the ATIPP act. I have used this act myself, professionally, and I have spoken with my able colleague, the Minister of Justice, about access to information and also protection of privacy. I also share the frustration of many in the community with the shortcomings of the existing legislation.

We are currently in the process of amending the legislation. We're working with the Department of Justice to come up with recommendations that we can then take forward to the public for comment. Currently those recommendations

are a twinkle in a mind's eye. They are being developed in concert with the officials in Justice, but there is lots of input into what the final recommendations we do take public will look like.

We welcome the feedback of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and appreciate her input into the process. We agree that access to government information and protection of personal privacies are the cornerstone of a functioning democracy — if there is something that you don't — I'm well aware of, myself, personally.

We fully expect the Information and Privacy Commissioner will assist us in preparing the ATIPP act to be compatible with existing technology and our future needs — as a government and as a society. I am one who believes in open data. We are pushing the open data repository as well so that citizens have access to the information that they help collect.

I said in my opening remarks that the current infrastructure for this government is based on — the tech infrastructure — is sorely lacking. We have made very few investments in that information technology as a government — far less per capita than other government agencies, and you can see it in the way we — when I was working in the civil service, it was constantly frustrating trying to get seemingly simple information from our servers that would be usable.

Since taking office, we have started to try to make more information available to the media and to the public. Just today, I was meeting with reporters up in my office about a report — a structural engineering report on the Ross River School that I recently released without an ATIPP request. We are doing our best to get information into the hands of the reporters and the public as easily as possible, as quickly as possible, and we are making strides to be more open and accountable and to provide the information that we are requested.

When are we going to have this information? When are the ATIPP act recommendations? We're working on that now as one government. We're working on this project together with Justice, and I expect that sometime in the near future, I'm hoping — it's hypothetical; we don't have it pinned down — but I would expect that, if we're lucky, we will have something before the public sometime this winter or spring. We're looking at trying to get amendments to this act before this Legislative Assembly sometime in the fall of 2018, I believe, is our timeline.

Ms. Hanson: That will probably put us three years after, I think, it was due, but that's fine if we're going to get it done. I raised the interest of the public interest override, Mr. Deputy Chair, because it was subject to a lot of debate in this Legislative Assembly during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's attempts to get information. The Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner had written to the former Minister of Highways and Public Works in April 2014, after listening to the debate in our Legislative Assembly around that.

She talked about these measures that are used elsewhere to facilitate a public interest override. They operate — I'm

quoting here — “to facilitate access to information where it is found to be in the public interest to disclose the information despite the application of a valid exemption to or prohibition of disclosure.” At that time, there was resistance on the government side to releasing information.

In addition to the importance of that public interest override, the Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner makes the recommendation authorizing the Commissioner in Executive Council to make a regulation authorizing the waiving of fees to process a request for access to information if disclosure of the record is in the public interest. I would be curious if the minister would agree to that waiving of fees. I think we have seen, over the course of the last six or so years, documents hundreds of pages long that are redacted black and/or being asked to spend hundreds of dollars to receive documents that are really public documents. I am curious about that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. This is what I will say about fees — hundreds of dollars doesn't seem like a lot. I was charged thousands of dollars for documents that I asked for from the Yukon government when I was editor of the paper.

I don't think that we are receiving a lot. We can talk about fees, but the fees are there because people have to make the requests. I actually come at it from a different perspective. I would like most information to be available so the fees become moot. If you can get the information, then you shouldn't have to pay the fee. The fees are only an issue if you are having trouble getting the information, so you are having to pay fees to get it and the fees become a barrier — a way of hiding information. We have all seen that — some of us more often than not. My approach is to try to make the information that the public government collects on behalf of its citizens available to the citizens of the territory who paid for that work.

In that model, the fees become less important, so I will agree with the member opposite in that spirit. As far as public interest override — the privacy rules — privacy is exceedingly important to the people of the territory. Their private information should be private, but sometimes that can be taken to extremes that can be troubling to people.

For example, on Friday, I asked for my test results that I provided to the hospital through the nurses and they won't give it to me because it compromises HIPMA. My own test results that the front-line staff at the hospital have access to and have been given freely to me for the last seven or eight years are no longer available to me, as the client, because of some issue.

This is how privacy rules can sometimes impede health care and impede us in our daily lives. I think common sense has to reign and we have to look at this. That is not to say that I am in any way advocating for some sort of compromising of personal information, but I think as an institution — our institutions are in a brand new world with a lot of new privacy rules, a lot of new pressures on us and we have to start — it's new — and we have to start to adapt. We have to look at these

things. What are we trying to achieve? What are we trying to protect and how best do we do that?

I think we have to take that lens and apply it to our privacy and access rules. That's why this legislative review and eventual amendments are in the works.

Ms. Hanson: In last year's budget, a system review was scheduled for 2016 for the Pelly airstrip and I'm hearing from the minister today that there isn't any significant amount of money going there. Our question is: When will this airport — or is it currently upgraded to allow medevac out of the Pelly airstrip?

In a meeting with the council last spring, they referred to the pile of the gravel at the end as “Mount Pasloski” — “Mount Paz”. It's a serious issue, Mr. Deputy Chair, because if somebody gets into really serious difficulty in Pelly Crossing, they have to get transported to Stewart Crossing, transferred to another ambulance and transferred to Mayo and then flown to Whitehorse. The issue is — and persists to be for the residents of Pelly Crossing — can and when will that airport be upgraded to allow for medevacs safely out of there?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will be very quick because I am cognizant of the time. In Pelly, medevacs can land. It isn't perfect if there is a snow event or something. It may impede that, but Pelly is capable of handling medevac flights at the current time. The mountain of gravel that the member opposite referred to is actually being used to resurface the runway. That work has now been done, and I guess that the mountain no longer — maybe it's a nub or something — it is not a mountain any more.

Deputy Chair: Order. The time being 5:30 p.m., the Deputy Chair shall now rise and report progress.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: Thank you. You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:32 p.m.