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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 11, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 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

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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

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Yukon Liberal Party

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
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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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 11, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
At this time, we will proceed with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day of Pink

Mr. Gallina: I rise in this House today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to recognize the International Day of Pink. Each year, on April 11, people across the country and around the world come together to raise awareness to stop homophobic, transphobic and other forms of bullying.

As many of you know, this movement began in Nova Scotia in 2007. Two high school seniors, David and Travis, witnessed a grade 9 student who is gay and happened to be wearing a pink shirt being bullied. Though they intervened in the incident, they knew and decided that more needed to be done to prevent homophobic bullying in their school. The response was resounding — hundreds of students wore pink to stand in solidarity with the bullied student, turning the school into a sea of pink. Since then, the pink shirt symbol has been used during Bullying Awareness Week in November, Pink Shirt Day in February and International Day of Pink in April each year. These events encourage each and every one of us to take a stand against bullying in all of its forms.

In Yukon schools, we strive to prevent bullying and discrimination throughout the year so that all students can learn, grow and be themselves in open, healthy and supportive environments. One way that we do this is by proactively encouraging good behaviour through an approach called positive behaviour intervention and support. It teaches students the value of engaging in respectful, responsible and safe behaviour, and its impacts on themselves and on others. By proactively setting expectations, students learn about acceptable behaviour and what is expected of them. They are reminded, encouraged and rewarded for behaving well. This approach involves our entire school community, including parents and students. We also integrate bullying awareness in discussions about gender and diversity into activities, classroom lessons and events throughout the school year.

In November, young men from Porter Creek Secondary School met with professional football players to learn about how boys and men can work with their peers to eliminate gender-based violence and be more than a bystander. In February, for Pink Shirt Day, students at Watson Lake Secondary school joined forces with Mr. Gurdeep Pandher to create a music video celebrating diversity. They dressed in pink, learned Bhangra dancing and recorded a song with empowering lyrics including: “it’s okay to be different”, “live

without judgment”, “all choices are beautiful”, and “let’s end bullying forever”. If you haven’t watched it yet, I encourage all of you to watch the video which can be found by Google-searching Gurdeep Pandher, Watson Lake.

Everyone deserves a safe learning environment, workplace and community where they can thrive and be themselves. The International Day of Pink encourages all of us to stand up together and speak out against hate, intolerance and oppression. It reminds us to support members of our community who may be marginalized and to celebrate everything that makes us individual humans and different from one another. Let us all work together to create a more positive, respectful and caring world together.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: Today, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute and recognize April 11 as International Day of Pink. Communities and organizations across Yukon, Canada and the world unite to celebrate diversity and raise awareness to stop bullying in all forms.

The Day of Pink began in Nova Scotia after a new student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt and two students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, witnessed the bullying and decided to stand against that bullying. They said that enough was enough. By wearing pink and encouraging the rest of the school to do the same, they started a movement. Call it a movement, a cause, a symbol, but it has empowered and inspired youth to create an amazing social change globally. Each year, on the second Wednesday of April, people are encouraged to wear pink to convey solidarity and show that together we stand up to bullying.

As leaders, we are the ambassadors who are willing to stand together and we have the platform to speak on behalf of the diversity of others. Have you ever seen someone who was hurt by bullying or discrimination? Perhaps you have experienced it yourself. Bullying has a detrimental impact on its victims and on our society as a whole: Bullying victimizes people and leads to low self-esteem and fear, it has led to an increase in youth self-harm and suicide, and bullying can be a vicious cycle.

Harassment and abuse do not always end with childhood but often continue to play a role in the lives of people who may have started either as aggressor or victim.

Not only on the Day of Pink — every day, let’s be open-minded, accept differences and respect each other. I invite each and every Yukoner of all ages to take this opportunity to stand against negative behaviour of any sort.

Pink is the symbol and we all play for the day, but let’s keep pink a cause to remind us of the challenges every day as we walk this world.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to commemorate the International Day of Pink. Today, millions of people worldwide are standing together against bullying, discrimination, homophobia and transphobia.

Today, we celebrate our rich human diversity by wearing pink.

Often it is a small act of resistance that starts a revolution and, as we have heard, that is exactly how Pink Shirt Day was born. A school movement in Nova Scotia has since inspired millions of participants in more than 25 countries to stand up for what is right.

Mr. Speaker, I attended a conference last year called Bridging the Gender Divide and it was an eye-opener. Things that you and I may take for granted are rights that others continue to struggle to achieve, like being addressed by the correct pronouns. If someone asks you to address them by “them” or “they”, or “he” or “she”, or “he” or “him”, it is not up for discussion — honour that request. You might make a mistake or two along the way, but mistakes are forgivable; willful ignorance is not.

Organizations and activists across Canada are working to stop bullying, discrimination and homophobia in schools and communities worldwide by offering and facilitating workshops, presentations and training conferences like the one I mentioned. These groups customize programming for communities and seek to engage everyone in an important dialogue about our diversity and our right to be. These champions of equal rights chalk up their success and ongoing campaigns to end bullying to a youth-led model that better engages both young Canadians and their communities in celebrating diversity and recognizing that our strength lies in this diversity.

Today and every day, we’re reminded that the words we use both in person and online can be harmful. If you wouldn’t say something to someone standing in front of you, don’t post it online, because cyber-bullying is still bullying. Author Oscar Auliq-Ice had good advice when it comes to what we say and what we write, and he said: “Be sure to taste your words before you spit them out.”

Applause

In recognition of Telus Ride for Dad

Mr. Adel: I rise in the House today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Telus Ride for Dad.

Each year, the Telus Ride for Dad allows me to combine my love for riding and the ability to raise money for the fight against prostate cancer. We would like to acknowledge the riders and supporters in the gallery from Ride for Dad Yukon, as well as the Gold Wing Road Riders, who will be introduced in a few minutes during introduction of visitors.

The mission of Telus Ride for Dad is to save men’s lives by supporting prostate cancer research and to raise public awareness about the disease, which is the most common form of cancer in men over 50 years old.

Since 2000, Telus Ride for Dad events have raised more than \$27 million nationally for the Prostate Cancer Fight Foundation, which supports prostate cancer research and awareness. On ride day, across Canada, in major cities and in small communities, a parade of vehicles grabs the attention of

the masses and the media, with all the funds raised going toward the fight against prostate cancer.

In the Yukon, events are held throughout the year, including the ride in the summer and the comedy shows over the winter. With the support of this government, the Department of Economic Development and my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, Ride for Dad held a summit here in October 2017. From that gathering of people here in the Yukon from all across Canada, a research grant has come forward. We are going to be involved in the testing of a new PSA test, which is a blood test, instead of the more invasive tests. They are hopefully seeing a 95-percent accuracy rate, which would certainly help with the early detection of this disease.

One of the great things about these events is that the national foundation supports prostate cancer research and awareness in the communities where the events take place. All of the money raised in the Yukon stays in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, last year, the Government of Yukon released a report, called *Cancer Mortality Trends, 1999-2013*. This report tells us that cancer is the leading cause of death here in the territory — one in three deaths is cancer-related. It also tells us that prostate cancer was the third most common cause of cancer death in males.

The success of prostate cancer treatment depends on how early the cancer is diagnosed. For this reason, we encourage all men over 40 to talk to their doctor about getting tested. It is particularly important due to the fact that symptoms of prostate cancer are often not present in the early stages of the disease.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to pay special recognition to our local Ride for Dad, whose members are doing some really great work to raise awareness about prostate cancer. The executive of the Ride for Dad Yukon Chapter works hard on behalf of Yukoners, forging relationships with sponsors, hosting sponsorship events, including the ride in the summer and the comedy nights in the winter, and meeting regularly to provide input and share updates in the fight against prostate cancer.

With the summit back in October, this was the first time some of these researchers had met face to face. We understand that this led to some more important discussions and new connections that will help us all going forward. The national Ride for Dad organization recognized this event last year when they rewarded the Yukon Chapter Co-chair Mike Thorpe a volunteer award for his enthusiasm and work in organizing the summit. Mike is one of the spearheads, but by no means the only one — everybody pitches in on this one.

We also heard that Ride for Dad Yukon has some exciting news on the horizon about prostate cancer. This year’s Ride for Dad Yukon event will take place on the second weekend in June in the Shipyards Park parking lot. On Friday, June 8, there will be pre-registration, a barbecue, a motorcycle rodeo and music. All are welcome to join in on the fun.

Saturday, June 9, is ride day, with a registration breakfast from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and kickstands up at 11:00 a.m. sharp.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who give generously of their time, not only on event days but throughout the year. For your contributions, we are truly grateful.

Mr. Speaker, we would also like to acknowledge that some — or even many of us — in the Chamber here today have lost someone near and dear to us through cancer. We encourage all of you to lend your support to Yukon families who are facing the battle with prostate and other cancers.

On a personal note, my wife Barbara and I will be riding this year for my father, who is a 25-year survivor of prostate cancer. He encouraged me to talk to my peers and, now, to my sons to get tested for themselves, for their families and for their loved ones.

I would like to conclude by expressing our gratitude and appreciation to all these individuals who are supporting Yukoners living with prostate cancer, and we would like to thank the riders, the members and the local corporate sponsors, and everyone who donates or lends their support.

Finally, we invite Yukon men to get the facts, to know the risks and to talk to their doctor about prostate cancer.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to recognize the Telus Ride for Dad, as they head into their 18th year in Canada, raising awareness and dollars for prostate cancer. Since 2000, the Ride for Dad has raised and donated over \$27 million to the Prostate Cancer Fight Foundation. I would like to give a special thanks to the Ride for Dad Yukon, which should be very proud of their contributions to this very important national cause.

Prostate cancer is not something most men want to think about; however, statistics show that one in seven Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. It's something that should be recognized and taken very seriously. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Canadian men. It is a slow-growing cancer and many men live years without it being detected.

Improved testing and better treatment options have lowered the mortality rate over the years; however, it is still very important to pay attention to your body and get screened regularly.

Our local chapter of Ride for Dad works year-round to raise funds for awareness and research for prostate cancer. In other jurisdictions, research dollars raised are spent locally, where they are made. Here in the Yukon, our chapter has been fortunate to be working with a researcher out of Edmonton, who has offered to bring his research to us, in a sense. His work on the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA test, will see a trial of the new blood test undertaken in Yukon — we heard about that earlier — which will make us the first jurisdiction to offer the test. In fact, a \$50,000 research grant was just signed off this morning. We look forward to the future

prostate cancer screening by blood test, rather than the only option we currently have.

In October, Ride for Dad hosted a summit in Whitehorse, where researchers and members from across Canada come together. This summit was the first chance many researchers had to speak to others about their work and learn about the work of others with respect to prostate cancer detection and treatment.

It was reported from the other Ride for Dad chapters that this Yukon summit has definitely raised the bar for future summits in Canada. One of my favourite annual events is the Ride for Dad Yukon comedy show that takes place in January. With local and national talents performing over two nights, Yukoners are treated to a night filled with laughter and fun in support of Yukoners with prostate cancer. Just by showing up, you are donating to the cause and can also take part in the silent auction or make personal donations.

This year, the Ride for Dad will begin on Saturday, June 9, at Shipyards Park, at 9:00 a.m. for ride day registration, and the ride begins at 11:00 a.m. sharp. I know from volunteering in my community, 11:00 a.m. sharp means 11:00 a.m. sharp.

Registration includes a breakfast, poker run, lunch, door prizes and more. Money raised from this event will remain here in the Yukon to support local awareness and education campaigns. This year's fundraising initiative prize is a 15-day African motorcycle adventure, with an entry for every \$100 raised.

I would like to thank Ride for Dad including all of the organizers and volunteers — some of them are here today — for your efforts. They are immense and much appreciated. Ride for Dad is always looking for donations, sponsors and volunteers, and you can contact Ride for Dad to see how you can help. Thanks to the riders, and good luck to all of you for this year's ride.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Adiel: I would like to recognize the people in the gallery who have come out today to support us. Here in the gallery with us today, we have: Mike Thorpe and Julie Thorpe, Gil Bradet and John Gullison and Mark Beese for Ride for Dad; from Gold Wing Road Riders are Roger Hanberg, Frank Schwertner, Lorne Whittaker; and Sarah Catliff from Ronald McDonald House. Thank you very much for the work you do.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: Because of his role, I was expecting the minister to do it. I would just like to welcome to the House Cam Kos, a person I haven't seen in the gallery for a long time.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. White: I have for tabling a photo taken today of accessible parking at the main administration building.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 50(1) of the *Environment Act*, I have for tabling a summary report for the 2018 interim state of the environment report. The full report can also be found online.

I also have for tabling a response to a question raised by the Member for Watson Lake on March 28, 2018.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling the Queen's Printer Agency and Fleet Vehicle Agency 2018-19 business plans.

Speaker: Are there any further 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

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure its contracting practices create business opportunities for Yukon companies.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to improve Takhini River Road by:

(1) immediately taking action to deal with the current flooding problem; and

(2) investing in engineering and design work for upgrading the road, including improving the road surface and the ditches.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reject changes to the governance of the Yukon Liquor Board and the Yukon Liquor Corporation that would see the privatization of retail operations, including the layoff of Yukon government employees in Whitehorse and in the retail stores and territorial agents operating in six Yukon communities.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to immediately repair and make accessible the handicapped parking spaces in the north parking lot of the Legislative Assembly, or immediately designate other parking spots as handicapped parking.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Dawson City Airport

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Today, I am taking the opportunity to update Yukoners on the progress that our government is making to modernize the Dawson City Airport.

Government of Yukon is starting construction on a new maintenance facility at the airport this summer. Construction costs are estimated at about \$7.7 million, and the facility is slated for completion in the summer of 2019. The new maintenance facility will allow airport staff to work in a dry, heated facility year-round and ensure that airport equipment is safely stored during cold and inclement weather. The new airport maintenance facility has been incorporated into the planning for the paving of the Dawson City runway. Having a heated maintenance facility at the airport is required to fulfill the heightened maintenance standards and needs of a paved runway.

Enhancing our aviation industry is important to growing Yukon's economy. We will ensure that the airport meets the needs of the community and its stakeholders and acts as a regional economic and jobs generator for the future. Building a maintenance facility at the Dawson City Airport will protect equipment and help people who keep flights moving in and out of the airport 365 days a year, even when it's 50 below.

I will note for the record that all other certified airports in the Yukon, which include the Old Crow Airport, Watson Lake Airport and Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport have this type of maintenance facility. This is part of our larger plan to improve the Dawson airport, which will see the runway paved as we committed to during the 2016 election.

A look at the five-year capital plan outlines a three-year project to improve the facility, and we believe the paving itself will take place in the summer of 2019. We are excited to get the ball rolling — so to speak — this summer, with the construction of this much-needed maintenance facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to update members and all Yukoners on this important initiative.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the statement made by the Minister of Highways and Public Works. The Yukon Party has supported improvements to the Dawson City Airport, including the paving of the runway. Prior to the election, we initiated a functional planning exercise in partnership with the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce to come up with a plan for the airport facilities.

Last year, we saw this minister waffle on his government's paving commitments, contradicting his colleagues and himself on a number of occasions. Hopefully, this statement means that they won't be amending another platform commitment.

This statement does, however, raise a number of questions that we would like the minister to address in his response today. Have all of the necessary approvals been received from Transport Canada and Nav Canada with respect to these airport improvements?

As the minister points out, this is part of a three-year project at the Dawson City Airport, and, unfortunately, the minister's statement is a bit confusing when he says that the costs will be \$7.7 million. In Committee of the Whole, the minister told us that the total cost of this project over three years would actually be over \$16 million. Perhaps in his response, the minister could clarify this, and perhaps he could tell us if this estimate includes the expected price increases to construction and asphalt that will come as a result of the Liberal carbon tax scheme.

Further, we found out in Committee of the Whole that the operation and maintenance costs are expected to go up by around \$700,000 per year due to these changes at the airport. Mr. Speaker, we are curious where that is reflected in the budget.

Another question I have is: If Yukon is not able to get the necessary Nav Canada or Transport Canada approvals, will it have to move the runway as part of the pavement project? I asked this question as well in Committee and, surprisingly, the minister was unable to answer it. The government is looking at \$7.7 million this year and over \$16 million over three years, but they still don't know the scope of the actual work that they are doing at the Dawson airport. This is concerning and we would hope that the government would have a better idea of what it is spending such a significant amount of money on.

We also have questions about why the government chose to proceed with the design/build tender for this maintenance facility. When in opposition, the Premier spoke out against design/build, so it is interesting to see him employ it now, as he is in government.

How will the government manage service interruptions at the Dawson airport in 2019 while the runway is being paved? We know that the Liberals completed a system review of all airports and aerodromes, so we are curious. Is that document publicly available, and what kind of resources will be assigned to other airports or aerodromes to improve them? For example, the Mayo Airport is in need of improvements to deal with increased traffic from the mining activity in the area. Will the minister be making major improvements to all airports, or just ones in the Premier's riding?

Hopefully we can get a five-year capital plan from the minister on aviation infrastructure improvements. When I say a plan, I mean a real plan, with real numbers and real details, as opposed to the five-year capital concept that we deal with here on a daily basis.

Ms. Hanson: In response to the ministerial statement regarding the construction of the new maintenance facility for the Dawson City Airport, Yukon New Democrats agree that government airport facilities such as maintenance buildings should provide safe work environments for airport staff and should be designed so as to ensure that expensive airport equipment is protected from the elements.

However, the minister's statement continues this government's refusal — much like that of its predecessor — to deal with some hard realities. During the election

campaign, the Premier promised that a Liberal government would pave the Dawson airport runway.

The previous government engaged in long and costly planning exercises, which all — quite frankly — pointed to the same conclusion, and that was that the paving of the Dawson City Airport runway will not change the fact that Transport Canada will not certify the Dawson City Airport for nighttime or instrument flight rules operations due to natural terrain obstacles. The 10-year capital plan and planning report for the Dawson City Airport, 2013-23 — which the minister has assured this House that he has read — is clear — and I'm quoting: "... the Airport's runway and approaches will continue to be designated non-instrument, day-use VFR into the foreseeable future."

The minister and the Premier have clearly bought into the idea that if they say something often enough, it will make sense. For a government that says it will make decisions based on evidence and that decisions will be for the benefit of Yukon as a whole, there are many outstanding questions to be discussed regarding the risks and benefits of proceeding with paving of the Dawson Airport runway, at least as long as that runway remains in the same location.

As the previously referenced plan put it, with respect to scheduled commercial air service: "... asphalt paving of YDA's runway may not have a beneficial impact on future aircraft selection since other Yukon airports situated along multi-stop routing may still not be paved. For example, assuming that the Yukon territorial service offered by Air North continues to be a Whitehorse-Dawson-Inuvik-Old Crow-Dawson-Whitehorse routing, then the Old Crow runway would also need to be paved in order to permit a wider range of aircraft options."

We look forward to clear statements and clear analysis from the minister on the next steps set out in his statement. In and of itself, the construction of a new maintenance facility at Dawson City Airport is good and we support it. Prior to assuming that the next logical step is paving the runway, the government will be required to demonstrate that the paving is an effective, economic and prudent use of Yukon tax dollars.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the members opposite for their comments today and input into this important initiative — making good on a promise that we made during the last territorial election. I have to say that I am a little disappointed in the tone of the remarks of the Official Opposition. It is hard to tell whether they support building the facility at all.

We are making solid progress on our goal of modernizing the Dawson City Airport. We are starting construction on an all-new, all-weather maintenance facility at the airport this summer, as I stated earlier this afternoon, and the facility is slated for completion the summer of 2019. It is a piece of infrastructure that is integral to the Dawson City Airport paving project, which we plan to do next summer.

I thank the members of the Third Party for the support of this project and I concur with the Leader of the Third Party. There have been some studies. We have done more. We have been in touch with the federal authorities on this matter and

we're confident we have a way forward. We're happy to talk about that at the proper time. This is a promise we made — to pave this runway — and it's a promise we're delivering. This is also a promise made on the eve of the last election by the previous government. Imagine our surprise to find, upon taking office, that almost no background work had been completed. There were huge gaps in questions, similar to their execution on the new Whistle Bend facility.

We have a different approach, Mr. Speaker. We are taking the time to properly plan this project. We want to be methodical and to actually do what we promised — to do it right. The budget for the maintenance facility is \$7.9 million. There is also money in the budget this year to get us ready for paving next year. The engineering planning work is being done this year to finalize the estimates and the way forward.

In terms of increased maintenance costs, we are anticipating an increase of about \$700,000 once the runway is paved. As I have indicated in the past, this is the beginning of a multi-year project to improve the important Dawson City Airport and its infrastructure. It is a very important piece of economic infrastructure in the north Yukon and it needs some attention.

The previous government thought it was a good idea to operate Yukon airports without legislation. They thought it was okay to be the only jurisdiction in the country running an airport without any legislation, without any oversight. We disagreed and we acted, fixing a legislative vacuum that has existed in this territory for decades.

The previous government also thought it was okay to have our airport fee set by the Executive Council without any oversight, to have those fees listed alongside overdue library book fees. The result was the imposition of a parking tax that raised millions of dollars for the government with no input or foreknowledge of airport users and the public. Again, we have a different opinion, which is why we set up an airport advisory panel to review any possible regulations the government might propose. We have a plan to modernize the Dawson City Airport and we're starting this year with this maintenance facility, something that is in place in every other certified airport in the Yukon, including Old Crow, Watson Lake and the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Next year, we are paving the runway. I think it is time for the Official Opposition to decide whether it supports this project or not.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Bluesky Strategy contract

Mr. Kent: Earlier this week, we asked the Premier about an event in Toronto on June 16 of last year organized by Bluesky Strategy. The invitation to the event was sent with Government of Yukon letterhead. The event was paid for by Yukon taxpayers, and the Premier and Deputy Premier attended and claimed the event was work-related. That's why we found it interesting that the Premier and Deputy Premier did not disclose their travel for this trip. When we asked the

Premier about this earlier this week, he said it was because they paid their own way. This seems odd, Mr. Speaker, especially considering he did claim travel for a second trip to another event organized by Bluesky later in the year.

Can the Premier explain why he would pay his own way if, as he claims, this trip was government business, and why would he claim it for one trip and not for another?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As we mentioned before, with Bluesky Strategy, there have been contracts from this company for our work in the government building, and also out in work we do nationally. We have had contracts with Bluesky for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and we have also used them for a transition to new government.

The federal government has registered lobbyist activities from this particular group. We have also committed to get back to the member opposite as far as some details on that. As far as the particulars of another trip the member opposite is asking about right now, our basic strategy is that if we're doing work that is government-related, then we're doing government-related business, but if we are doing business that is party-related, then we are not going to be paying for that out of taxpayers' money. We know that when the opposition was in government, during Roundup, that might not necessarily have been the case. We are trying our best to do more as far as openness and transparency.

Another example is that instead of just the ministerial travel when we go out on business trips, we are actually involving the travel details of our support staff as well. We don't have to do this, Mr. Speaker, but we want to ensure that when we are using taxpayers' money, it is being accounted for.

Mr. Kent: As we now know, the Liberal government sole-sourced nearly \$55,000 to the lobbying firm Bluesky Strategy to host these two receptions in Toronto. The Premier won't tell us whose decision it was to sole-source these contracts, but we do know that his chief of staff is listed on the federal lobbying registry as the key contact for Bluesky. Regarding the travel to the June event in Toronto, we know that the Premier and Deputy Premier, for some reason, have not posted their travel on the government website. They claim it is because they paid their own way; however, when we did look at the travel disclosure website, the Premier's chief of staff claimed nearly \$2,000 for this trip.

The question that we have is: Why would the Premier's chief of staff claim travel for this trip, but the Premier and Deputy Premier did not?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have had an opportunity day in and day out to go through this topic. I think we have been very clear. First of all, the contract in place was with Energy, Mines and Resources. We talked a bit about why the opposition wanted to know the timing on it. They challenged the use of the contract, saying that it wasn't appropriate for us to be undertaking that type of work on the Fraser Institute at that time of year. We definitely educated the Assembly in the sense that, yes, this is actually when the work on the survey is

done. This is the time you engage corporate leadership and analysts.

Previously, I know that there was almost \$1 million of money put aside under the previous government for this type of work. We continue to use our local organizations, such as the Yukon Mining Alliance, and we work with the Chamber of Mines. Over and above that, there have been some big changes in the Yukon when it comes to our relationships with First Nations. Over the last year, we have done a tremendous amount to educate people on that.

I know that in one particular case, in September, we had a CEO from one of our local mining companies say that there was a six-figure investment made into their company while they were sitting in a room listening to this. I think the return on investment is there and I think that this is the good work that we will continue to do.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate those responses by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, but it didn't address the question as to why the Premier's chief of staff would claim travel for this trip, but the Premier and Deputy Premier did not.

Earlier this week, when we asked about this trip to Toronto to attend this reception organized by a lobbying firm that the Liberals sole-sourced contracts to, the Premier made an interesting comment. He said he paid his own way for that trip because — and I quote: "... there were other engagements as well." Earlier in Question Period, the Premier referenced party business, but yesterday in responding to the Leader of the Third Party on a fundraising question, he said that he didn't engage in any outside fundraising activities before October of last year. Can the Premier tell us what these other party engagements or other engagements were that he was referring to?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity's sake, for the record again, the contracts with Bluesky are all public records. They did the work that they were paid for, and they were very helpful, specifically — as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has outlined — when it comes to the mining file.

Members opposite are very familiar with the workings of hiring lobbyists. They have hired them several times in their time in office — they hired Temple Scott Associates; they hired Global Public Affairs, Rawson Group Initiatives Inc. and Hill and Knowlton — just to mention a few. As I have mentioned before, the Leader of the Official Opposition's chief of staff met with lobbyists 42 times when they worked with the federal Conservatives. This work happens all the time.

Let me assure taxpayers that, if we are doing business for the government, that travel will be accounted for appropriately and if we are doing party business, then we will make sure that we pay for that as a party. We're making sure that our openness and accountability is much more than what the Yukon Party had in place when they were here working.

Question re: Bluesky Strategy contract

Mr. Hassard: Clearly, my colleague wasn't getting any answers, so maybe I'll have better luck. As we mentioned earlier this week, according to the federal lobbying registry, Bluesky Strategy was registered to lobby on Yukon's behalf, starting on March 21 of last year.

On March 22, 2017, they met with the federal Environment minister on Yukon's behalf. However, according to Yukon's contract registry, the very first contract awarded to Bluesky was April 1 of that year. We have asked the Premier why the contract work for that lobbying effort was not publicly disclosed, and his answer was that Bluesky did not charge the Yukon for this work.

While that seems highly unusual for a company to not charge for its services, maybe the Premier can tell us who, in his government, negotiated this arrangement with Bluesky Strategy to lobby on Yukon's behalf for no charge?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If the member opposite doesn't like the answer I give him, it doesn't mean that we're not answering the question.

Again for the record, the contracts for Bluesky are all on the public record. They do work for us and they have worked for us, as we outlined, with transition services; they have worked with us on our work with Energy, Mines and Resources. We have had great inroads with the ministers in Ottawa. Our opinion has always been that it doesn't matter what the political affiliation is in Ottawa; we want to make sure we have great government-to-government relationships there. We are now able to book meetings without the help of lobbyists, and I think that's a good thing. I think taxpayers should be very happy with that outlook.

Again, Mr. Speaker — more than the previous government — if we are using the taxpayers' dollars, we are accountable for that. We are not only just making sure that Yukoners know about ministerial travel dollars for per diems or for travel out with hotels or airlines, but we're also including, over and above that, support staff. That's not something that was done previously, but again, we're doing more in terms of accountability.

When it comes to Bluesky Strategy, we do work with this particular lobby group. We think they're a very good group to be working with and we're happy with the work they have done so far for this government.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure what part of that the Premier thought answered the question, but maybe tomorrow morning he can review the Blues and he'll figure it out for himself.

We're still left wondering why the Premier has told us the Liberal lobbying firm Bluesky Strategy did work on the government's behalf on March 22 that it did not charge for. It's interesting to note that, on April 1, ten days after the lobbying firm did this free work for the Liberals, they received another sole-source contract from Yukon valued at \$80,000.

According to the contract registry, this contract is described as a "communication strategy development training program for Cabinet."

So let's walk through the timeline. At some point, someone from the Liberal government approached Bluesky Strategy to lobby on behalf of Yukon. On March 22, Bluesky met with the federal Environment minister for free. Was this \$80,000 contract a quid pro quo for the lobbying work?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we're answering the questions and then the Yukon Party says that we're not answering the questions. When it comes to Bluesky — they have to register. If they're going to be doing work for this government, they have to register. It's a federal law when it comes to lobbying. That does bring up the question as to whether or not we should have lobbying registration here. So that's what they did. Now, for that particular event or for that particular meeting, it turns out that we weren't charged for it. For some reason, this is now some kind of conspiracy to the Yukon Party.

It's pretty straightforward stuff. We have answered it on the floor of the Legislative Assembly a couple of times now. Again, the opposition is not happy with the answer.

We do use lobbyists. The previous government used lobbyists. We'll continue to use lobbyists. We are going to account for more of that money — not only ministerial travel, but also for our support staff travel as well. We are going to do the good work of having a lobbyist registration here in the Yukon as well so that the Yukon public can actually have even more accountability than in the past.

Mr. Hassard: Let's look at the timeline here, as it is very curious. It does appear that the Premier didn't want Yukoners to know that this lobbying firm was meeting with federal ministers on our behalf, so an arrangement was made that they would lobby on our behalf for free and then the contract would not have to be proactively disclosed by the Yukon government. Then, 10 days after they lobbied on Yukon's behalf, they received an \$80,000 sole-source contract. It would at least appear that this contract was to pay for the lobbying work.

So can the Premier tell us again who in his office decided to go with Bluesky for this lobbying work and who asked them to do it for free?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I certainly appreciate the imagination of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. That is some great fiction. What we're really seeing is the fact that, for opposition, that

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: For the Deputy Premier to just accuse the Leader of the Official Opposition of saying something that, in his words, was "fiction" clearly seems to be in contravention of Standing Order 19(h) and I would ask you to call him to order on that and have him retract that remark.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: In my view, it's pretty squarely a dispute about the facts. So no, I don't believe there is a point of order at this time.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think what we're really finding is the fact that, if you look at our session so far this spring, we have talked about some very key points and we've heard the opposition definitely ask some great questions. But I think what we are seeing is that, really, we're veering away.

For an opposition that says that they champion business and the economy, we saw the worst economy in Canada in 2016. Now, what we're doing is we are seeing mud thrown any which way to not talk about what is really happening in the Yukon. What is really happening in the Yukon is that, for 16 months in a row, we have had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. We have more Yukoners as a percentage working, out of the total population, than anywhere else in the country.

We see improvements time and time again in our mineral investment. Last year we saw double from when the Yukon Party was in place and now we are looking to see those numbers triple. We see diversification in our economy; we see tourism numbers through the roof; we see hospitality and stays through the roof and we see airline numbers through the roof.

What we are seeing is absolutely any ability to take the conversation away from what is really happening here in the Yukon, which is a great economy and great work by my colleagues and great work by this government.

Question re: Medical services case management

Ms. White: Last month, a constituent came to me with a concern regarding her prosthetic leg. The Department of Health had sent her to Victoria in 2017 for a needs assessment of her current prosthetic. It was determined by specialists that the current prosthetic was at risk of catastrophic failure, putting this individual at risk of a sudden fall. A request was made by the family physician and the specialist clinic for a new prosthetic and sent to the department in December of 2017.

To this day, this individual has not received an answer from the department. It was only after I wrote to the minister that this individual was informed yesterday — four months after the initial request by her doctor — that the decision was delayed because of a vacancy in the department. Mr. Speaker, this is really what is happening in Yukon today; this is the reality.

Does the minister find this kind of delay in making a decision for such a central health service acceptable?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question, a question that was posed to me and has been case-managed and followed through by the department. I am happy to say that the individual that submitted the request — the request is being reviewed by the department.

Do I agree with the process? I agree that we react and we provide essential services and collaborative care when it is required. If there are issues and concerns, I do want to ensure that we provide support in a timely fashion and if there are any concerns and delays — I just followed through again this morning with the department and my understanding is that there was a letter issued and the letter wasn't received, is what I am hearing.

I would be happy to follow through on that.

Ms. White: They have been waiting for an answer since December 2017. One might consider a leg to be an "essential service". This kind of delay in making decisions for such essential health services is unacceptable. Last week the unimaginable happened: The prosthetic did fail and this individual found herself on the floor of her apartment. She remained there for three hours unable to get herself up — all this because of a vacancy in the department.

When a position goes vacant, especially such a critical one, there must be a process in place for those duties to be assigned to another person. Patients' health should not be negatively affected.

Can the minister tell us how many other individuals were negatively affected by delayed decisions regarding coverage for medical equipment?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am going to refer to the case that is before us — or the question that is before us — with respect to this client to Health and Social Services. The request for support for a new prosthesis and the relationship between the client and their physician is a private confidential process. We will ensure what we do through Health and Social Services aligns us well and that we are responsive to the needs.

I am sorry to hear that there were concerns raised, and with respect to the timeliness of the response, I will ensure that I do go back to the department and get the responses that are required. Clearly, if this is happening, then it surely should not be happening and individuals should not be left with these delays. If that is the case, I would assure the member opposite that I will follow through on that.

Ms. White: Sadly, this is just one example of processes within the department that just don't make any sense. The idea that no process was being followed on applications for medical equipment or supplies, including whether a person's prosthetic leg should be replaced, is simply astounding. The person in that position would be making decisions with regard, not only to prosthetics, but wheelchairs, grab bars, walking aids and glucometers. These items are all things that allow a person to live independently and affect a person's quality of life. The fact that it took nearly four months for the department to communicate that no decision had been made — or no decision that this individual has been able to track down — is acceptable because of a vacancy.

This government talks about aging in place and respecting our seniors and elders. Sadly, the reality is different. How will this government rectify this situation and ensure timely responses and communications with individuals applying for medical equipment or supplies?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The points that are being made are clearly things that we don't want to happen. We want to ensure that every Yukoner is given adequate and appropriate health care coverage and supports. My understanding is that the communications between the client and the physician, and the information back to the department — I understand now that the timeliness of the response is one thing, but the timeliness of getting action is a whole other thing — and perhaps a structure that needs improvement. That is what we aim to do. We aim to ensure that we change processes and policies so that we don't end up in situations where essential services are delayed as a result of structural processes that have been there for many years. I really want to assure the member opposite that I will ensure that the individual is given the support that they require and that we follow through in a timely fashion. I have committed to doing that, and I will ensure that the department is aware and follows through as quickly as we can.

Question re: Southern Lakes water enhancement project

Mr. Istchenko: Yesterday, during debate with the Yukon Development Corporation, we asked some questions about the Southern Lakes enhancement project. The minister said — and I quote: "We are certainly down the road, potentially, but that is not an undertaking, in my role in working with the president of the Yukon Development Corporation, that I see as a potential project that will provide an output that helps us with our short-term energy needs." Can the minister confirm that he is not actively pursuing this option at this time?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Kluane was so kind to me yesterday, and I thought we were having a great exchange and that we both understood each other. Certainly, just for clarification, the question was concerning the Southern Lakes. I touched upon the fact that in our role and with my colleagues, we have had a number of people from the Southern Lakes, as well as the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, reach out to us. The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has also accurately brought this to the Assembly as well. What we touched upon is that there is a lot of sensitivity and there is concern about the impact of increased water levels within the Southern Lakes. What I touched upon was the fact that there has been consultation. I touched upon the fact that there has been engineering work done. I also touched upon the fact that I don't think that the engineering work that has been completed to date has given the comfort level that is needed to move forward on a project.

I touched upon the fact that there has been money under the previous government spent on this project — I think up to even \$5 million. As I understand it, we're looking at a one-megawatt output. I said that, in the short term, I do not believe that the one-megawatt output is part of our short-term solution for increased demand.

That is what I said. I look forward to questions number two and three.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for his answer. So when we look at the project — although when we look at it on the Yukon Energy Corporation website, it does state — and I quote: “We have worked closely with First Nations and local residents on this proposed project. In 2017, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation indicated its support to move to the next phase of planning and to prepare a Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board project proposal.”

This sort of appears to contradict what the minister said yesterday. Should Yukoners believe what the minister said on this file, or Yukon Energy’s website?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The chief of staff of the Yukon Party is writing some interesting questions today. Certainly, what we are touching on is the fact that, first of all, the support and any documented support that has been put in place has come from the Carcross/Tagish Management Corporation, which is the development corporation arm of the First Nation.

In some of the dialogue that has happened with the First Nation and with some of the individuals who are on their lands committee, which plays a large role in the Southern Lakes, there has still been concern. The dialogue that I have had with the Yukon Energy Corporation to date has really focused on the fact that I have asked for the process to slow down. I touched on it yesterday, and I put it on the record that I didn’t say there wouldn’t be further consultation over the next five, 10, 20, 30 years.

As I stated in the Legislative Assembly previously, the reason that this project is still on the books is because, when the cost of the project was brought forward, the Yukon Utilities Board said that you should go back and continue to work on this because of the dollars that were previously spent on it. Yukon Energy, at one point, wanted to put this on the shelf, but they were asked by the Utilities Board. So that is why they have continued to do that work. They have been mandated to do it.

I appreciate the dialogue that I get to have with the chair of the corporation and the good leadership by their president, Mr. Hall.

Question re: Social housing

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday, I asked the minister responsible for housing about the communiqué she signed this week that states that Yukon will develop mutually agreed-upon targets for increasing the supply of social housing. I asked the minister what those targets were, and the minister confirmed for the House that there were targets, but she didn’t tell us what those targets actually were.

Mr. Speaker, what are Yukon’s targets?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As noted yesterday, I had just gotten off the plane. In fact, I had been on the flight for 36 hours to fly to Toronto, do the meeting and fly back. My commitment to this Legislative Assembly is to be here and be responsive to Yukoners, to ensure that we meet the needs of Yukoners. Housing is a fundamental principle of that.

We have gone forward to look at implementing the housing action plan, putting some components around that so

we start addressing critical needs in Yukon around social housing. Yes, we want to get to the numbers. We just now signed a framework agreement that defines how and what we are going to do with respect to our partnership with Yukon. We signed a \$24-million agreement; the federal government made significant announcements. The Premier noted in his budget that we have \$40 million allocated to housing and infrastructure. We have worked with our communities. We have multiple units going up this year. We just released \$2 million in a partnership build initiative.

The objective is to reach out far and wide in Yukon and to start addressing the challenges we have — finding the partners we haven’t historically seen.

Ms. Van Bibber: I didn’t hear an answer there.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said that the Yukon had targets for increasing the supply of social housing. She still hasn’t told us what those targets are, so could she please tell us what Yukon’s targets are?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As to specific numbers, I don’t have the specific numbers on how many doors we’re going to have open this coming year. What I can say is that we have allocated significant resources to seek the partnerships so that we can hit the targets. We know we’re working with the community of Watson Lake — the municipality there. We know we’re working with the Liard First Nation, because there are significant challenges there. We have worked with the Ross River Dena Council and we’re turning some units over there. We have worked with the Klondike Development Organization in Dawson City.

Our priority right now is to target the communities that are in the most need. We are working on a Housing First initiative in Whitehorse and, in the fall of this year, we will see 16 units opening up — also noting that, as we progress, we have opened up the transition units at the Salvation Army, working with our partners, the City of Whitehorse, the Anti-Poverty Coalition, Kwanlin Dün, Ta’an Kwäch’än — there are 20 units there. We are working quite closely with our partners in the communities, looking at occupying the space that hasn’t been there historically.

Ms. Van Bibber: This week, the federal government announced that there would be a targeted housing funding to the north that works out to \$30 million a year. Yesterday, the minister told us that, as part of the agreement she signed this week, she secured \$2.4 million per year. This works out to Yukon only getting eight percent of the total amount of money allocated for the north.

Can the minister confirm that she was only capable of getting eight percent of the total northern housing money for Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can confirm is that we have secured \$24 million. Every jurisdiction in the country has not secured stabilized resources, other than some base funding. The objective of the framework was to allow us to negotiate on the federal announcement that was just released most recently.

Part of that is the indigenous housing component, which is very important to note because the federal government,

through its management and structural processes, did not define how self-governing Yukon First Nations will be dealt with.

Speak to any First Nation government in Yukon and they will tell you that they have not been considered and our objective is to ensure that we seek those partnerships and I can tell you that, historically, the Yukon Party and the members of the opposition perhaps don't know what partnerships are because they didn't seek the partnerships. We're doing that. We will work with our development corporations and we will work to ensure that we provide housing.

The question keeps coming up with respect to land — where are we going to build? Well, we know that we have to seek partnerships in order to address the challenges in communities like Watson Lake, for an example, where we understand from mayor and council that they are in a bit of a crisis and we have no land to build on. It's essential that we seek those partnerships.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 9

Clerk: Motion for the Production of Papers No. 9, standing in the name of Ms. White.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of a list of government-led renewable energy projects that have been initiated by the Government of Yukon since December 3, 2016.

Ms. White: It is a pleasure today to talk about renewable energy. As my colleagues will know, it is something that I'm passionate about. I look forward to hearing from the government side.

Renewable energy is derived from natural processes that are replenished at a rate that is equal or faster than the rate at which they are consumed. There are various forms of renewable energy derived directly or indirectly from the sun or from the heat generated deep within the earth. They include energy generated from solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, hydro power, ocean resources, solid biomass, biogas and liquid biofuels.

Renewable energy is expanding across the world and becoming more affordable each and every day. I was reading articles about this, and I went to the World Economic Forum and this is an article from February of this year. It says: "China is the undisputed renewable growth leader, accounting for over 40% of the total global clean energy mix by 2022..."

"China has also already surpassed its 2020 solar panel target, and the IEA says it expects the country to exceed its wind target in 2019." Sometimes we don't think about China and renewable energy, but there you go.

"The United States is the second largest market for renewables." Despite the "... decision to pull out of the Paris agreement, renewable projects in the US are expected to benefit from multi-year federal tax incentives and state-level policies for distributed solar panels in the coming years."

Mr. Speaker, you might be surprised but in India "... renewable capacity is expected to more than double by 2022. Solar and wind represent 90% of India's capacity growth, which is the result of auctions for contracts to develop power-generation capacity that have yielded some of the world's lowest prices for both technologies".

It also said that: "India has also improved grid integration and addressed the financial issues of its utilities. Because of these factors, India's growth between now and 2022 is, for the first time, expected to be higher than in the European Union".

Mr. Speaker, renewable energy is really a big deal. If you look at individual EU members today, the outlook is brighter, however.

Denmark, for example, is expected to generate 69 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2022, and that would make it a world leader. Ireland is second, with a report predicting it will generate one-third of its energy needs from renewable resources.

The reason why I am using these international examples is because targets were set. When you set the target, then you can see where you are.

There is no disputing that renewable energy creates jobs. We have had that conversation in this House — it has been on a national forum, it has been on an international forum — that green energy does create more jobs than the fossil fuel industry. We in the Third Party have the experience of the last government and, unfortunately, that's kind of been brought forward a bit. Previously, every six months or so, there would be an announcement about a pilot project or there would be some announcement about energy.

The new F.H. Collins was going to have geothermal heat; it was going to be innovative; it was going to be fantastic. They drilled the well and we were ready. F.H. Collins got built — no geothermal heat.

In that same time, there was planning done by the City of Whitehorse. Whistle Bend was going to be a community heated with district geothermal heat. We won awards — the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government won awards — but it didn't happen. It didn't happen.

We could talk about the next generation hydro. That was the big announcement — that was a huge announcement. We could talk about connection to the grid, because that was also a big announcement. We talked about biomass. There were a lot of announcements about biomass. We had wind studies that weren't made public until a request for information. There were all sorts of examples in the previous government and, unfortunately, that is what our experience is right now. But the previous government made announcements about renewable

energy — whether or not they happened is completely beside the point; announcements were made.

My issue is that in the last two budgets — so the first budget that was released in 2017, to be fair, was the first time this government had put a budget forward. They were dealing with the previous government — so we gave the government a pass. We said, okay, well, we hope to see other things in the future. 2017 was the year that the government could blame the previous government. They could say that it had happened before them and we are trying to get through it. But the 2018 budget — that was entirely the Liberal government's budget. They had been in power for just over a year and this was a budget where I was hoping that they were going to address climate change. We were going to talk about renewable energy investments. We weren't going to just talk about the ones that the Yukon government is supporting. We were going to talk about ones that Yukon government had initiated; that they are leading.

If Yukon government reaches out to someone else and says, "Look, we are really interested in doing a wind project with you," that would count. My concern is that I don't want to be told about the projects when a First Nation development corporation partners with the Yukon government — when they reach out and say they want to talk about wind in their community. I want to know what projects the Yukon government has done — where they have reached out to someone else and said, "Let's do this together," not that they have been reached out to by someone else.

Yesterday, in a brief conversation before the YDC debate, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources mentioned seven projects. I am looking forward to hearing about those seven projects. I am hopeful, because this motion is really specific — it is really specific. It is asking the Yukon government to table a list of government-led renewable energy projects that have been initiated by this government since the last election.

I hope that the projects the minister talks about, or the things the government ministers talk about, actually follow that. I want them to be government-led and I want them to have been something that is new since the last election.

We know that communities are ready for renewable energy. In the 33rd Legislative Assembly, we had the chance to visit communities like Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing. Burwash Landing has district biomass heating, which is awesome. All their new construction, all their new houses — I was there when they were building a duplex — have solar panels attached. Their government buildings have solar panels. That community is putting up wind. They're going to have wind turbines, which is fantastic.

We know that the community of Mount Lorne has put solar panels on the building out at their community centre. We can look at things like the Mount Lorne transfer station. They have done really cool things with renewable energy, including solar panels and a charging station for electric cars. We know that, right now, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation is getting presentations about wind on Haeckel Hill. We have heard the Carcross/Tagish First Nation talk about the possibility of wind

on Montana Mountain. We have heard the discussion about transmission lines by that First Nation toward Skagway, so they could sell surplus power to Alaska in the summertime, when they need it the most.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that communities, First Nations and citizens are picking up the slack for government inaction. We know that there are so many solar installations going on in people's houses that the Energy Solutions Centre is being run off their feet. That's a pretty great success story.

My previous colleague, Jim Tredger, has two properties — one is out on the Pelly River, and it's 100-percent solar. They have so much solar that they can vacuum in the summertime and they can boil a kettle with a plug, which is phenomenal — it's a really phenomenal thing. He took it further and he covered his house in Whitehorse with solar panels, because he wanted to show that things could be done.

We have examples of people choosing to install solar panels and then also have solar heat and solar hot water. At this point in time, what we can talk about is that there is a grant incentive that is up to \$5,000, depending on your solar installation. In other jurisdictions, there are things like specific energy loans. There are buybacks; there are all sorts of examples.

When the ministers respond, I want to know what government is actually leading. I want to know what they're doing and what projects they're putting out there first. The Yukon energy resource plan shows that government is planning to add one more LNG turbine in 2019 and 20 megawatts of diesel power production. Mr. Speaker, that's huge. All that is supposed to happen by 2021.

I want to know if they have the same commitment to renewables — to new energy, to clean energy. To date, it hasn't looked like it. I'm ready to be proven wrong. I'm ready to have government show me.

Just to end this one, there's an opinion piece that I found that was published in the *Whitehorse Star* in 2009. I'm just going to read excerpts from this. This is talking about Canada and Canada's role in clean energy, but I think it's applicable — and I quote: "And now as we seek to stimulate our economy, we could begin investing in our energy future, not our energy past. This is the big exposure of the Yukon: we are very dependent on fossil fuels. Despite all the talk about investing in new green power here in the territory lately, our heating and transportation demands are more than five times the energy of hydro. Right now our homes, our mines and our hospital(s) all rely on fossil fuels. In order to have a secure energy future we need to move to renewable sources."

It goes on to say: "So if our political leaders have been informed about all of this, why aren't they doing something? Why haven't we figured out how to create a renewable energy economy over the past five years? Ten years? 20 years? The reason is that we need to invest now, while the return on the investment — or the costs associated if we don't invest — are down the road. Faced with that type of choice, most politicians pick NIMTOO — not in my term of office. But now is the time. Finally, some of the real economic debate is

under way. The simplest question is: should Canada lead or wait? My opinion is that our economic future is renewable.”

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Should Canada lead or wait? Obviously, I think we should lead. In Yukon, should we lead or should we wait? I couldn't agree more with that statement, and I don't think anyone can argue with a straight face that this is the kind of approach currently being taken by government.

Those are the words of our current Minister of Community Services. The contrast between the urgency to invest in renewables as expressed in the 2009 article certainly clashes with the excruciatingly slow pace that this government has taken on renewable energy. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and others to explain why this is the case or hearing about the projects that are government-led and government-initiated.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The motion today asks the government to provide a list of government-led renewable energy projects that have been initiated by the Government of Yukon since December 3, 2016. First of all, obviously, since the time the motion was identified by the member opposite, which was yesterday afternoon, it would be appropriate to say that we would request some more time to compile a list from multiple departments. That is not a problem to collect the information. We just want to be able to respect the staff who are in a multitude of areas to bring them through.

I do want to be respectful to the member opposite and touch on a couple of points that were made. First of all, between 2017 and 2018 — out of the gate, the member opposite was correct — we had a budget that was prepared and we moved it through and edited it where possible, but 2017-18 was a budget that we tabled.

Between 2017-2018, and now moving into the next year, we have nine separate projects. Some of the projects are within one or two First Nations. In Teslin, we're working with the Village of Teslin, but we're also working with the First Nation as well on projects. So in some communities, there are two projects. There are nine projects in total. We're going to prepare the list and provide it to the member opposite.

We have funding announcements with a number of these groups that are upcoming, and I'm not going to pre-empt that. I don't think it's appropriate. They have done a tremendous amount of work on these. The member opposite can write it down. There are nine projects here. The only one — I would say, to be respectful — is the wind project, which was something that had been on the books for awhile. That's not a new project. The other projects that are here are all new projects.

Over and above that, I would say there are at least — and I might be wrong by one — half a dozen projects through the work of the Energy Solutions Centre. I have to edit one comment that was made. I appreciate the passion toward renewable energy, but, when you say the “excruciatingly slow pace of government” — I will take the responsibility for not having communicated in the Assembly, and in some cases, maybe we could have had more conversation. It's true that

sometimes when we tout the good work, like in a ministerial statement — and I can get up and talk about all the things, but I would probably have the Leader of the Third Party say to me that I am, once again, grandstanding when I'm communicating.

We could have a motion, and maybe that's what we could do. I will take that responsibility on, because there has been a tremendous amount of work. The comment that stings a bit is when you say the “excruciatingly slow pace”. I can tell you that the staff at the Energy Solutions Centre — and the work they have been undertaking is certainly not at an excruciatingly slow —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about government. I'm not talking about the public servants within government. So every time that the minister says that I'm talking about public servants, it's imputing a false or unavowed motive, which is 19(g).

Speaker: Hon. Premier, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about government, we're talking about ministers and the departments. If the member opposite wants to clarify it and accuse the minister himself of being slow or working at a glacial pace, then maybe she should direct her comments directly to the minister and not to the government.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I think I've heard enough so far on this debate. It's still within the ambit of debate, in my view. I don't believe there's a point of order with respect to Standing Order 19(g). It's certainly open to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King to criticize the minister, in his capacity, and, to a certain extent, the departments, I suppose — but more likely to be criticizing the minister in his capacity directly.

We can continue with the comments of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

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

To touch on it, very clearly, what happens with these projects — I have an opportunity to sit with a deputy minister or a president of a corporation — who are in a leadership role. We sit down, usually on a weekly basis. We have one specific focus meeting, which is our bilateral meeting. The information from that flows to the ADMs; the ADMs then meet with their directors, and that's how we work.

When we sit down and talk strategically about how we're going to ensure that we grow our renewable resources portfolio — I have been meeting with my DMs. They have been doing great work; they have been passing it on to the ADMs. I want to commend some individuals, like Shirley Abercrombie, who then meet with the directors, such as somebody like Shane Andre, and then they undertake the work.

My time with my deputy minister has not been excruciatingly slow, and my information, dialogue and direction have certainly not been. I am sure lots of people who work with me would love to see a slower pace, but that is certainly not how I operate. I thank the people around me for taking on the challenge of what we have wanted to undertake. Certainly, we feel like we're making up for some lost time, and that is how we approach a number of our files.

I think there are a couple of contradictions that I heard today. One contradiction is — maybe I'm splitting hairs. I have no problem with putting a list together, but I think, as a government and in the Legislative Assembly, we want to empower the people of Yukon anytime we can to take on projects. If that means that we can have great projects — and I know the member opposite is not countering that, but it was the question: "What are you doing?" I think that, when Yukon Energy Corporation comes as witnesses, there will be a great opportunity to talk about how Yukon Energy in their work — what projects they are leading when it comes to new renewables.

Our role in government and the role at Yukon Development Corporation — I see us as a catalyst to help organizations. The member opposite spoke passionately yesterday about an organization in northern British Columbia where the member opposite had visited, and I think that it is a great model. The member opposite touched upon there being organizations here in the Yukon that are looking to do the same thing.

I think it's a bit of a different opinion. My focus primarily is to see organizations and First Nation development corporations and municipalities and citizens come together. We have talked about this — we want to get out of the business of doing business and, in some cases, energy production is business. We certainly want to empower others to do that. Also, there is an obligation. The Third Party talks at length about the respect and commitment to the implementation of final agreements, and certainly those final agreements — and, in some cases, specific language on partnership — the partnership is not in a majority position, but we feel that there is an opportunity to engage those organizations. I know that it is both, but I would say that the only difference when I'm splitting hairs is — I believe that, as a government, when we have a portfolio that is somewhere between 95- to 97-percent hydro, even though we're moving away because of issues with climate and a number of other challenges that we touched on yesterday — primarily, I want to empower versus take the lead.

But Yukon Energy — that's a different story. I do have responsibility for their activities, but I think they can give an understanding and they will explain the challenges that they have as well.

We will prepare a list. We can discuss it and debate it here. I feel very comfortable, and I commend Yukon Development Corporation, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the staff for what they have undertaken. There has been a lot of work. In particular, I want to thank Geoff Woodhouse. He has done a tremendous amount of work

and a lot of heavy lifting, and previous to that was Blair Hogan, who worked with us a bit and has a great outlook and has been part of a lot of national conversations when it comes to renewables. He has now gone back to take a leadership role in Teslin, which is fantastic, because, as we talked about, some of the biomass work there — he is going to be a key individual. He is also helping a number of other nations realize some of their energy futures.

We are absolutely going to support this motion. Even though I may have challenged some of the conversation today, I just want enough time to properly prepare. There are things right now that I think should be on the public record as well. The Yukon Geological Survey, which many people wouldn't think are part of this work, are part of this work. We have a great Yukon company — Midnight Sun Drilling — working with the Ross River Dena Council and doing some extensive geothermal work right now. That is a long process and an expensive process, but certainly we believe in looking into that. The member opposite touched on that. There is work that was concluded earlier this year with Da Daghay, the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council development corporation. New Age Drilling Solutions teamed up with Midnight Sun Drilling, and we funded work through that in partnership with the federal government.

I think all of that information should be — because we are looking at solar and we are looking at geothermal. When the rubber hits the road, out of our projects here — at least six of them, I will be able to come back and show that they have money flowing now for buildout and for capital expenditure and CapEx, and then some of them have larger amounts in the new fiscal year, but part of that is because — as I touched on yesterday — really what happened is that the federal government came in quite big on a couple of projects. So in our negotiations and in our conversations with our partners, they said, "You know what — it would be helpful in the outer years if you could be more supportive, because right now we are in a pretty good position from the standpoint of budgets."

I feel good about where we are going and I think that we have an innovative outlook. I will apologize to the people who do all this good work. I think I need to — and we will at Yukon Development Corporation — share this information.

We have had this discussion with Yukoners Concerned. They sat with us before many, many Yukoners — and I think the members opposite had some of their communication information. We sat down with their leadership — the president of Yukon Development Corporation — and for every point that was identified — I think it was a former member of the Legislative Assembly who was leading that discussion on behalf of Yukoners Concerned. We provided a response clearly showing the activity that we were doing that — for lack of a better term — countered or aligned on every single point that was identified.

What was said by Yukoners Concerned to us was: "You're not doing a very good job of telling your story. You're doing the work, which is great, but you have to explain that." So that is some of the work that we are going to do. I think we will probably end up engaging a Yukon

organization, a Yukon company that can help us with that through the Yukon Development Corporation so we can continue to share that.

We certainly support this. I look forward to speaking on this and doing a better job of speaking about the good work that all of our employees who are focused on this are doing, and I respect their vision. I look forward to hopefully getting to a vote on this.

Mr. Istchenko: I stand here with this beautiful bowtie on to speak to the motion. I want to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward today this motion for the production of papers ordering the return of a list of government-led renewable energy projects that have been initiated by this government since they were elected over 17 months ago.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, and we on this side believe, that this request is important to Yukoners. This government was elected on a set of promises that they needed to deliver on.

Platform commitments that focused on renewable energy, expansion and retrofits by this Liberal government were ambitious and made up a large portion of their promises. One of these measures was a commitment to allocate up to \$30 million per year to implement an energy retrofit program for residential, government and commercial buildings. We know this government is just about to force a carbon tax on Yukoners, so there is no denying that this new tax is going to cost us. A major cost that Yukoners will feel directly will be in the increase to their home heating bills.

Government and commercial buildings are the largest contributors to carbon emissions in the Yukon. I am going to speak to one of our buildings in a little bit. By retrofitting these buildings, costs will be cut to private buildings and to taxpayers. Unfortunately, this government did not pay much heed to this election promise — \$30 million sounds good on paper, but \$10 million was all they were able to allocate to their quest for retrofitting buildings in their budget this year.

It's also important to note that the Liberals said that this \$30 million per year would be new money, not existing money. The former Yukon Party government put a number of programs into place that remain today and I want to talk a little about some of these important and effective programs and services provided prior to the election of this government.

Announced in May 2015, the commercial energy incentive program promoted efficiency upgrades throughout Yukon institutional and commercial buildings. For commercial buildings that opt to upgrade to LED lighting, there is up to \$10,000 in rebates. This is offered in partnership with Yukon Energy.

There is up to \$50,000 available in rebates that improve the thermal enclosure and performance of existing multi-use residential buildings and mixed-use buildings. This includes rebates for energy assessments, thermal enclosure upgrades, HRV installations and window and door replacement.

The residential energy-efficiency program was announced in January 2015. It is specifically aimed to help Yukon families save money that is lost through efficiencies in their

homes. The good energy incentive program offers a number of rebates on high-efficiency products, including household and heating appliances, domestic and water and bioenergy systems. This program is now in its 10th year.

Another very successful program is microgeneration. I believe we have had a record amount — 145 projects — and they're home-based and they were approved. The rural electrification in my riding alone I have seen a lot. I believe we're the leader in Canada right now when it comes to solar power.

It was not long ago — and I said I would speak to one of our government buildings — that this main administration building had extensive renovations done to increase the efficiency of the building and the performance of its parts. There was a time where you could place a glass of water next to the window in your office and it would actually freeze. These renovations alone were a major contribution by the former government to reducing Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions — real, tangible emission reductions and real savings for taxpayers. This is much better than this government's approach, which is to bring in a carbon tax to increase cost to taxpayers.

We are proud of the renovations that we did. We're looking forward to moving on to other government buildings to see a further reduction in carbon emissions and also further savings to the taxpayers. I'm confident in the abilities of Yukon government employees. I know that the minister and our fellow colleague from Takhini-Kopper King discussed the employees, and they are so important. They have been dedicated to increasing efficiencies and lowering our emissions throughout the Yukon. There has been much focus placed on energy-related investments that began with the previous government — a focus on conservation, emission reductions and infrastructure planning has been something we have been dedicated to. These initiatives were a priority for the former government and I hope to see this current Liberal government continue that work.

The fact that the Liberals have once again broken a platform commitment to Yukoners to deliver \$30 million per year in retrofits should be a bit concerning for everyone, especially taxpayers. It's another example of them saying one thing to get elected and then acting completely differently once in office.

Thank you to all those Yukoners who have made a conscious decision to increase the efficiency of their homes and incorporate environmentally friendly practices into their lives.

On this side, we will definitely be supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing this motion forward. I look forward to getting the legislative return from the minister on exactly what they're doing. I'm pretty sure that will bring more questions to the floor of this House.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will speak briefly to the motion and in support of the motion. I thank the Member for Takhini-

Kopper King for bringing it forward and I look forward to pulling this information together in one place and sharing it.

There are a couple of points I wanted to raise. The first one is to apologize. Just as I was going through some notes, I recognized that when I spoke to a question in Question Period — maybe it was earlier this week, but recently — and I'll see when that was — I referenced \$20 million this year and I was incorrect. It is \$11.7 million this year that we are investing in retrofits — my apologies to the House.

I wanted to talk for a second — I know I have said some of this before. The notion of energy out there in the public is often synonymous with electricity, but it is so much more than that. So much is it synonymous with electricity that, sometimes when we get reports about India, China, Denmark, et cetera, and they're talking about how far they're going to get renewables on to their system, they're really talking about their grid system, their electricity, and how that's distributed around.

What isn't always the case — and you have to be very careful in looking at this; I'll try to find the same numbers the Member for Takhini-Kopper King did. When we look at those numbers, if you want to compare that to the Yukon, our grid is more than 95-percent renewable already. That's Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, Burwash, Destruction Bay, Old Crow — those communities are not on the electrical grid that is driven dominantly by hydro power — renewable energy.

When we're looking at trying to improve the system — and we do want to improve the system here — we need to look beyond electricity. We need to look at transportation and heat. As it turns out, solutions for heat are easier to achieve here in the territory than are transportation, but you need to look at both. The Member for Takhini-Kopper King mentioned the F.H. Collins Secondary School as an example and also Whistle Bend.

By the way, Whistle Bend was really about solar energy, but the beauty of it was that it would store that energy in the ground, and that was seasonal storage, which is absolutely needed here in the territory. It's not so much the storage from day to night or night to day; it is much more from summer to winter. Right now, we have summer energy, which is being wasted — we just don't use it — and we have a demand in the wintertime. That was the great idea for Whistle Bend.

With the F.H. Collins Secondary School — it didn't happen, yet the best solution is not geothermal or solar on those schools — it is insulation. I know I will sound like a broken record; however, when it comes to heat energy, your best thing — when we think about trying to divert waste, we talk about reduce, reuse and recycle. Often the focus is on recycling, but we should really try to get to the reduce and reuse sides.

Similarly with energy, we talk about renewables a lot, but, really, we should try to get to the efficiency and conservation side of that question, and that is why building buildings that don't require as much energy, especially heat energy, is really the best way to go.

The investment we are making this year is \$11.7 million. I heard the Member for Kluane talking about our platform

commitment. I thank him for talking about that. I'll just quote it here, because I happened to be with the Premier when that announcement was made during the election campaign. It says — and I quote: "... allocating up to \$30M per year to implement an energy retrofit program for residential, government, and commercial buildings, working with federal agencies to access funding sources".

That day when we were there — and I have talked with the media several times about this — we never believed that we could get there overnight. We thought we would need to build to it, and that is what we are doing. \$11.7 million is for this year, and it is, in effect, better than renewable energy. I hope we count it in the list — I'm not sure how it's thought of by members opposite, but my point of view around energy is that this is definitely the right sort of investment.

The Member for Kluane talked about it being new funds, and we are working to get new funds. I have had several meetings with my counterpart, Minister Sohi, where we discussed the infrastructure funds and the applicability toward energy retrofits. That's what we have been working on.

In the meantime, we still see the importance of this. We want to work with all communities; we want to build capacity within our communities to make sure this creates jobs in our communities, that we are doing energy audits in our communities and that we are doing the retrofits in our communities. There is a growth curve to get to.

When I looked at the other parties' platforms, I saw that the Yukon Party talked about \$20 million a year — terrific; I hope we get past that. Our goal is to get to \$30 million a year. When I looked at the Third Party's platform, it talked about \$10 million a year and then referenced maybe supplementing this — then, later on, it described possibly through carbon pricing. That was their approach — terrific.

I think what is great to see here in the Legislature today is that all parties talk about the importance of having sustainable energy. I think it is very important, when we talk about this year and talk to and for Yukoners — that there is a strong sense of where we need to go — where energy currently is not renewable, where it ends up being a leak on our economy and where we can make a big difference. The biggest areas are heat and, well, as it turns out, agriculture. I think it is important to share this information.

One last point I will make is that I am very supportive of partnerships where the proposals come from our communities. I don't mind that at all — in fact I think that is terrific. I hope that we are receptive to that and enabling of it. I have seen too many projects where the Yukon government tries to impose solutions on a community and then we get push-back and social licence is not there. I prefer those solutions where they come from the community themselves and they take the lead and we provide a supporting role. For me, I am not worried about where the solutions come from — I'm worried that they come.

The last one I will note is that in my role as Minister of Community Services and in trying to address the issue of prevention of wildland fire and risks, I see opportunity there in working on the issue of biomass and again, the need to

work with our partners in communities to try to address those risks and make sure that those solutions work for the local communities.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on the Motion for the Production of Papers No. 9?

Ms. White: I thank both the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for their comments.

Firstly, I am just going to put this out there: We are part of the Westminster Parliamentary system, where ministers are responsible. Anytime I have critiques or criticisms, they aren't for the public servants doing the work — it is for the direction and the decisions made by government. By that, I mean by ministers of the government. I have never once had a bad thing to say about a public servant, but I do have criticisms for ministers and therefore I have criticisms for government.

It was interesting when the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources said that when we brought forward this motion yesterday, there just wasn't enough time. Well, Mr. Speaker, every second week, members of the opposition are given one day's notice to debate motions from the opposite side and we don't have the public service to help us with our research. So I understand that one day isn't very much, but I understand it from a really different perspective, which is that there is a lot of research done by the opposition on government debate days, other than government business. I do appreciate that one day isn't much, but that is the system as we have it right now.

I thank the Minister of Community Services for the correction because Whistle Bend was indeed solar — and I did just look — but it was district heating I think I was trying to get the point out about. There are opportunities I think in different ways when we look at biomass and things like that.

There is often a lot of talk when we talk about energy and about things like retrofitting — and I don't disagree, but one of the issues that I have is that transportation and home heating are the biggest usages of energy. If we stay on fossil fuels, they are still going to be using fossil fuels. The reason I am asking about the development of renewable energy is because, when new construction is having electric baseboards added to housing, that is electrical, but it is not efficient electrical. It is not the most efficient system we have. I am talking about how we facilitate the decisions for others. Part of it is that, if we generate more electricity, we can look toward the developments that are happening in electric cars, home heating and things like that.

This was about renewable energy and the development of new renewable energy. I am a bit concerned that, if the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources understood the message from Yukoners Concerned to be that the Yukon government is doing all of the great things that they said that they are in the pamphlet that Yukoners Concerned just hand-delivered to every mailbox in the City of Whitehorse, I don't think he understood their message. I say this because I have

been having conversations with the same people for six years, and what they are looking for is leadership.

When I asked about new renewable energy products, I want to know how many megawatts of renewable have been brought on-grid by this government. At this point, I am not sure. I was told that I can wait, and that soon I am going to be told about nine projects, so I look forward to that. There is one in Teslin and other announcements are coming, so I will wait for the list — that's good.

I read an opinion piece from the Minister of Community Services from 2009. He asked the question: Should Canada lead or should Canada wait on the development of a renewable energy economy? He said that his opinion is that our economic future is renewable. I don't disagree with that.

The question is: When will Yukon show us that? When will the Yukon government show us what they are doing? We look forward to the list. We look forward to that information, and we look forward to developing additional renewable energy in the territory.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 9 agreed to

Motion No. 271

Clerk: Motion No. 271, standing in the name of Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Lake Laberge:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to introduce amendments to Bill No. 15, *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*, to:

(1) remove provisions that would grow the size of government by seeing government expand into the retail and distribution of cannabis; and

(2) replace those clauses of Bill No. 15 with clauses that allow Yukon businesses to become licensed to sell and distribute cannabis in accordance with federal and territorial laws.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to this motion, I would just like to note that one of the things we have been trying to do in our time as the Official Opposition is not just to criticize government for the choices we believe are mistaken, but also to outline alternatives and to give a good rationale for those realistic alternatives.

In this case, the motion that we're proposing here today is urging the government to take a different approach and bring forward amendments to a bill that's placed before the Legislative Assembly — that being Bill No. 15, the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act* — to remove what, in our opinion, are unnecessary provisions in the legislation that would grow the size of government and increase costs to taxpayers.

In speaking to this motion, I also want to note that we in the Official Opposition recognize that the topic of the legalization of cannabis is one that Yukoners have strong feelings about. There are Yukoners who are strongly in favour, and Yukoners who are strongly opposed. Our position is that we respect the views of all Yukoners who support it and those who do not, and since the federal government is clearly proceeding with legislation, we believe it's the job of Yukon government to prepare to responsibly regulate it once it's legalized and to handle that in as responsible a manner as possible. In our role as the Official Opposition, since we believe that government has made some mistakes in their approach, we are proposing changes to correct those mistakes and outlining what we think should be done differently.

I just want to note, in recapping this issue, that, at the current time, the government is planning to spend millions of dollars getting into the retail and distribution of cannabis. As I outlined at length on Monday afternoon, there are alternatives available. Specifically, one alternative that we pointed to is the different approach taken by the Province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, according to government's information in their press release issued by the Government of Saskatchewan, has announced that — and I quote: "Both wholesaling and retailing of cannabis will be conducted by the private sector and regulated by SLGA." SLGA is an acronym for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

According to the Government of Saskatchewan, they are expecting to issue approximately 60 cannabis retail permits in up to 40 eligible municipalities at the outset of legalization. We have heard the argument presented by members of this Yukon Liberal government that the Yukon government simply cannot prepare for issuing private retail licences that quickly.

Again, we've pointed to the fact that the Province of Saskatchewan is dealing with the same timelines from the federal government and actually a larger challenge in terms of

the number of licences and communities that they are trying to manage. As I have said on several occasions here in the House, our primary argument behind urging government to go down the road of allowing private sector retail and distribution is that it would reduce the cost to taxpayers and would avoid seeing taxpayers' money put at risk by investing millions of dollars in purchasing cannabis inventory and supplies for just the first four months of operation. Government has projected \$2.7 million for those costs. In any area that involves retail, there is always some risk when anyone is getting into that, including the government.

I am not going to spend too much time here in my remarks this afternoon. I just want to make a few points to outline our position to the government in our attempt to convince them to take a different path than they are currently taking.

We have argued — and will continue to argue — that government entering retail is completely unnecessary. As has been demonstrated in Saskatchewan, there is an alternative approach. I gave a number of examples in previous debate of models by which the government could allow for applications sooner than they are currently projecting. According to the Minister of Justice, it is a year or so down the road that they envision allowing private retailers.

We have noted that if government were to do as it does in several other regulatory areas — placing the onus on the applicant to demonstrate their plan for operating safely — they could make that a condition of a licence, and they would have the ability to ensure the enforcement of that through the potential to suspend or cancel a licence if a retailer or a distributor did not act responsibly and in any way, shape or form violated the terms of that.

We had heard the indication at one point from a minister — that minister, at least, was under the impression that the *Yukon Act* was forcing them down the path they were taking. As I quoted the other day, the relevant section of the *Yukon Act* is section 18(3), which says quite clearly — and I quote: "The Legislature may make laws relating to the importation of intoxicants into Yukon from any other place in Canada or elsewhere and defining what constitutes an intoxicant for the purposes of those laws." That section would allow the Yukon government and this Legislative Assembly to go down the same path and use a model virtually identical to what Saskatchewan is proceeding with, which leaves the risks and the costs of operation for retail and distribution primarily to the private sector, rather than seeing government enter into that area.

With that I will wrap up my introductory remarks. Although government has so far indicated a lack of willingness to accept this suggestion and to alter their plans, we do believe it is our job to present the arguments in favour of doing so. We hope that government will see the flaw in its plans and choose to take a different path — that being the path of moving quicker to allow the private sector to enter retail, changing its plans to allow the private sector to deal with distribution and wholesale, as is being done in the Province of Saskatchewan.

In our view, government should focus primarily on regulations, including the licensing portion, on inspections and enforcement, on education and on related issues, such as ensuring road safety.

With that, I will conclude my introductory remarks. I hope that the government will change their minds from what they have previously indicated and recognize that the approach we're outlining reduces the cost to Yukon taxpayers and reduces the risks to Yukon taxpayers, and that moving forward with allowing the free market to operate in all Yukon communities at an earlier date than a year or so from now would be an effective method of ensuring that the free market begins to replace the black market. Government's current plans would not do so.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: In rising to speak to the motion today, I appreciate that the Official Opposition is bringing forward constructive suggestions about alternatives, rather than just criticizing. They are putting their perspective forward on ways they believe we should work. I thank them for that approach.

I said the other day — and I will say it again here — that the message they are giving to us is one that we are considering and have considered. While we don't support the suggestions that they are making, it doesn't mean that we don't think them through and don't consider them. I will try to describe why we feel it's not the right approach for the Yukon, but there are some issues I want to try to start with. The first one is about the size of government and growing government, which this motion refers to.

I agree that, since devolution has happened in this territory, the Yukon government has grown. It has grown significantly. Last year, we had the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. They looked at our situation and they told us that we have to be careful with our government growth, and we need to manage that growth and make sure that, if there is growth, it is thoughtful and not indiscriminate.

For example, if we have more students in our schools, then we need more teachers — great. As we open a continuing care facility, we will need to staff it up — for sure. But the question that we are talking about today is: Should we have any growth in government around cannabis?

First of all, in debate here in Committee of the Whole, I have outlined the numbers that we were talking about in terms of growing government. I have said several times now in the Legislature — and I will say it again — that the number of new, permanent, full-time staff to address cannabis will be a handful — meaning no more than I can count on one hand, not meaning trouble. The main area where we plan to hire permanent, full-time staff is around enforcement and regulations, and several folks around the warehousing and distribution.

We know that cannabis is an intoxicant. We know that our priorities are to displace the illicit market and to make sure that we are taking a strong focus on health and wellness, especially information for our youth. Is that the right thing to do, to have a warehouse that is run by the government? I think

so. The reason is that, if we decided to contract that out and let it be run by the private sector — which we enable inside the legislation. But if we were to do so, given the newness of the product of cannabis and it becoming legalized — and the federal legislation, which wants to ensure that there will be seed-to-sale control, and the fact that our priorities are to displace the illicit market and ensure the safety of Yukoners — then we would need to increase regulation and enforcement around the warehouse itself. We would reduce the number of staff on one hand, but we would increase it on the other. I don't know that there is a savings there. It is possible that there is, and that is why we have allowed for that opportunity under the legislation, but, with the economy of scale that I think we are looking at, I don't think that is the case. I agree with the principle of the member opposite that we should be watching that and trying to ensure that we are not growing government indiscriminately.

Maybe the member opposite in his closing remarks could talk about whether he does believe that there should be staff for enforcement and regulation, given that cannabis will be legalized. I think there should be.

The next thing about the motion as it is worded is that it talks about the legislation being amended to replace clauses of Bill No. 15 with clauses that allow Yukon businesses to become licensed to sell and distribute cannabis in accordance with federal and territorial laws.

I went back through the legislation, and here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. Sections 16 through 24 talk about the licensing board. Sections 25 through 46 are all about Yukon businesses becoming licensees. Sections 47 through 51 are all about inspections and enforcement around those licensees. Just about half of this legislation is focusing on the private sector and how to ensure that there is safe and controlled access to cannabis. I don't see that it needs an amendment in that sense. I believe there are 81 clauses overall, and so almost half of the legislation is about enabling the private sector. I don't want to amend any of that. There is nothing in there that says that the government must go forward and must go ahead

I have described the rationale about why I believe we will go forward — and I will go over that again — as an interim measure until such time as the private sector is up and running.

Let me talk a little bit about that. It hovers around regulations and licensing procedures, which need to be put in place ahead of the private sector being able to move forward on retail cannabis.

This legislation and this change to legalize cannabis here in the Yukon and across Canada — but in the Yukon, we have had a tremendous amount of citizen input into this legislation. It has been more than I have ever seen before, and maybe more than ever before on any piece of legislation. We had 50 community visits. I made it to several of those. In other visits, when I went to communities, the issue was raised because there is a lot of interest from the public, municipal governments, First Nation governments, citizens and all walks. People are interested in this legislation and they care about what happens with the regulations. It stands to reason

that, as those regulations are drafted, there needs to be some time for members of the public to provide feedback on them and to give us a response.

I remember — in fact today we were discussing in this Legislature the airports act again. I recall being in here last session when we were discussing the airports act, and there were five amendments brought forward by the members of the opposition, and those amendments, generally speaking, were seeking to slow the act down and allow more opportunity for input from the public and to wait to get to regulations. Here we are today with a motion that is suggesting that we should speed up the process, which would effectively not allow us to engage fully with the public. It is a different approach.

Again, I appreciate that the members opposite are providing their advice on which way to go. However, it is still not consistent. When we talked about the *Public Airports Act*, what we said was that, as regulations were developed, we would enshrine involvement by the public through an advisory committee and the industry through an advisory committee. This time we are talking about work that has already begun to draft those regulations, that there is diligent work and that we will need time in order to ensure that we get it right for the Yukon and for Yukoners.

As I have just said, many Yukoners have been speaking to us about these topics. In fact, late last week, I had yet another meeting with potential private retailers, and they were talking to us about regulations. They had very specific questions and they wanted to provide us feedback on their suggestions about which way to go on those regulations. They have opinions, and we need to work to see those opinions heard and considered fairly and fully.

That's the private sector that is coming forward with that. There is no doubt that the private sector is interested in moving quickly. The folks I have talked with would like to go right away. I asked the question of those groups that came forward to talk to me about opening a cannabis retail outlet. The groups I have talked with — I have asked them where they would like to open that retail outlet and they have all said to me, "in downtown Whitehorse". I have said, okay, let me then acknowledge that they should be in conversation with the City of Whitehorse. I thank the City of Whitehorse — they have identified a director who is the lead on this. I know they have folks over at their planning department to bring forward the zoning bylaws that they put in place, which say that, currently, cannabis retail and warehousing is restricted to Marwell. I respect that is the decision of our municipal government, and that is their right. We did not request that in any way, but we will certainly abide by that, because that is their authority to do so.

When I meet with potential private cannabis retailers and ask them where they're hoping to put their store, if they say to me in Whitehorse and somewhere other than Marwell, then I direct them to connect with the City of Whitehorse.

There are other timelines that are not within our control but that must be considered.

Let me talk for a moment about the spending. We are not spending millions of dollars on retail. We are spending money

to purchase inventory. I defy the members opposite to tell me how we can get cannabis in the territory if it is, as we are saying, going to be controlled and an intoxicant. Maybe they're suggesting that we shouldn't control it, but we as government are clearly saying it is an intoxicant. The federal government is talking about controlling it from seed to sale. We will support that, and we will ensure it is safe for consumption by Yukoners who are of age and within the law, as it exists.

It's not that we're just going to privatize that and then say to the private sector, "Don't worry; you guys go and get that supply". No; it is controlled; it will come through our system, much as it does for alcohol and, therefore, the purchase of that inventory is ours, which is recouped when it is sold.

The way I would characterize it is that, when we seek to open an interim store, our rationale for that is that we will not be ready for the private sector with regulations and the licensing procedures at the point that cannabis will be legalized, so we will provide retail for Yukoners, because we believe that a store is integral to reducing the black market.

There will also be e-commerce. If you want to displace the black market, you have to provide an outlet for the product to be purchased legally. It's that simple.

When it comes to purchasing, we will seek an inventory here, much as we do with liquor. I have agreed with the member opposite that there is risk. There is risk on all sides whenever you're involved in retail. I think there is also risk if you don't get cannabis because then, of course, we'll just promote the black market, which I disagree with.

Finally, what I want to say is that, because our goal is to displace the black market, we are setting the prices of cannabis to be competitive with the black market prices. As such, as we introduce cannabis into the territory, I don't expect us to turn a significant profit as that store first opens up. However, our projections, which have been rather conservative, show us as coming out breaking even. So I challenge the member opposite's words about spending millions of dollars. What I think would be fair to say is that we see this as a break-even proposition when it is introduced. We are happy to move on to the private sector.

I want to talk for a moment about Saskatchewan. I like Saskatchewan as a province. I think it's a great place. I like all of the provinces. I looked across jurisdictions to try to see what we're talking about with all of the provinces, just to try to understand where we sit in the midst of all of this.

British Columbia will have government distribution and retail, which is shared between the private sector and government. Alberta will have government distribution and retail, which is the private sector. Saskatchewan will have private distribution, but controlled by the government. That control will mean they are in charge — at least as far as I understand it — of purchasing the inventory. They will have private retail. Manitoba will have government-run distribution and private retail.

Ontario will have government-run distribution and government-run retail. Quebec will have government-run distribution and government-run retail. New Brunswick will

have government-run distribution and government-run retail. Nova Scotia will have government-run distribution and government-run retail. Prince Edward Island is the same. Newfoundland will have government-run distribution and private retail. Northwest Territories will have government-run distribution and government retail. Nunavut will have government-run distribution and a Crown agency doing the retail.

Out of the other 12 jurisdictions, only one is seeking to privatize the distribution. I appreciate that the members opposite believe that is the right way to go. Our position is that the legislation will enable it, but it is not what we are seeking to do. The reason is because we are going to put safety first. We don't believe that there will be much of a difference in terms of additional resources. I have already stated that I think that the warehouse will just be a few employees. I don't know the exact number because it's still in development, but as I have said, less than you can count on a hand. If we didn't hire those employees and instead did privatization, then I believe we would need to increase the regulatory side on the enforcement side with staffing there.

In terms of retail, the Yukon is going to be an interim government retailer, phased out to the private sector. When I look at what is most common out there, it is a blend. I agree with the members opposite that we should let the private sector run retail here and so we are happy to go that way.

I appreciate that the members opposite support us bringing forward legislation on cannabis and believe that we should control it. I hope they agree that our two primary goals should be to displace the illicit market and to support harm reduction and safety. I don't agree with them that it's right to rush to get the private sector up and running. I think we need to take the appropriate steps to engage around those regulations and get them right for the private sector and for Yukoners.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on Motion No. 271?

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation's comments, but I do have to take issue with some of his statements. In answer to a couple of questions — as the minister should be aware if he has listened to the comments that I have made on behalf of our caucus in the House, as well as the press releases we have issued, we have been very clear about the fact that we do support the government eliminating the black market. In fact, in one of our press releases issued on February 27 of this year, we made it very clear that our priorities were eliminating government growth, as well as eliminating the black market, strong enforcement and protecting youth.

Again, I do have to point out to the minister and his colleagues that, if the government is serious about its recent talking point that the Premier began using — and others have, as well — about getting government out of the business of

doing business, then an important first step toward government getting out of the business of doing business is to not enter into areas of business, including the retail and distribution of cannabis.

I appreciate the minister listing for the House the various models of other Canadian jurisdictions, but I would point to the fact that, although many other governments may be getting into the distribution of cannabis, the reason that we have pointed to the Saskatchewan model is that we believe the Government of Saskatchewan has done the best job of getting the model right within Canada.

That being said, there are some minor adjustments that we would make to that model, but we believe that — largely speaking — the province of Saskatchewan has taken the most fiscally prudent approach to the legalization of cannabis and to handling the issues around retail and distribution.

To reiterate — since the minister seemed to have missed the point — we do believe that both retail and distribution should be handled by the private sector, but should be regulated by government.

The minister — somewhat oddly — brought up the issue of the *Public Airports Act*, and is forgetting in that case that the questions around consultation and regulations are very different in the case of the cannabis legislation, where the timelines around legalization are being imposed by the federal government and provinces and territories need to determine what they are going to have in place at the time of legalization — versus the issue of the *Public Airports Act*, which is entirely a self-inflicted wound by this government — and the Minister Highways and Public Works, when he charged down the road of this legislation, was actually forced to change a press release he had issued that claimed that he had consulted with stakeholders, after those very stakeholders came out and said that the minister had incorrectly stated the facts. Government then went into badly handled damage-control mode during the fall, where they refused to accept reasonable suggestions and amendments that we brought forward that would have provided for the opportunity before this legislation was put in place in an area that had been doing quite fine without it. We encouraged them to consult on it and they did not.

I just want to remind the minister of that fact, since he brought that up, and point out that, in this area, in addition to the fact that government has already consulted on the approach to the legalization of cannabis and did not take the act itself out for specific consultation, they have obviously concluded that they learned enough from that public consultation to be able to move forward in a manner that was consistent with what they heard from the public without actually taking the step of taking the legislation out for public consultation, because they did not consult on the legislation itself.

That can be extended one step further in suggesting that, if government were to allow an element of that legislation, the private sector retail, to be an option that Yukon companies can apply for this year instead of delaying it for a year, that would again be consistent to our view with the same basic approach.

I do want to remind the minister, since he brought up the specific point, that in previous discussions in the House on this legislation, I have noted that we certainly would be supportive of public consultation on regulations, but that government also has the option of moving forward quickly with a small package of regulations to allow for the immediate operation of the act and doing more detailed public consultations at a later date, with the indication being given to anyone who is issued a licence at the start that changes will come — not even a question of may come, but will come. The government has that option.

As I laid out in previous discussions here in this Legislative Assembly, there are models that the Yukon government uses in other areas that would allow government to place the onus on the applicant to demonstrate their plan for safely managing and controlling cannabis. I noted that, in the case of the Government of Saskatchewan, one of the things that they have outlined in their backgrounder for what applicants for a licence there need to do includes that those applicants — and I'm just going to find the page so I can quote from it. They have noted that applicants for retail in Saskatchewan need to demonstrate financial capacity and the ability to track and report inventory movement through the supply chain.

That, again, is an example of how Saskatchewan is doing almost exactly what we have suggested — placing the onus on the applicants for retail to demonstrate what steps they will take to monitor and control inventory. In the case of Saskatchewan, considering they're dealing with the same federal legislation and looking at a greater number of retail permits for cannabis, as well as wholesale, they're dealing with an even bigger challenge than the Yukon government is in terms of how to manage that, yet they are moving forward with allowing for both the wholesaling and retailing of cannabis to be conducted by the private sector and regulated by the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

The model exists — we understand the government is not going to take it, but it does seem like a case of this Liberal government setting foot down a path that is not the most prudent and, when given constructive suggestions about how to reduce the cost and the risk to taxpayers, choosing to defend their choice to go down the path they're on, rather than taking those suggestions and taking an approach that would not spend \$2.7 million on cannabis inventory, which is the government's initial cost estimate. That cost, I should note, doesn't include the cost of new staff, the cost of retail space or a number of other factors related to operating it.

We expect that, if anything, government is likely to have underestimated the initial costs of getting into retail and distribution of cannabis. If the government were to do what we believe is the right thing and move to a model that regulates the private sector, but places the onus on them to spend the money on cannabis inventory and take all of the risks when it comes to sales to the public, that would reduce the total cost to Yukoners and would free up \$2.7 million. It would almost, in fact, balance this government's budget, if they were to see the error of their ways and take the path that

we are suggesting — the very path the Government of Saskatchewan is going down — rather than the path they are on.

With that, I will conclude my remarks this afternoon and commend this motion to the House and hope that the government will choose between now and the vote to change its mind, although I think we have heard very clearly that they are going to continue to defend a mistake, rather than change the path they are on.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are five yea, 11 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the motion defeated.

Motion No. 271 negatived

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 206: *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Ms. Dendys: First of all, I would like to welcome our deputy minister, Valerie Royle, and our director of Corporate Services, Philippe Mollet, to the House today to assist through this debate.

Mr. Chair, it is my pleasure to introduce the Department of Tourism and Culture main estimates for the 2018-19 fiscal year and to highlight some examples of the outstanding services we provide for Yukon and Yukoners. The Department of Tourism and Culture strives to make Yukon a place where the world wants to be. As minister, my overarching strategic priorities are to market and help grow tourism while protecting and promoting Yukon's rich cultural heritage and history and the diverse forms of artistic expression enjoyed by residents and visitors.

This budget reflects the many programs and activities the department delivers to achieve this vision and our priorities. At the same time, the budget reflects the priority my Cabinet colleagues and I place on fiscal responsibility. We are striking a balance between providing the services Yukoners want and need and the responsibility to manage Yukon's public finances prudently. When Yukoners elected us, they put their trust in us to deliver effective and sustainable government, both for today and for the future. We will not betray that trust.

To offer a high-level summary, the Department of Tourism and Culture administers resources for the arts, museums and First Nation cultural centres, visitor information services, support to tourism operators and marketing the territory as a year-round travel destination, archaeology and palaeontology sites and collections, geographical place names and the Yukon historic sites and Yukon government archival programs.

Collectively, these programs and activities seek to maximize the economic and socio-cultural benefits for Yukoners and visitors. I am pleased to say that the department has made great strides in these areas and continues to build upon the work of previous years.

I would like to begin by highlighting just a few of my department's achievements in the last fiscal year. Many of these were in partnership with other departments, governments, organizations and other stakeholders.

2017-18 was a special year in Yukon, as we celebrated Canada's 150th anniversary alongside other territories and provincial friends with partners in Yukon. The year also marked the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Alaska Highway. At the very end of last year, we held a public event to mark the opening of the Yukon Archives vault expansion and the 45th anniversary of the Archives. The new vault provides the essential and highly specialized storage capacity that will meet Yukon's needs for the next decade or more.

Recently, the process of developing a Lansing heritage management plan was completed. The department worked in close partnership with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun to fulfill a commitment in chapter 13 of the *Na Cho Nyäk Dun Final Agreement*. The heritage management plan will help protect the area and allow for interpretation of its history, while respecting the traditional and current use of the important site.

Last year, for the very first time, Yukon recognized National Aboriginal Day on June 21 as a statutory holiday. By doing so we acknowledge the diverse range of indigenous cultures, languages and traditions that exist in the territory. Aboriginal Day promotes greater understanding and appreciation for Yukon First Nation people, their culture and traditions. It helps to revitalize the relationship between indigenous peoples and other Canadians and to foster reconciliation in Yukon and in Canada. I am proud that the Department of Tourism and Culture contributed to this historic day by hosting a community walk in Whitehorse. Throughout Yukon, there were celebrations, singing, dancing, walking, honouring, storytelling and feasting with Yukon First Nations and people of all cultures and backgrounds.

Yukon's rich and diverse cultural heritage is important to residents and visitors. Culture is front and centre in all aspects of the department's work, including another recent major project, the Yukon tourism development strategy. Tourism is a key component of Yukon's economy, providing meaningful work for Yukoners and supporting our vibrant communities. The time is right to take tourism to the next level. That is why we are working to develop a new high-level Yukon tourism development strategy to sustainably grow tourism in the territory. This will be a Yukon strategy, not a Yukon government strategy. It is important that everyone can see themselves in this high-level strategy.

The Yukon tourism development strategy steering committee — which represents First Nation governments, municipal governments, arts and cultural associations and the tourism industry — will be guiding the strategy forward. I look forward to sharing a draft strategy and seeking further input from Yukoners early in the fiscal year. In recent years, we have seen significant sustained growth in winter tourism to Yukon. To seize the opportunities this creates, the department presented a winter tourism summit in December that attracted more than 120 participants. The summit was an opportunity for Yukon's tourism industry and its many partners to come together and celebrate the success winter tourism is enjoying right now and to move forward — united and inspired — to further success in the future.

Along with efforts to grow tourism comes the essential task of measuring the outcomes of those efforts. The tourism sector needs reliable and current data with which to plan and deliver visitor services. To this end, the latest visitor exit survey was launched in the fall and will continue through to the fall of this year. Together with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, we are collecting valuable information, such as visitor characteristics, and behaviour, trip characteristics and visitor spending. As a result of efforts to promote Yukon as a tourism destination in partnership with industry and businesses, we are already seeing more travellers to the territory. We recently reported last year's figures for visitation, which showed increases across the board — for example, in air arrivals, border crossings and retail sales.

The Tourism branch was also very busy last year on a major redesign and relaunch of the Travel Yukon website. This is the face of Yukon for potential visitors. It is how we welcome the world to our home. The new customer-oriented website supports our marketing efforts to increase awareness of Yukon and the likelihood that this awareness will lead more people to visit the territory. After such a great year in both culture and tourism, we are looking ahead to build on the momentum for an even stronger 2018-19.

The Department of Tourism and Culture enjoys many successes and plays a key role in supporting the government's enduring priorities. These are a people-centred approach to wellness; healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities; government-to-government relationships with First Nations, fostering reconciliation; and diversifying and growing the economy. These are strong priorities, each with their own complexities.

As I present the main estimates for the forthcoming fiscal year, I would like to show how we work to support each of them. To begin, I will outline the overall amounts to be appropriated. For 2018-19, the Department of Tourism and Culture is requesting \$31.4 million. This is a \$3.4-million decrease over the last fiscal year. The amount requested includes \$28.3 million for the operation and maintenance budget. This is an increase of \$94,000 over the previous year's estimates, largely due to the increased recoverable contribution from Lotteries Yukon and the arts operating fund. The total amount requested also includes \$3.1 million for the capital budget. This is a decrease of \$1.2 million over the previous year's estimates, largely due to the completion of major capital projects at the Archives and the MacBride Museum.

Investment in culture is essential to the development of our unique cultural identity and is a critical underpinning of the Yukon's tourism economy. This department works to meet the government's enduring priorities through the programs and activities of the Cultural Services and Tourism branches. In presenting the main estimates for 2018-19 by branch, I will begin with the Cultural Services branch.

This year, the branch has \$13.4 million identified in O&M and \$2.3 million identified in capital projects. The branch has several program areas, including arts, archives, museums, historic sites and heritage resources, which include

palaeontology and archaeology. These programs help to revitalize, maintain and celebrate First Nation culture and heritage and promote First Nation arts as vital components in the rich cultural tapestry of the Yukon.

The Arts unit is receiving \$4.5 million to enable continued support of Yukon's dynamic cultural communities. The arts operating fund, with a budget of \$825,000, supports year-round arts programs, such as the Yukon Film Society and the Adäka Cultural Festival, while the Advanced Artist Award helps professional artists to further develop their careers with a budget of \$150,000. As well, \$100,000 for the touring artist fund supports professional artists in presenting their work to new audiences outside Yukon. The \$500,000 art fund provides organizations throughout the territory with support for community-based art development projects. It helps to foster creativity in Yukon communities through the participation of artists and the appreciation of audiences.

The department also supports the operation of many arts organizations through government transfer agreements, including, for example, the Yukon Arts Centre, the Dawson City Arts Society, the Northern Cultural Expressions Society and Culture Quest.

Finally, within the Arts unit, I would like to mention the \$45,000 new Canadians event fund, which supports events and festivals hosted by organizations with a cultural or a multicultural mandate. These events increase understanding and appreciation of Yukon's multicultural communities and help new Canadians transition into life in the territory.

The capital budget for the Arts section in 2018-19 is a total of \$1.1 million. Included is \$30,000 for the purchase of new artworks by the Friends of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection for pieces to be added to that collection. A further \$500,000 is allocated to address storage capacity for the collection.

This year, the Property Management division has identified maintenance of the Yukon Arts Centre as a priority project — specifically \$600,000 of capital funding is allocated for lighting upgrades at the centre.

I will move on to the Museums unit. The department provides financial and specialized support to 11 Yukon museums and eight First Nation cultural centres. The most current statistics show there were an astounding 133,000 visitors to these museums and cultural centres in 2016-17. This means that visiting these attractions is one of the most popular visitor activities in the territory.

Our museums and cultural centres celebrate our history and provide unique settings for festivals and other community events. As such, they contribute to making our communities healthier and more vibrant. Support from the department assists facilities to research, preserve and increase awareness of Yukon's cultural heritage and natural history. The Museums unit operational budget is \$2.8 million with a further \$600,000 for the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre. Over \$2 million of the Museums unit budget goes to support the operation of museums and cultural centres and assist them to undertake special projects, such as exhibit development, artifact inventories and conservation projects.

As well, the Museums unit works closely with the department's visitor services unit to provide the Yukon gold explorers passport program, popular with visitors to the territory. Last year, over 3,500 people visited 10 or more of the attractions included in the contest. Many visited over 20.

One very popular museum in Whitehorse is the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, which tells the fascinating story of the Yukon's ice age past. This year's capital budget included \$130,000 to renew exhibits to enhance the centre's ability to educate Yukoners and visitors about Beringia. In all, the Museums unit capital budget totals \$230,000 and includes a \$100,000-government transfer payment to an expanded MacBride Museum for new displays and exhibits of Yukon history.

The department's Heritage Resources unit is world-renowned for its research and archaeological and paleontological finds. More than ever, the unit's prestigious work is featured in global, national and local media. The CBC's *Nature of Things* recently devoted a full episode to the internationally recognized ice patch research work carried out by the department in collaboration with Yukon First Nations.

As well, Yukon's fossil heritage never ceases to capture the interest of residents and visitors. In support of this work, as well as place names and scientific and explorer licensing, the Heritage Resources unit is receiving \$1.2 million in O&M and \$60,000 in capital funding. Capital funding will be used to acquire skeletons for the paleo-interpretive collection and new cabinets for the safe storage of the growing archaeological and paleontological collection.

The historic unit — historic sites are another component of Yukon's fascinating past and the department's Historic Sites unit is allocated just under \$2 million in O&M to preserve and interpret the territory's significant built heritage.

Under the *Historic Resources Act*, Yukon has nine territorially designated historic sites, the most recent of which is the Old Log Church and Rectory. The Yukon historic places inventory has more than 4,000 records of historic places more than 50 years old across the Yukon.

Over \$500,000 is allocated in government transfer payments for the preservation and interpretation of historic places with First Nations, property owners and non-government organizations. In partnership with First Nation governments, the department co-manages important historic sites, such as Fort Selkirk, Forty Mile, Rampart House and LaPierre House. By working government to government on these and other heritage management planning activities, the department is making significant contributions toward fostering reconciliation with First Nations.

On February 14, we saw the signing of the completed Lansing Heritage Management Plan. This plan was jointly developed by the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Yukon government with input from the public. The historic Lansing Post townsite at the confluence of the Stewart and Lansing rivers will be managed by the First Nation.

As members are aware, the Tr'ondëk-Klondike UNESCO nomination was submitted and accepted by the World Heritage Centre in Paris a year ago. The ongoing work on this

project is an excellent example of four governments — Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon, Canada and the City of Dawson — working together for a unified vision for the future of Tr'ondëk-Klondike. This year, \$68,000 is planned for a three-year term position based in Dawson to continue the coordination of the Tr'ondëk-Klondike project.

In the support of historic properties, the capital budget for the Historic Sites unit is \$603,000 for this fiscal year. These funds will support repair and maintenance of Yukon government-owned or co-owned historic properties, including the telegraph offices at Lower Laberge and Dawson —

Chair: Order, please.

Ms. Van Bibber: I too would like to welcome and thank the officials from the Department of Tourism and Culture for being here today. I also agree with the Minister of Tourism and Culture when she stated "the world wants to be here". I believe that fully as well. It seems everywhere we go, if you say you are from the Yukon, somebody has a relative who has been here or wants to come here, came for the Trail — you name it.

I have some questions for the minister and we will start with questions specifically related to tourism. Yukon is a destination for winter festivals and events. Rendezvous has seen people come and go from all over the globe to take part in the festival as well as the Yukon Quest. Has any work been done over the past year on other initiatives to promote Yukon as a winter tourism destination?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, absolutely. As I mentioned in the first part of my speech — I still had half way to go, just so you know — so we will try to get to some of the points that were missed.

I had mentioned in my speech that we had hosted the winter tourism summit and there was a huge uptake. Most communities were represented there — 120 partners and stakeholders at this event. It was fantastic to see the industry come together and all the stakeholders, including Rendezvous, Yukon Quest and all of the festivals that are hosted throughout the winter season and into the summer season.

Dawson was well-represented there and spoke a lot about Thaw di Gras and the draw of that festival. I think we do have festivals throughout the Yukon during our winter months. We had fantastic discussions, and that is where we first tested our tourism development strategy tools that we have used over the last several months to engage with Yukoners, engage with all of our stakeholders and engage with all governments to talk about tourism overall — but a good focus was on winter tourism, so we know that is an area to grow. It was certainly in my mandate letter from the Premier to explore winter tourism options.

Winter tourism will certainly be a very big aspect of the tourism development strategy that is underway. It certainly is one of the components of that and something that people are talking about throughout the Yukon. At that summit, there were a lot of really fantastic ideas and new entrepreneurs who were there. It was really very inspiring to participate in that one day with all of our partners.

We are investing in the Yukon Now campaign, which is definitely a big investment for us this year. We are investing \$1.8 million into the continuation of Yukon Now. Two of the commercials are actually winter-focused. We also have, as I spoke about a little bit in the first part of my speech, the redesign of the website, which really focuses on all seasons within the Yukon. There is a huge area that we are filling now. You will see in the budget that there is \$200,000 allocated for content for the new website. We are working on that now. They just did the shooting for a new digital clip that will be used in new marketing. That will be a winter-focused marketing tool that will be used and you will see it coming out soon.

If you watch our new Travel Yukon website, you will see some of these new marketing tools coming out of there. You will see it through social media as well. There is huge social media — digital campaigning — that is happening now. Actually, I just had a meeting with our agency of record last Friday, when I was in Vancouver for the national inquiry — a one-day meeting with all of our partners — talking to Destination Canada, the corporation that is responsible for marketing Canada and the focus that they are putting on the north. Winter is certainly a very big part of that. I think we all agreed around the table that Canada needs the north in terms of the branding and the exercises that they are going through to promote Canada overall.

I had the chance to meet with our agency of record and talk to them about some of the work that they are doing on our behalf and to get a sense for myself, personally, of their commitment to the Yukon. I certainly got a good sense of that — that they are working hard and that they understand Yukoners. There is certainly a lot of psychology that is going into the marketing of Yukon and that is something that I got from both of those meetings with Destination Canada and our agency of record — Cossette.

Yes, there is certainly a lot of work going on to promote Yukon. As I have mentioned — the visitor exit survey — a lot of new data will come out of that because it will be a year-round look at tourism and all of the trends and the characteristics of the types of travellers who are coming.

I think I had a chance previously to talk about the Aurora flight that was done with Air North last November. That was hugely successful and we're certainly hoping to see this continue.

There is a lot of innovation and, again, I think this is something that I have mentioned before when I have had an opportunity to talk about tourism, which is the huge investment from our industry. It is really vital that we continue to work hand in hand with industry, with all of our stakeholders and looking at all of the new opportunities that are to come.

I think we certainly heard a great deal from all of the engagements that we are wrapping up at the end of this week — the engagements on the tourism development strategy. I think we have had 47 sessions or more — 51 sessions now. We're just wrapping that up this week and I'm sure we'll hear

a lot more coming out of that in terms of the development of winter tourism.

Lastly, I will say that October to April air arrivals were up eight percent and retail was up four percent during that time. That shows that there is a huge increase in visitation. Overnights were up eight percent compared to last winter and up 20 percent compared to the five-year average.

Ms. Van Bibber: Speaking about the visitor survey, there was \$305,000 allocated in this budget. Can the minister confirm that this amount has been increased from \$125,000 in order to cover phase 2, which began in the fall? Could the minister also explain what is covered with this increase? While we are on the topic, what type of questions would be asked of people taking the survey? How will the information be used going forward with your strategy?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, I can confirm that the forecast was \$125,000. This year, it is \$305,000. I am glad you raised the Yukon visitor exit survey. It has been awhile since we have done one. The last one was done six years ago. As I have said, we are looking at data from a lot of different sources, but this one is going to be really significant as we develop the Yukon tourism development strategy. I just want to really emphasize that it certainly isn't my strategy — it is Yukon's strategy, and that is what we are aiming for here. We are aiming for a strategy that every Yukoner can see themselves in and where we have considered all of the issues and concerns that people may have throughout Yukon.

Tourism is a complex sector that is constantly changing to meet the needs of today's visitor and the way that they plan their travel and what they want to do. We know that we have cultural explorers. We have folks who want to come and explore our land, but also want to explore from a cultural perspective. All of the data that we are gathering and that is being gathered on our behalf is really digging deep into the characteristics of the type of traveller who comes to Yukon. The Department of Tourism and Culture visitor survey assesses visitor characteristics, spending and travel patterns. This information is used to inform tourism development and marketing decisions made by the department and Yukon's tourism sector.

I just want to say that, when I was at Destination Canada last Friday, some of the deeper types of analyses that they are doing on our behalf is fantastic. It is going to be very helpful to us as we go forward and make decisions around investment and to different countries — emerging countries — for marketing and development in all those areas. The department is working — as I have said — with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to plan, develop and implement the visitor exit survey, which is being conducted from November 2017 to October 2018.

The majority of the exit survey in 2018 will be spent conducting interviews along the highway and exiting Yukon. These are good jobs for Yukoners; they have been working really hard on these surveys. I am not sure if folks in the Legislative Assembly have been stopped as they are exiting or entering Yukon — if you haven't, you will be, as the visitor exit survey unfolds.

Ms. Van Bibber: There is also a major IT project upgrading www.travel yukon.com. I imagine there are big hopes for the outcomes of this project. Will there be a change in the way inquiries are tracked, or the ability to track the inquiries about what people are interested in on the Web?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. Yes, absolutely. This is a big change; I think everyone agrees it is a huge improvement over what we have had. It is much easier for us to add content, to make changes, to be responsive and to add content from our stakeholders. As I have said, we have allocated some additional dollars this year — \$200,000 for content. If people have content that they are interested in having our department look at, they can certainly approach Tourism and Culture to discuss the content that they have. We have had some really great submissions. I have heard some great stories about time-lapse types of aurora lights being captured in different areas of the Yukon. We are certainly interested in that type of content and the innovation of Yukoners to highlight and promote our photographers and our Yukon artists as well.

It really is tracking through our new customer relationship management system. It allows us to be able to — in real time — look at who is thinking about travelling to the Yukon, and it gives us an ability to look at the types of characteristics, where people are checking in from and what they're looking at — and we're able to tailor to their needs. It's very interactive. It's a much different system from what we had.

I can say that we did the launch and many jurisdictions are looking at this. We're really hopeful for some even bigger recognition that may be coming sometime soon around this website. We see this as a major investment for Yukon, and it's going to tie right into the new Yukon tourism development strategy. It will allow us to work more effectively with our partners to ensure that they are promoted within the website and that people are finding it interactive enough so that they are able to really explore what they're interested in and to tailor their trips to what they want — because there is so much to offer in Yukon.

I don't think we sometimes, even as Yukoners, know what there is out there, so any Yukoners who are interested in different experiences in the Yukon, come and have a look at the new www.travel yukon.com website. It's fantastic and the department has worked really hard with our agency of record. These are some of the areas that they have advised on and we have met their recommendations with action.

Getting that up and running was a lot of work for the department, and I'm really proud of the work that staff have done in the department to make this a priority. It makes their work a lot easier as well, because they're able to gather data that we just didn't have before, so it's a very useful tool. I would be happy if anyone is interested — the department loves to talk about the work that they do, and we would be happy to offer more in-depth — maybe technical — sessions with folks, if they're interested in that.

Ms. Van Bibber: When somebody calls the Department of Tourism and Culture at their 1-800 number,

who do they reach? Is it a local employee or is it a subcontracted firm that handles these calls?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: They reach our local visitor reception centre.

Ms. Van Bibber: That's good to know.

Under capital with Tourism, there is \$200,000 earmarked for content acquisition. Can the minister please explain what types of content they are going to acquire and where the content acquisition is going to be used?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have spoken about this a little bit already.

It really ties in with our new website that I just spoke about. It will be used to purchase photos, videos and stories, and also to produce them if we are unable to acquire them from outside sources. There will be publications, visitor guides, social media — so it is really to populate that new www.travel yukon.com website and to make sure that it reflects all of the seasons. That is really important to us, that we now have a website that is interactive. You can go in and look at different seasons and plan your travel. It is really important for us to have up-to-date, current types of content within that website. It is an investment, for sure. It is making sure that we are up to date. We don't want any stagnant kind of information on that website. We want to keep it so that when people come in — they may have a look at the website and then not come back for two years. So we want to make sure that it is fresh and it is up to date. That is something that we actually talked to Cossette about last week. In their presentation to me, they went over how that whole system works. They are very pleased that the government has made these types of investments to ensure that the information is kept up to date.

It is a really great opportunity for Yukoners to contribute to tourism in the Yukon and to promote what they are doing. Some of the content is unsolicited. We do have really specific requirements, so there are some limitations, of course. We want to make sure that we get the right content under the various seasons and ensure that we have the right type of images and content for the type of traveller that we know is looking at our website.

Ms. Van Bibber: We just passed the two anniversaries. Could the minister provide a list by community of the initiatives and expenditures for both Canada 150 and of the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway? Could she also provide us with whatever feedback — even on the banners — she has heard on Canada 150 and the Alaska Highway 75th anniversary?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, last year was a really remarkable year. I know that it really contributed to the overall tourism for Yukon, and overall for Canada in terms of the Canada 150. It was a huge focus for marketing Canada last year. When I was able to meet with my colleagues across Canada, it was really evident that everyone else has had the best year in tourism. I think Canada is doing a great job and celebrating what is important to us as Canadians.

The Government of Yukon entered into agreements for \$230,000 for the Yukon Arts Centre to engage with First

Nations and municipal governments to develop projects for both Canada 150 and the Alaska Highway 75th anniversary. The fund was divided as follows: \$150,000 for Canada 150; \$40,000 for the Alaska Highway; and \$40,000 for outreach and travel.

The communities that accessed the money — Beaver Creek, White River First Nation, received \$5,000 and their project included constructing a new sign, highlighting both the Alaska Highway 75th anniversary and the Canada 150 celebration. That was a great little project. Burwash Landing, Kluane First Nation, accessed \$5,000 to host traditional hide-tanning workshops over the fall and winter for the community. The Carcross/Tagish First Nation Development Corporation accessed \$5,000 for signage. The Carcross Recreation Board accessed \$5,000 for enhancement of the community skating rink by providing lighting, including the purchase of a generator to run the lights.

Carmacks, through the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation — and I will just list them because there are three for Carmacks: Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation accessed \$5,000 for the 20th anniversary of their interpretive centre celebration day and dinner; the Yukon College Carmacks campus, for a mural project, accessed \$5,000; and the Village of Carmacks, to upgrade new signage in and around the community for some well-used trails, accessed \$5,000.

The City of Dawson received \$5,000 for the Dawson annual Celebration of Lights. This was a December event at the waterfront. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in received \$3,400 for the 2018 Myth and Medium held February 19 to 22. The theme was around food, culture and identity.

Faro, through the Town of Faro, received \$5,000 to hire a local artist to help restore mural panels depicting the history of Faro.

Haines Junction, through Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, received \$5,000 for Southern Tutchone traffic signs and increased safety throughout their community — Klukshu, Haines Junction, Canyon City, Champagne and the Takhini River subdivision.

There was another allocation of \$15,000 for the Da Kù Festival, which happens in June. The Village of Haines Junction received \$3,000 for the Canada Day celebration.

Mayo — through the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun — received \$5,000 for a mural on the exterior walls of their grocery stores, and I think there was another one as well. I was up there and they were really proud to show me those murals and the youth who did them. The Village of Mayo received \$5,000 to purchase a covered trailer to be used for storing various types of event equipment and whatnot, including the Canada Day equipment that they use.

The Mount Lorne community association received \$5,000 to develop a 30-minute puppet show with a Mount Lorne theme. The theme was for the Canada 150 — it was a really great project.

In Old Crow, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation received \$5,000 for the artistic commission for the John Tizya Centre.

Pelly Crossing, through the Selkirk First Nation, received \$8,750 to host an event — a youth-focused youth bullying event, focused around workshops with Don Burnstick.

The Tagish Community Association received \$5,000 for four community art workshops in four different mediums.

The Village of Teslin received \$5,000 for a Canada Day celebration; the Teslin Tlingit Council — for their bi-annual Haa K̓usteeyí Celebration, they received \$5,000. The Town of Watson Lake received \$5,000 to purchase a newly released northern lights show that was filmed in Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Other organizations included the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association — they received \$15,000 for Voices Across the Water, which was basically around traditional water transportation. The Skookum Jim Friendship Centre received \$9,800 to do a youth arts mentorship program.

In terms of the Alaska Highway, communities that received funding — I won't go through the details on them — Beaver Creek received \$5,000; Burwash Landing, \$5,000; the Village of Haines Junction received just under \$7,000; the Village of Teslin received \$5,000; Watson Lake received \$5,000; Whitehorse, \$5,000; Ta'an Kwäch'an Council, \$5,000; the City of Whitehorse, \$5,000.

I think you also had a question about the banners. The tourism banners were designed — and we went through this last year — for a two-year use. We are now in our second year, so we will soon be putting out another call and soliciting art for the 2019-20 banners.

Ms. Van Bibber: I am going to move on to tourism infrastructure, because I have a few questions. As we know, most of our visitors use the roadways and the highways. Roads, bridge repairs and maintenance are always welcome for our visitors, both local and outside people. As these expensive machines now travel to and fro, road conditions become a hot topic. You had mentioned partnership with other departments. Does the department share information it receives from visitors on road conditions — good and bad — with Department of Highways and Public Works and do you work in collaboration with getting things fixed?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, absolutely. Taking a one-government approach to issues that impact tourism is essential. I work very closely with my colleagues and, when we become aware of issues that are being pointed out by visitors or by folks travelling our highways, we bring them to the attention of Highways and Public Works and work with them to find a solution or to look at ways to mitigate the issues. We get complaints through our VICs, as well, and we share that information. We have even received information from the Inuvik visitor centre, and we have case-worked that through Highways and Public Works to address the issues that visitors have on our side of the highway. We are working as one government on this.

I think last year, we talked a little bit about the Dome Road and the clearing of that road. We have actually attended meetings with the Klondike Visitors Association, alongside

my colleague, the Minister for Highways and Public Works, to talk about the issues.

We were in Watson Lake recently. We heard issues that pertained to Highways and Public Works. When we came back we immediately had the discussion with the Minister for Highways and Public Works, and they had a visit just within the last week with the Town of Watson Lake to discuss those issues. We get a lot of people who are very forthcoming to talk to us about issues that they have, whether it's highways or whether it's outhouses or other issues throughout the territory. We work as one government to address those issues, whether it is highways or something with campgrounds. That will be a huge strength behind the Yukon tourism development strategy as well. We have an internal working group that is working together as the tourism development strategy is being developed and unfolding. We also have an internal committee that works at an official level to ensure that we're having the discussions that we need to be having.

As we go forward, I see that will be a big strength behind the tourism development strategy, in terms of strengthening our communication with each other and continuing to build relationships and knowing that infrastructure in this area impacts visitor satisfaction.

It also helps us to meet the needs of our local communities because, when we become aware that maybe our communities aren't raising with us — sometimes visitors are more forthcoming in telling us that this is what the issue is. If we are able to address it, then we are able to address an issue for a community member as well.

In September, TIAY had their AGM in Dawson, and we actually had the Deputy Minister of Highways and Public Works come and join us. As we go forward in the future, especially as we have the new tourism development strategy to work from and make decisions by, we will definitely have more interaction by more ministers on all of the various areas that tourism touches.

Ms. Van Bibber: Well, you mentioned my hot topic — outhouses. They are a mess and they never seem to change, and I don't know what the solution is. When our visitors are going up and down the highways — and I see them. Even if they have a big motorhome, they will stop and use a facility. Sometimes, I am moving in behind them and it's not a pleasant experience. We just saw in the paper last week that there was a break-in at the Stewart Crossing facility there. It was closed, so people had to use the outhouses. One was locked and the other was filthy.

So even for locals throughout the year, these are facilities that we do need to continue to keep clean. When the new design came out for outhouses with the concrete floors and big space, I thought, "Wow, this will be easy to clean" — not true. Can the minister work with Highways and Public Works and/or Environment or whatever department to keep them clean year-round?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It doesn't matter where I go — I end up talking about outhouses. They say the job is glamorous, but I don't know. We are talking outhouses most of the time.

It is an essential service. I completely agree. It is part of the experience, and we need these services throughout — for Yukon residents, but we also need to ensure that they are there for our visitors. What I have found is that there are four departments that are responsible at various levels for outhouses in the Yukon: Environment is responsible for those that are in campgrounds; Community Services is responsible for public washrooms that are in buildings, like the Carcross Pavilion, for instance; Highways and Public Works is responsible for them all along the highways and anywhere there is a public road; and Tourism and Culture is responsible for them on heritage sites. So there are four departments.

This is an area around infrastructure and management of infrastructure that we will address in the Yukon tourism development strategy. We definitely know that there is an issue there — certainly an issue in winter, and in maintenance through the summer as well. We know that there are issues there that we aim to address — and to create some more efficiencies. There will be some action around this. I can assure the member opposite of that.

Ms. Van Bibber: Good to hear. I will be checking.

The Yukon Sawmill — I saw the ads that were out for applicants for use of that building now that it is complete in the historic site in Dawson. Have you had any good applicants and is that to be let soon?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The Yukon Sawmill is a really exciting development under the historic restoration unit. They have been working on this for a number of years. I actually went and had a look inside the building during one of my recent visits to Dawson. I wanted to see how the work is progressing. It is very tedious work that is happening there because they are trying to restore it at a level that is historic. It is very specialized work that is happening there.

We are doing it in phases. Right now we are doing the fire suppression and the plumbing, and we have an allocation for more work for this year, which is why we did the expression of interest. We definitely have had lots of conversations with interested parties. We are assessing what we have received right now. No decisions have been made at all.

This is a very prime location for a business, and so we are really hopeful that we will get a tenant who will be able to develop it into something that is uniquely Yukon. Again, there is work that is continuing to happen at the Yukon Sawmill. They have done it in small phases throughout. I know that we have had difficulties in finding contractors to actually do the work, and so we're happy that there is work happening on the Yukon Sawmill as we speak. Next time I go to Dawson, I will check in again to see what it looks like because it is a really fantastic space. It is exciting to see new locations with so much historic value open up like that.

Ms. Van Bibber: I have a few questions for the minister around Tourism Yukon's 2017 year-end report. The report shows a significant decrease in attendance to a number of visitor information centres, including the airport, Watson Lake and Carcross. Further, the VIC in Dawson City as well

as in Haines Junction have experienced large jumps in attendance.

In the case of Haines Junction, there is an increase of 35,000 for 2017. Can the minister confirm how these numbers — if these attendance numbers are correct — are measured for each VIC?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. Yes, we actually use electronic counters. Every time someone comes in and out, it is counted.

I may have missed part of the question in terms of what you were asking specifically about — because, yes, there are certainly increases in different areas throughout the Yukon. Some may be decreases, but overall, the visitation in Yukon is up. Maybe you could ask that question again if I haven't answered it thoroughly enough.

Ms. Van Bibber: If you are using electronic means, somebody could move back and forth between the doorway a few times and be counted a few times, so it kind of skews the numbers.

National historic sites also were reported to have a large increase in visitors last year. Can the minister confirm how the department tracks visitors to these sites?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Van Bibber: Not national — okay.

With respect to the museums and cultural centres, it seems that the attendance has been measured in the past but there is nothing reported in 2017. Can the minister confirm whether attendance numbers for last year do in fact exist, and does she have access to those numbers to present?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We have those numbers. We do not have the 2017-18 numbers yet, but we will have them. We work closely with all of our museums and cultural centres, and it will be part of what they will provide — whatever the level of access was to their facilities.

In terms of national historic sites, we work really closely with Parks, as well, so those are numbers that we can certainly and do look — we can obtain the numbers and we do look at them as part of our overall view of visitation to Yukon and access to different areas. They have certainly come on strongly with the Yukon tourism development strategy and we are working really closely with them, as we see Parks as major partner going forward and Canada in general.

Ms. Van Bibber: There is \$170,000 set aside for cultural camps and indigenous events in Yukon parks. Can you elaborate on which First Nations get the funding or is it equally split? What Yukon parks will be used for these events?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is funding that is within the Department of Environment's budget; it is a transfer of dollars to YG under the NWT *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. One notable thing is that there will be \$55,000 for an elder-youth archaeological project in this particular fiscal year budget. It is an exciting project; I had a chance to go to Herschel Island last summer and I thought immediately that we need to be doing more interaction between youth and elders on the island to really explore it before the opportunities are lost — literally. The island is deteriorating so fast as a result of

climate change and the heating of the waters around. Some of the historic buildings — all of the sod houses had collapsed.

One of the projects I thought would be fantastic is if there could be an opportunity for youth and elders to come together to rebuild them and to even look at some of the ice caches that are deteriorating as well. There is huge opportunity for interaction between our elders and youth on this island to explore archaeological finds and palaeontology. It is almost guaranteed that you are going to find something really amazing. I myself picked up a vertebrae of a whale just along the shore of Herschel Island — dated probably 25,000 years — and vertebrae and fragments of ancient horses that are dated back around the same time.

It is a huge opportunity and we are really happy to have that partnership with the NWT Inuvialuit to do this really great work together.

Ms. Van Bibber: I see that the government has allocated \$500,000 to the Yukon permanent art storage under capital within Cultural Services. I understand the art collection needs modern air-controlled areas to house and to keep for generations. Can the minister expand on what is being done, where this planned permanent collection will be housed and how soon we can see progress on this particular item?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, we are definitely out of space. Right now, the collection is housed at the Yukon Arts Centre, and you need the category A storage.

We explored options of partnerships with Yukon First Nations. We explored other options within Whitehorse as well to have a different space to house some of the collection, but, right now, what we are focusing on is a new collapsible type of storage. The capital will go toward the current location and more efficient storage units for the art collection. We are looking at options into the future, so that whatever infrastructure we put into place here will hopefully be able to be used in some of the future options that we are looking at.

I didn't get a chance to talk about this — it was sort of at the tail end of my budget speech — and I am not sure that I will get a chance again to get up to talk about it, but there are a few capital projects that we have allocated some dollars to under the envelope of Highways and Public Works for planning.

I just want to talk about them quickly. Yukon archaeological and palaeontological artifacts are considered to be absolutely world-class and we want to move forward in planning for a heritage resource centre that will provide the storage and security these items need, while enabling maximum opportunity for research and education about them. Our government will extensively consult with First Nation governments on a facility aimed at a collaborative management model, once completed. We also recognize that, while a centralized heritage resource centre is needed, community heritage needs must also be met. That is why our government has allocated funds in 2018-19 for the planning of a paleo field station in Dawson City. This work will be done in full consultation with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and industry partners, such as the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

Our third capital planning project involves an expansion of partnership for a new visitor information centre for Watson Lake. The members of this House debated the need for the community development approach to the Watson Lake visitor information centre and, as Minister of Tourism and Culture, I have a strong interest in this project moving forward. I have talked about this a little bit during other opportunities, where I have spoken about the recent visits that I have had to that community and the approach that we like to take with Watson Lake.

Those are three projects that are contained in a planning envelope under Highways and Public Works. It's not something that you will see in our budget, but it is something that they have been allocated for, and we're working on these three projects right now in terms of the planning phase. It's well underway.

Right now, the only category 1 storage in Yukon is the Yukon Archives and the Yukon Arts Centre. Those are the two options that we have, and we're continuing to work with the Friends of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection to find other short-term solutions, as we move forward on other plans into the future long term. My hope is that we will house our collection in a heritage resource centre.

Ms. Van Bibber: I have a couple of questions related to funding allocations and transfer payments. The arts operating fund has jumped from \$668,000 to \$825,000. What are the thoughts around this increase? Why was it needed for this particular fund?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The increase is due to a surplus from Yukon Lotteries that was allocated to the arts operating fund, so we saw the increase of \$167,000.

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Van Bibber that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 11, 2018:

34-2-53

Yukon State of the Environment: Reporting on environmental indicators — 2018 — Highlights (Frost)

The following legislative return was tabled April 11, 2018:

34-2-122

Response to Written Question No. 24 re: physicians and nurses employed in Yukon (Frost)

The following documents were filed April 11, 2018:

34-2-46

Fleet Vehicle Agency 2018-2019 Business Plan (Mostyn)

34-2-47

Queen's Printer Agency 2018/2019 Business Plan (Mostyn)