



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 2

3<sup>rd</sup> Session

34<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Monday, October 7, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Fall Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

<b>Ted Adel</b>	Copperbelt North
<b>Paolo Gallina</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Don Hutton</b>	Mayo-Tatchun

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Harris Cox
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, October 7, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**Speaker's statement in recognition of artwork exhibits in the Chamber**

**Speaker:** In keeping with our tradition of including Yukon artists' works in this Legislature, I am pleased to note that we have some new exhibits in this Chamber this fall.

In the case on my right, closest to the Chair is a work by Brian Walker entitled "Directions", which uses copper, abalone shell, and opercula. Top marks to those who can determine what opercula is — but great: opercula.

In the second case on the same side are two works: the first is a glaze on stoneware by Phyllis Fiendell, titled "Peacock Ore Plate"; and the second is a carving by Ken Anderson titled "The Wolf and the Raven", which uses birch and acrylic. On the left, closest to the Chair, is a sculpture by Kitty Smith, which is untitled. There is also a pair of gloves created by Fanny Charlie with beads and beaver fur on tanned moosehide. Finally, in the second case on my left, Elizabeth Bosely has created a beautiful pair of mukluks titled "My Mother, My Inspiration", made of home-tanned moosehide, molten cloth, beads, yarn, rickrack, and coyote fur.

We will have a reception honouring the artists, and of course all members and members of the public will be invited. Thank you for your time for those introductions.

We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

## DAILY ROUTINE

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming today to the Legislative Assembly Sue Ross, the president of the Yukon Teachers' Association.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to help me in welcoming some guests to the Legislative Assembly today: Nora Merkel, who is featured in the tribute we will be doing in a few moments and is featured in the art exhibit that is happening here today; and also Ellen Davignon, who is one of our featured women. I would like to welcome them here today. Of course, Nora is accompanied by her son Randy Merkel — welcome — and, again, welcome back to the Legislative Assembly Chief Rick McLean of the Tahltan Nation.

I would also like to welcome Hillary Aitken, who is our new director of the Women's Directorate. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Mr. Kent:** I would like to welcome two individuals to the gallery here today: a former long-time neighbour of mine, Mike Stanock, and Carel Alexander — they have joined us here for these proceedings.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further introductions of visitors? Are there any reports of committees? Are there any petitions?

Sorry, I have bypassed a whole section — a little rusty. I apologize to the House and to the members.

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Women's History Month

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely my honour to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Women's History Month.

October is Women's History Month, a month we use to thank and acknowledge all women and girls throughout Canada's history and a time to recognize the trailblazing women who have helped to shape Yukon. Women's History Month has been celebrated in Canada since 1992. The theme of this year remains #MakeAnImpact, to honour women and girls.

When I think about impact, I stand here reflecting on the incredible and courageous movement that is taking place in real time internationally with young activists like Canada's own Autumn Peltier, a water protector, and Greta Thunberg, a climate change champion. Their movement has created a spark throughout the world, and I urge Yukoners to use this time to reflect on women who have shaped our history as leaders, elders, and activists. Not only do we celebrate their victories, but we must also acknowledge the enormous challenges that they have faced.

In 1927, five brave women asked the Supreme Court of Canada to declare that women were persons under the meaning of the *British North America Act*. The court said no. The Famous Five, as they were known, took their case to the Privy Council of England, and on October 18, 1929, the Privy Council overruled the Supreme Court of Canada, affirming that, yes, women were indeed persons. Although this is something that we should celebrate, it is also a time to acknowledge that marginalized women such as indigenous women and other women of colour were not considered to be persons. Indigenous women in Canada could not vote until 1960.

This year offers us a chance to open dialogue and discuss how we can work toward an even stronger future within our territory. On October 18, Yukon Senator Pat Duncan and Yukon Commissioner Angélique Bernard will be hosting an event at the MacBride Museum to mark this historic day.

I would like to thank all of the women's organizations in the Yukon that are helping lift women up and overcome challenges that they are faced with, especially those who are marginalized or seen as "less than".

Today I was honoured to host a reception where we unveiled a selection of portraits of incredible Yukon women in

the foyer of this building. These paintings are selections from the series *Yukon Women, 50 Over 50*, created by local artist Valerie Hodgson. Take the time to learn about the incredible stories and contributions of these and other women in our communities.

We are very lucky to come from a territory with a rich history of female leadership. In Yukon, women in leadership is normal. As we look toward the future, I encourage all of you to support the women and girls in your life and in our community. Together we can contribute to foster a Yukon where every woman and girl has the opportunity to create a legacy in her own way.

I look forward to paying tribute to some very incredible Yukon women throughout this month.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Women's History Month held in Canada during the month of October. The theme this year, as was mentioned, is #MakeAnImpact, and the month will honour all women who have contributed to society and history.

We have come a long way since our foremothers first started to rattle the chains for more autonomy and freedom to express their views. For centuries, there was a place for women, and it was not in the workplace of society. The line between the poor and the wealthy was also large, where the wealthy could have nannies and domestics and where the poorer classes had no such luxuries. These women would still have to care for their families as well as do hard labour for others.

The focus we put on well-known women who have been recognized as trailblazers through the decades is documented and shared. In the Yukon, names such as Kate Carmack, Martha Black, and Victoria Faulkner come to mind — but the list is so long that time does not permit me to continue.

I grew up in an era where women's groups organized all community events — the Women's Auxiliary, the IODE, and the Nutty Club, who put out a newsletter for Dawson covering the weddings and the births and who went out on holidays and when they returned, as well as all the coming events.

Well-known Yukoner Ione Christensen has given much of her time and energy no matter what she is involved in — mayor, Commissioner of Yukon, senator — to include and champion women. The newly formed Whitehorse chapter, Lodge No. 2, of pioneer women was her initiative. This group has brought together Yukon women who have been here for 20 years or more to ensure that women's stories are told, recorded, and celebrated. I would like to say I'm an active member — but nonetheless, I am a member. The few times a year that I'm able to join a meeting, I so enjoy championing what we can accomplish together.

One story was read by a member, and she wrote about her mother. She started the story by saying: "My mother was not famous. She did not work outside the home and she didn't do anything spectacular." But this mother, alongside her husband, did raise a family, she helped the community where she could, and she participated in all local events. To her children and

those around her, she was very special, and she did spectacular things. I was so struck by this and felt we must recognize those many, many women who, day to day, do make a difference in lives around them. I applaud all who do and all who don't make the headlines.

There are so many stats that state the inequalities — the way things were and the way things are, the size of families, the ability to ensure that we can afford a certain standard of life, as we know most women today must work outside the home to ensure that standard. Women are not recognized for having birthed nations, but they have literally given birth to people who have shaped our world and our moral compasses. Women have been there and will continue to be here to ensure that our society is inclusive and compassionate. We continue to work on behalf of women across the country and in Yukon who aspire to better things.

I will leave you with a quote by Diane Mariechild — quote: "A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform."

*Applause*

**Ms. Hanson:** I am pleased to rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to October as Women's History Month, the first of a suite of celebrations during October that offer us insight into the important and often overlooked role of women and girls, historically as well as today.

As has been mentioned, the theme this year is #MakeAnImpact, in honour of the women and girls who have made a lasting impact as leaders, as the first in their field of endeavour, and as women and girls who believed and who believe in something so deeply that they have invested their time and their energy. Over the course of this month, we hope to see greater recognition at the national and territorial level of women business leaders, politicians, researchers, artists, and activists. These women of impact have helped shape Yukon and Canada into a thriving, diverse, and more equitable country through their own efforts and often at great personal cost, their achievements driven by a desire to make a difference.

In addition to the government-sponsored sites, such as "Women of Impact in Canada", which contain much useful and often fascinating information, the intrepid reader can find all sorts of material about cool Canadian women from every corner of the country — famous and forgotten faces in science, sport, politics, war and peace, arts and entertainment, and many other fields.

As Canadians we have a reputation for being modest and for not celebrating — in many cases, not even recognizing — the historic significance of actions past and present of those in our midst. Women's History Month is an opportunity to change that and to recognize the remarkable women in Canadian history, from the fate of adventurous Gudridur the Viking to the murdered Mi'kmaq activist Anna Mae Aquash, or Elsie MacGill, who became the first woman in the world to design an airplane and supervise the production of the Hawker Hurricane fighter plane but was never able to fly herself because she was confined to a wheelchair due to polio, or even

Canadian film star Mary Pickford, who developed into a shrewd business woman, became Hollywood's first millionaire by the age of 24, and became the first female movie mogul. Youth has its advantages, Mr. Speaker. There are so many other fascinating, illuminating, horrific, and inspiring situations that women have faced and overcome if we only look and listen.

As we have heard today, there have been many female firsts in Yukon. In her book *Yukon's women of power: Political pioneers in a northern Canadian colony*, former Yukon MLA Joyce Hayden noted that in the 1970s in Yukon, because of feminist lobbying, labour laws were changed to allow women to work in non-traditional jobs, including in Yukon mines. Child care centres were set up, with some support from the Yukon government. Post-secondary education courses came to the Yukon, and life in general became easier for women and their families. Think of our transit system, Mr. Speaker — Whitehorse transit was started by a group of volunteer women.

All in all, those early activist women of the 1970s changed the territory from a male-dominated, male-oriented community to one that fostered healthy diversity and family life. Who can forget that shortly after Audrey McLaughlin was elected as the New Democratic Party MP for Yukon, she was elected in 1989 as the national NDP leader, becoming the first woman in Canadian history to lead a national party? Audrey coined the phrase “from sea to sea to sea” to bring a greater definition of Canada and the inclusion of the north.

She was also known for her feminist views. Hayden quotes McLaughlin as saying, “I make no apology for being a feminist and I think it's time we took back the language. When people say to me, ‘I'd like to talk about women's issues,’ I reply that every issue is a women's issue. How can the environment, defence, the economy and peace not be women's issues?”

Mr. Speaker, it is not just the names that we've heard through history that inspire us. I expect that any of the many hundreds of Yukoners who participated in the climate change strikes over the past weeks can think of a few names of young — some pretty young, early-teen women whose names should be added to the list of women who make an impact.

*Applause*

### In recognition of World Teachers' Day

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I rise today to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to Yukon educators in recognition of the 25<sup>th</sup> annual World Teachers' Day.

In 1994, UNESCO proclaimed October 5 to be World Teachers' Day to commemorate the anniversary of the 1966 signing of the *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. On this day, over 100 countries around the world joined to recognize and honour the valuable contributions educators make in the lives of young people in our communities.

Today I would like to recognize Yukon teachers, including aboriginal language teachers, educational assistants, administrators, school staff, and retired teachers for their vital work as leaders and role models.

I would also like to acknowledge Yukon First Nation elders and knowledge-keepers who are traditional leaders and

role models and who too have a vital role in shaping the youth and the leaders of tomorrow. All of these dedicated people are the ones with the most influence over student success at school. Their relationships with students are essential for a young person to thrive in their learning.

Mr. Speaker, we ask a lot of our educators. They pass on the knowledge and life skills needed at each stage of development. It is their job to inspire, to encourage, and to challenge young minds. They teach reading, writing, and math — the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy — and help students apply these skills to communication, to critical and creative thinking, to emotional and personal social skills, ethics, and so much more.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation theme for 2019 World Teachers' Day is — and I quote: “I Teach for a Better World”. Yukon educators work together toward this goal every day. They are bringing new school curriculum to life for students through hands-on learning, through career and financial education for different ages, and through relevant content for Yukon about First Nation languages and histories and ways of knowing, being, and doing in all courses at all grade levels. They are teaching students new skills like teamwork and organization and making connections between communications and science and traditional knowledge through experiences like outdoor bike programs, musical instruments and band programs, bison hunts with their schools, or spending their spare time furthering their own learning — all in the name of serving the students and the school community. They are also on their own personal and professional learning journeys and encouraging students to become active citizens and advocates for social justice and communities. Educators work to instill a love of lifelong learning in Yukon students. Every day, educators introduce new ideas and give students the confidence and skills to do their best not only in school but in life as well.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues in the Yukon Liberal government, I want to thank Yukon teachers, educational assistants, administrators, school staff, retired educators, and Yukon First Nation elders and knowledge-keepers for all their vital work with Yukon students.

*Applause*

**Mr. Kent:** Before I start my tribute, I would like to thank the Premier for his and also for the time he spent as a teacher and educator in our territory before he decided to join us in this Legislative Assembly.

I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize educators across the Yukon on World Teachers' Day, which took place this past Saturday, October 5.

I too want to thank our teachers, administrators, para-professionals, and other educators who have a hand in preparing our children for their future. Teachers have my utmost respect for the immeasurable work they do and the dedication they have for the next generation of Yukoners. We are so fortunate to have such amazing educators here in the Yukon, each of whom deserve special recognition for their role in supporting each and every Yukon student through their educational journey and beyond.

The role of the teacher in Yukon and across Canada has changed a great deal since my days in school. We are seeing a shift in focus in the classroom, with teachers placing emphasis on hands-on learning, STEM subjects, experiential sciences, and other areas that may not have had as much of a role in the classroom when my generation was in school.

We see teachers taking education a step further, furthering their own training to align with the curriculum today and finding new ways to ignite curiosity in our children. We see educators teaching not only arithmetic and grammar, but fostering creative problem-solving with modern problems. Our children are learning to code and are exploring robotics in elementary school. They are learning in the classroom as well as on the land, taking part in traditional pursuits and applying practical knowledge in the Yukon outdoors.

I can appreciate the need for change in how education is delivered and knowledge is absorbed, and I am quite confident in the skills and abilities of our Yukon teachers to ensure that it is done right.

So once again, I would like to thank each and every education who helps our kids, navigate, learn, grow, and adapt each and every day.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to celebrate teachers around the globe and those who support them, but especially to those teachers and support staff in Yukon for World Teachers' Day.

People who choose education as their profession are remarkable individuals. Being a teacher is about going in early and staying late. It's about working weekends and into the holiday breaks. It's about coaching sport teams and running school clubs. It is about being a trusted ear in turbulent times. It is about problem-solving and creative solutions. Being a teacher is making sure that your charges have what they need to be the best possible learners when they need to learn. Being a teacher is hard work. Teachers don't work in isolation — they work in school settings with support staff, like principals, administration staff, and custodial staff. They share classrooms with language teachers, educational assistants, and parent volunteers. Education is truly a team sport.

As we celebrate the contributions of Yukon educators, let us not forget the challenges they face: threats of both physical and verbal violence, exhaustion and burnout, and the housing insecurity they face in communities. As teachers strive to ensure that inclusive and equitable quality education is a reality in Yukon, so must we ensure that the supports teachers need and deserve are there for them. So today, we celebrate and thank teachers.

*Applause*

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** The Chair has for tabling the Yukon Legislative Assembly's respectful conduct policy. This policy was approved by the Members' Services Board on June 12, 2019, and entered into effect immediately upon approval.

Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the Yukon Liquor Corporation annual report, 2018-19, pursuant to section 16 of the *Liquor Act*.

I also have for tabling, Mr. Speaker, for the very first time, the Cannabis Yukon annual report, 2018-19, pursuant to section 15 of the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*.

**Mr. Kent:** I have two letters for tabling with respect to the planning committee for the new Whistle Bend school.

**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?

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 3: *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I move that Bill No. 3, entitled *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 3, entitled *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 3 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to complete an innovation plan and a five-year funding plan for innovation in the technology sector to support community development and strengthen Yukon's economic base.

**Ms. White:** I rise to give notice of the following motion: THAT this House recognize:

(1) that human-caused climate change is contributing to global climate warming;

(2) that the Yukon in Canada's north is warming at three times the global average;

(3) that climate change is a threat to our land, water, wildlife, and way of life; and

(4) that irreversible and catastrophic climate change can only be prevented if we collectively reduce our carbon emissions to near zero early in the second half of the century;

THEREFORE, this House urges the Government of Yukon to declare a territorial climate emergency and that the Government of Yukon develop a comprehensive internal

assessment process that would apply the lens of climate change to all government decision-making by reviewing how all projects, policies, legislative decisions, funding increases, and infrastructure projects will contribute to or reduce carbon pollution and mitigate climate change risks to Yukoners.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House recognizes that Yukon is experiencing the impacts of a climate change emergency driven by human activity that impacts the environment, biodiversity, Yukoners' health and the Yukon economy, and urges the Government of Yukon to continue to take action to achieve the following four goals:

- (1) reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- (2) ensure Yukoners have access to reliable, affordable, and renewable energy;
- (3) adapt to the impacts of climate change; and
- (4) build a green economy.

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

THAT a Select Committee on Electoral Reform be established;

THAT the membership committee be comprised of two members of the Yukon Liberal Party caucus, two members of the Yukon Party caucus and one member from the Yukon New Democratic Party caucus;

THAT the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Leader of the Third Party name their respective caucus members to the committee by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 2019 Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly;

THAT the committee conduct public hearings for the purpose of receiving the views and opinions of Yukon residents and prepare a report on matters including but not limited to:

- (1) proposing the best system to replace the first-past-the-post voting system, including consideration of proportional representation;
- (2) considering fixed dates of elections;
- (3) considering legislative amendments in order that voters have the final say when a Member of the Legislative Assembly changes caucus affiliation after being elected; and
- (4) considering banning corporate, union, and Outside contributions to Yukon political parties;

THAT the committee report its findings and recommendation in the 2020 Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly;

THAT the committee have the power to call for persons, papers, and records; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to create a plan going forward

for the renovation or replacement of one RCMP detachment building every five years as outlined in the 2012 *Territorial Police Service Agreement* between Canada and Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to allow direct sales from local beer and liquor manufacturers to bars, restaurants, and consumers and eliminate the markup on local products.

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

THAT this House urges the Premier to honour his commitment to restore confidence in the Yukon's development assessment process by establishing a collaborative framework in partnership with Yukon First Nations and industry to deal with timelines and reassessments under the YESAA process.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House thanks the hard-working crews from ATCO Electric Yukon, Yukon Energy Corporation, the Department of Highways and Public Works, the City of Whitehorse, and Yukon municipalities for working throughout the weekend and evenings to address the power outages and road conditions caused by the large snowfall this past weekend.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to commit to improving safety on the Alaska Highway in front of the Porter Creek Super A by adding a turning lane and a slip lane.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to build thriving communities by recognizing local needs, interests, and solutions and using local Yukon developers when developing lots.

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

THAT this House urges the Liberal government to respect the importance of ensuring that the process for considering potential changes to the electoral system is fair and not biased toward the governing party by taking the following actions:

- (1) abandoning their current unilateral approach to electoral reform, including rescinding the appointment of the two remaining members of the government's commission;
- (2) ensuring that the appointment of a new commission on electoral reform is done through an all-party process that gives equal say to every party instead of allowing the Liberal government to hand-pick the members; and
- (3) developing the terms of reference for a commission on electoral reform in collaboration with the Official Opposition and the Third Party.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to improve highway safety at the intersection of the Mayo Road and the

Alaska Highway by moving forward with the project that was supposed to begin construction in the 2018 construction season, including widening two kilometres of the Alaska Highway and lengthening the turning lane and having a through lane.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Liberal government to live up to their obligation to provide Members of the Legislative Assembly with a printed copy of the throne speech in both official languages, not just in French.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to cover the cost of shingles immunization for senior citizens and people with compromised immune systems.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the government to recognize the needs of Yukon citizens by taking steps to enhance and modernize supports provided under the medical travel program, including:

(1) amending the *Travel for Medical Treatment Act* to increase flexibility and reduce wait times;

(2) increasing per diems for travel Outside from the current rate of \$75 per day after consulting with the public as part of determining an appropriate new level;

(3) increasing per diems for travel inside the Yukon from the current rate of \$75 per day after consulting with the public as part of determining an appropriate new level;

(4) increasing the subsidy for non-emergency medical travel within the Yukon from its current level of 30 cents per kilometre after consulting with the public as part of setting the new rate;

(5) amending the regulations to add Kelowna and Victoria to the list of cities covered by the regulations under the *Travel for Medical Treatment Act*;

(6) reviewing the provisions pertaining to escorts for medical travel;

(7) improving administrative coordination to make it easier for people in rural Yukon to schedule several appointments in Whitehorse for the same trip rather than having to travel multiple times for appointments;

(8) reviewing the provisions under “Travel to benefit others” to determine whether they are adequately assisting people who donate an organ to someone else; and

(9) ensuring that, following a medevac for treatment Outside of the Yukon, Yukoners whose travel may be covered by the federal government are automatically able to return home with the assistance of our medical travel program and leave the issue of cost for the two governments to deal with later.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise in the House today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to work with First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management

Board, renewable resources councils, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Trappers Association, the Yukon Outfitters Association, and individual hunters, trappers, and anglers to improve the management of fish and wildlife populations to ensure that healthy populations will sustain hunting and fishing opportunities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to support local initiatives and events that promote and recognize one of Yukon’s oldest industries — trapping — including, but not limited to: UnFURled, organized by the Yukon Trappers Association and the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council; the Asek moose recovery program, administered by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Asek Renewable Resources Council; and the Dawson Fur Show, organized by the Dawson District Renewable Resources Council.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Youth panel on climate change

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Our Liberal government recognizes that there is a climate emergency. Yukoners have known this for many, many years, and we need only look around us to see the ongoing effects of climate change in the north.

People around the world took note when the territory fell victim to river piracy in 2016, as the flow of the glacier-fed Slims River dramatically changed course in a matter of days. Scientists have identified this as a first major case of river rerouting resulting from human-caused climate change. Visitors and tourists in Kluane can see the dusty results of this piracy as they travel along the Alaska Highway, which itself is heaving and shifting as permafrost thaws.

Young people around the world are understandably concerned about their future and the future of our planet, and they speak out about the need for change. Yukon youth joined in solidarity with youth all around the world to demonstrate and demand action on climate change as part of a global climate strike earlier this fall. They have forcefully reminded us that the future depends on what we do today. The future of our youth here in Yukon is precious, and they deserve to have their voices heard.

As the Premier of Yukon, I want them to know that their government is listening. This is why we have created a youth panel on climate change. This panel will allow Yukon youth to share their perspectives and to provide their advice directly to policy-makers here in the territory. This advice will help us implement the new climate change, energy, and green economy strategy for Yukon. This strategy is being developed in partnership with Yukon First Nations and municipal governments. It will set ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as actions needed to achieve them.

Our Liberal government recognizes that we need to act on climate change. We need to do that urgently, and we need to do



that together. This has been central to our work so far and will continue to be a driving factor in our work to balance economic diversification with environmental stewardship to build healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities across Yukon.

The climate change, energy, and green economy strategy is central to our Liberal government's unwavering commitment to marry the territory's economic goals with our environmental values. This summer, we joined four First Nation governments to recognize the Peel watershed land use plan to ensure responsible land use in the Peel watershed while protecting its ecologically sensitive areas. The signing celebration occurred the very same week as Victoria Gold, the largest gold mine in Yukon history, received a water licence for its Eagle Gold project. These two historical events demonstrated how our Liberal government's respectful government-to-government relationships and commitment to a responsible, balanced approach to the environment and the economy can benefit all Yukoners.

Once established in 2020, the youth panel on climate change will provide us with valuable insight so that we can continue along this path to build a brighter future for Yukon — a future our youth deserve.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, climate change is an issue that affects all Yukoners. We know that Yukoners are affected by climate change more significantly than the rest of the country. I can sure tell you that from my riding. We know that it requires real, tangible action from the government to address it.

Youth — not only in our territory but across the world — are leading conversations about what can be done to address climate change effectively and sustainably. With this announcement, we are pleased to see more opportunities for youth to get involved, and I would like to encourage the government to ensure some rural representation. There are also a lot of details missing in this announcement. The government only shows us what we are talking about shortly before we come into this Legislature, so it's clear that they are not truly interested in having a discussion on these topics. So without much detail, I do have a question — and I do have to question the Liberal government's use of the House's time.

As we said last week, the Liberals' throne speech was already a collection of re-announcements of things that could easily be better addressed in press releases so we could allow the House's time to be focused on the budget and legislation. Here we are today — they are using the House's time to re-announce something that they just announced a few days ago in a throne speech.

It is becoming more and more clear to us that the Liberals do not want to be accountable in this House, so they try to eat up the House's time through respective re-announcements in order to limit debate on budget and on legislation.

For example, the Department of Health and Social Services is the largest area of the government in terms of expenditures. This year, it has a budget of over \$443 million. This is almost 30 percent of the government's entire budget. The combined total budget for the Department of Health and Social Services

and the Department of Education is \$657.9 million, which is 45.8 percent of the government's total expenditures for the year. However, despite their significant place in the territory's budget, the departments of Health and Social Services and of Education were only debated for approximately 4.4 percent of the total hours in this Sitting.

In comparison, the Liberals delivered 18 ministerial statements in the Spring Sitting. This means that up to approximately 3.5 percent of the Legislature's time was spent debating these statements, which were often re-announcements, instead of debating the Health and Social Services and Education budgets.

At the beginning of the Spring Sitting, the Official Opposition requested the number of sitting days to be set for 32 days. This request, along with the concern that there was not enough time to debate the \$1.5-billion budget, was further reiterated in the House on March 26 and on April 15. With the same concerns at the end of the Spring Sitting, the Official Opposition brought forward a motion on April 30 stating that an extra two days would allow enough time to finish debating the larger budget items. Unfortunately, the government did not agree to the motion. They did not think it was important to give adequate time to debate the budget, but now they are going to eat up the House's time to respond to speeches from the throne and a bunch more ministerial statements.

So here we're calling on the government to either reduce the number of ministerial statements so that we can properly debate the \$1.5 billion in spending of taxpayers' money that the Government of Yukon is spending this year or to allow for an extended Sitting so that the Legislature can actually scrutinize what the government is doing.

**Ms. White:** I am hopeful that we have all heard the voices of youth from across Yukon, across Canada, and from around the world as they demand more action from their government and their leaders. I would suggest that these young people are not only concerned, they are angered at the inaction of governments and leaders that they have seen so far. They are afraid of what the impacts of inaction will be for their generation and for future generations. The youth and many of the people who are standing with them are demanding that those in the seats of power start acting on the crisis that is facing this planet and that is the crisis of climate change.

The youth are well-versed and informed on what the stakes are for all humanity if climate change continues to be ignored and not aggressively acted upon. It is critical that governments not only listen to youth, but meaningfully involve them in the decision-making process and the creation of solutions. But, more than anything, it is even more critical that there be immediate concrete steps taken to begin to address their concerns.

On the Yukon level, we support the creation of a youth panel on climate change. We believe that it should include youth from communities across the Yukon, as we know that impacts being felt differ regionally, from the changing course of the Slims River to the melting of the permafrost along the

Porcupine River. Mr. Speaker, different perspectives bring different strengths.

But I repeat what I have heard from the beginnings of last year's climate rallies to, most recently, on the steps of Whitehorse City Hall and in front of the federal building — that was youth demanding immediate action before it is too late. The youth are aware of the need for consultation and participation, but they are also very aware that these discussions should not delay any real action. One of the most direct signs at the recent global climate rally was “Blah, blah, blah. Do something.”

Government can expect that youth participating in a panel on climate change will expect action, and this is real. One of the signs given to us at the first Whitehorse climate rally is still on our office window as a reminder for all of us as we walk past. It says, “You will die of old age, but we will die of climate change.”

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon New Democratic Party looks forward to real action — meaningful, concrete steps that will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions with clear targets, a vision for a renewable future with clear targets, and the role that we all need to play so that our actions demonstrate to youth and all citizens that Yukon government is taking action now.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I want to thank my colleagues opposite for their comments today. Mr. Speaker, youth in the territory are very concerned about their future, the future of the territory and the future of our planet. We have seen them voicing the need for change in solidarity with youth around the world in climate strikes and demonstrations here in Whitehorse. They are right that the future depends on what we do here today. The member opposite is correct as well — we need concrete actions, not just declarations.

Yukon youth deserve to have their voices heard, and it's important to let them know that their government is listening. That is why we are creating the youth panel on climate change. This panel will allow Yukon youth to share their perspectives and to provide advice directly to those policy-makers here in the territory, and directly to the Premier as well. This advice will help us to implement a new climate change, energy, and green economy strategy for the Yukon. The panel will be established in 2020, and more details will come in due course. The Yukon Liberal government recognizes that the need to act on climate change is urgent, and we do need to work together. The youth panel on climate change will provide us with valuable insight from our youth on how we can continue to ensure that we have a bright future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members opposite for talking about climate change. It's interesting that the Yukon Party wants us to do better to manage our time here in the Legislative Assembly, saying that ministerial statements somehow are not a good management of our time. I will direct their attention to chapter 2 of the Standing Orders where it says in 11(3), “On the Ministerial Statement, as listed in Standing Order 11(2), a Minister may make an announcement or statement on government policy or a matter of public interest.”

I guess the members opposite don't want us to talk about anything except for the budget. Does that mean they want to get rid of tributes as well? Do they want to get rid of introduction of visitors — maybe even get rid of oral Question Period? That doesn't have anything to do with the budget as well. Or petitions — I'm not sure where the list starts and ends — but I know that I will take our record on non-filibustering compared to theirs any day.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Health care review

**Ms. McLeod:** Last week, the Liberals launched phase 2 of their comprehensive health review through a survey on Engage Yukon. Yukoners have raised a number of concerns over the past year, namely on the true cost of the review, its consistent delays, and particularly the cost-cutting motivations behind it. The Financial Advisory Panel advised the government to look at increasing health care fees and making people pay more for medications. We have repeatedly asked the government to rule these options out and they have so far refused. In this new survey, the Liberals are asking Yukoners whether they support the introduction of a fee for service, otherwise known as health care premiums.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm whether the government is considering the introduction of health care premiums in Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm very proud of the work that Health and Social Services is doing — its engagement with Yukoners. The recommendations — as noted — from the Financial Advisory Panel really set a new course of action in terms of how and what we do with health care and collaborative care for Yukoners. The comprehensive health review is intended to look at health and social program service systems and is focused on how to improve health and wellness of Yukoners, making sure patients, clients, families, and providers have positive experiences and better value for the money that we have available. The work of the independent expert panel appointed by the government to conduct the review is well underway. There are numerous meetings happening over the next month that will allow Yukoners' further engagement, and from that we will seek their direction.

**Ms. McLeod:** I might remind the minister that she was elected to make decisions, and it's up to her to decide whether or not the Liberals will bring in health care premiums and not some unelected panel.

So on the government's website, Yukoners are asked whether they support a fee for basic health care services. More specifically, the Liberal government floats the idea of charging Yukoners a \$900 annual health premium. For a family of two, that could mean \$1,800 a year in what is essentially a health care tax. Many Yukoners are already finding it hard to get by, and the medical travel reimbursements are far below the actual costs. This means that many Yukoners are already paying out of pocket to receive health care. The Liberals need to rule this health care tax out, full stop.

Will the minister definitely say that the Liberals will not introduce a tax for basic health care services?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the question and for acknowledging the independent expert panel, because that's what they are: an independent panel considering many issues affecting Yukoners and of course seeking options and looking for perspectives from Yukoners.

We are, at this point, letting them do their work, and they will continue with the great dialogue with Yukoners. That's what we do as government: We look and we listen to Yukoners, and they provide us with direction. We have many perspectives and many views, and we want to take into consideration all of that as we look at how and what we do with health and health care deliverables in Yukon, as we look at rural Yukon and we look at collaborative care models to ensure that good health practices are delivered to all Yukoners where they reside in their communities.

**Ms. McLeod:** I'll note for Yukoners that the minister did not rule it out — and it's interesting also to note that the Premier certainly didn't have any problems standing up immediately and ruling out an increase in royalties for placer miners.

So here's what we know about the Liberals' plans on health care. The Liberal Cabinet ordered every department to find up to two percent in cuts. We've seen Liberal-appointed panels hint at increasing fees, and now the Liberals are considering health care premiums. We have given the Liberals plenty of opportunities to rule out charging Yukoners more for their prescriptions or to rule out a health care tax. They have refused to rule this out. The minister and the Liberals have to realize that they are the government and that they are decision-makers. We know that they are afraid to make decisions and try to delegate everything to panels and commissions, but it's time to show leadership, Mr. Speaker. It's time to do the right thing.

Will the Liberals rule out \$900-a-year health care premiums for Yukoners — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is interesting that the Yukon Party will have us take all recommendations in one area and then they will ask us to cherry-pick the recommendations in another area. Now they are asking us to make a decision without consulting. It is a very convenient narrative for the members opposite.

What we will do is wait until the comprehensive health review comes in. I am so proud of the work that the minister and her team are doing in looking at an independent lens to get some great ideas from stakeholders in a very comprehensive part of this government that does most of our spending. We will not — unlike the Yukon Party — hedge our bets. We will wait for that review to come in and we will act with leadership accordingly at that time.

#### **Question re: Independent Commission on Electoral Reform**

**Mr. Cathers:** Earlier this year, the Liberals unilaterally appointed a committee on electoral reform. Despite receiving only about 39 percent of the vote in the last election, they decided that they would have the sole authority for the selection of committee members, terms of reference, and overall

decision-making. This was a “one party decides all” approach. It appeared the Liberals were stacking the deck in their favour on a process that could fundamentally alter the way our elections in the Yukon work.

The process has now come to a halt due to issues with the committee. The Premier claims he halted the process because the chair resigned, but the chair resigned August 29 and the Premier didn't notify opposition parties that the committee was stopping work until September 30.

Can the Premier explain why he kept the chair's resignation a secret for over a month?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am glad to be able to have an opportunity to talk electoral reform on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. It is a very important issue to many Yukoners, as we saw through our public engagement. We heard this also when we were campaigning, and we take these concerns of Yukoners extremely seriously. We committed to strike a commission on electoral reform, to consult with Yukoners on possible changes to how Yukoners cast their ballots, and we remain committed to this process, Mr. Speaker.

We strongly believe that this must be a non-partisan commission, and we also believe it should be three members. With the resignation of the appointed chair, we have to pause. We have to pause the work of that independent commission while we work with the opposition parties to set a pathway forward. We will do that.

The member opposite neglected to tell Yukoners that we did send letters to the opposition and I am waiting to hear from them. We will meet together and we will talk next steps.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier still didn't provide an answer to that question. I have to remind Yukoners that this process began with a biased survey done by the Liberal Party which didn't even give Yukoners the option of saying that they were happy with the current system. We heard the Premier on the radio this morning complaining that we insisted there be a written record of everything that was done on electoral reform. He is apparently upset that he wasn't able to do this without putting it in writing. He needs to realize that democracy belongs to all Yukoners, not just the Liberal Party. We are talking about serious stuff here, so yes, you do have to put it in writing, and a party that got about 39 percent of the vote doesn't get 100 percent of the say.

If he is genuinely interested in working in good faith, he will have no problem creating a written record, but for some reason he has been very reluctant through this to put it in writing. We also know that he kept the chair's resignation for over a month and he still wouldn't tell us why today. The *Yukon News* reported that the chair resigned because the terms of reference still weren't ready five months after this began.

Can the Premier tell us why, after five months, the terms of reference are still not complete?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes, I do remember saying to the media that I had laid awake dreaming of a visit from a Premier when I was in opposition — it just never happened. So I will formalize that process, absolutely, and I apologize to the members opposite if they didn't appreciate my visits to talk about electoral reform.

I don't believe that it is for me to discuss the reasons why the chair had resigned, and I want to thank her for her thoughts on this matter. We appreciate the careful consideration that she had for this particular decision. This was unexpected, Mr. Speaker, regardless of how the members opposite want to paint it. It has led our government to give further consideration on how an independent, non-partisan committee should operate with support from all Members of the Legislative Assembly. I very much appreciate the former chair for her honest reflections on the tasks, and I am very disappointed that this will delay this important work.

I have reached out to the opposition parties to once again discuss what opportunities exist and to ensure that our commitment to an independent commission enjoys a greater level of support from all parties.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the reluctance of the Premier to put it in writing is again disturbing on this. We have seen in the past that the Premier's verbal commitments aren't worth the paper they are not written on. As we have noted before, the Yukon's democracy belongs to all Yukoners, not just the Liberal Party. Yukoners were concerned when the Liberals appeared to be trying to stack the deck in their favour. If there is a new process for electoral reform, we hope the Premier will actually sincerely try to collaborate with the opposition parties instead of simply paying lip service to the principle. This means involving all parties in decisions, not giving just one party the ability to stack the deck.

Finally, if there is any major change that is proposed to the way Yukoners vote in the next election or how those votes translate into the Legislative Assembly, Yukoners should have the final say in a binding referendum on whether it goes forward or not.

Will the Premier commit that if major changes come forward at the end of this process, they will hold a referendum so that all Yukoners can have a vote on those changes?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** What we hear from the opposition is minds already made up on the electoral process. I believe an independent commission goes past the opposition and goes to Yukoners and asks them what their ideas are for electoral reform.

Prior to the appointment of the current members — in answer to the member opposite's question — I did reach out to both opposition parties a number of times and made a genuine effort to reflect their comments in the appointments. I was very surprised by the responses that I received from the Yukon Party. I am optimistic that their party leader will be more interested in working with us on this process this time around. I see value in making this a non-partisan process, and I believe that the end result of that process will be much more beneficial if all parties come together with the best interests for Yukoners — for Yukoners, not political parties — at the forefront of their minds.

### **Question re: Independent Commission on Electoral Reform**

**Ms. White:** Last week, the Premier announced that the chair of the electoral reform commission resigned, and this was disappointing to many Yukoners keen on seeing improvements to the way that Yukon elects its representatives. It was surprising that it took the Premier over a month to announce this development publicly. In a letter of resignation, the chair highlighted that the commission had not been provided with finalized terms of reference over a month and a half after their appointment.

Combine this with the fact that this government took over two and half years to appoint their commission raises questions about their commitment to the process.

Mr. Speaker, why hadn't this government provided terms of reference to the commission on electoral reform over a month and a half after they were first appointed?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I have already addressed some of these issues. We're not holding things back; we're working with the process. Again, it's not for me to discuss the reasons for the chair's decision for leaving. At the same time, this was unexpected, and we internally have taken the time to make sure that we listened to the letters that were sent by all three members of the panel and we are carefully considering options based upon that.

I want to thank the members opposite for their recommendations, because we are listening to those. I want to thank the opposition for a genuine spirit of wanting to work together on electoral reform. We embrace that and we will work with them on this. As we move forward, I honestly still believe that an all-party committee with all political parties being represented is not the way we need to go forward. We need an independent commission. I am more than willing to work with the opposition members on how we move forward with an independent commission. I want to thank the opposition for their care and consideration in this particularly very important issue to all Yukoners, but I have to say from the survey: We are getting from the Yukon population that electoral reform means a lot more than the small, narrow pieces that the opposition members want us to focus in on.

**Ms. White:** My first question was actually about the terms of reference.

The government's delay when it comes to electoral reform is just the tip of the iceberg. When this government created the independent commission on electoral reform, two things became abundantly clear: The commission was independent in name only, and the Premier was intent on doing it his way. The Premier established the timeline for the commission, its terms of reference, its membership, and arranged for its administrative assistants and determined its budget. Not only does this situation open up the electoral reform process to the perception of bias, it also undermines the independence of the Legislative Assembly. When we're talking about changing something as fundamental as the way we vote and the Premier completely shuts down all opinions that aren't his own, it creates a dangerous perception that he's gaming the system.

Mr. Speaker, does this government recognize that its unilateral approach to electoral reform has the potential to undermine Yukoners' faith in Yukon's democratic system?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm more than taken aback by the member opposite's comments. I don't think she remembers the meetings that we had in their office, talking to both the former leader and the current leader about names for this committee and talking about conversations that were led by the NDP where, political pasts aside, we wanted to make sure we have a committee that represents Yukoners and that can take a committee all the way through Yukon and hear from Yukoners. I am upset to see that all of a sudden that's a unilateral process. But I digress.

I have heard from the NDP that they have already made up their minds about proportional representation. The words are in their motion. So again, I have heard them, and we're looking forward to continue having the meetings. But with that being said, I have asked the other party leaders to meet with me and discuss how we can move forward on this. If they want to talk politically about it, that's one thing. If they want to genuinely come and meet with me and talk about how we can get this process back on the road, I am all ears. How this process continues is exactly what I want to discuss with my fellow party leaders, and it's exactly what we're going to do as soon as I hear from the opposition.

**Ms. White:** The Premier keeps acting shocked that we don't like his impromptu visits to our office. It's not the conversations that bother us; it's the constant misrepresentations of those conversations here in this House and the media that bother us.

Electoral reform has never been the priority for this government. The recent developments and inaction by this government make it clear that no form of electoral reform will be in place by the next election.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Order, please. The members who want to express a point of order will stand up and be heard.

So, point of order, yes.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I just heard the member opposite say that the Premier was misrepresenting here in this House, which I think is in contradiction to Standing Order 19(h), charging another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** I think it falls squarely under the various rulings I have made. I will review Hansard and get back to the members.

The most fulsome reasons were on November 21, 2018. Once again, if members wish to modify their Standing Orders, that is of course the members' prerogative; however, the modifier is "deliberate". I will review Hansard and return if necessary, but the process of presenting narratives back and forth and characterizing narratives and facts is part of the current Westminster model.

Like I said, I will review Hansard, but I believe that my reasons from November 2018 still apply.

Leader of the Third Party, you have 30 seconds.

**Ms. White:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier says that allowing MLAs to have input on electoral reform would make the process too politicized, but the Premier fails to realize that he has politicized this process from day one by exerting total control over the process and shutting out all other voices. The Premier can redeem the electoral reform discussion in Yukon by supporting the establishment of an all-party select committee of this Legislative Assembly on electoral reform.

Mr. Speaker, will the government relinquish its control and commit to participating in an all-party select committee on electoral reform so that members of this Legislative Assembly from all political parties can be part of the process of learning from Yukoners what changes, if any, they want in how they elect their representatives?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I am a lifelong learner. I remember being in opposition and having ministers drop into my office, and I appreciated those meetings from the members opposite when they were in government. Again, I will formalize the process when it comes to working with the opposition if that's the way they want it — absolutely.

This issue is becoming a textbook case of politicians politicking. Our government has reached out to the opposition parties to involve them in the discussion. I have sent a formal letter asking members for a meeting to discuss how this process proceeds and I'm looking forward to once again participating with the Yukon Party and the NDP. Respectfully, this issue is too important to be mired down in political games. We have asked for involvement from the opposition, and following that meeting, we will be doing more about discussing this publicly. I look forward to those conversations about how we can get this process back on track.

### Question re: Funding for non-governmental organizations

**Ms. Hanson:** When the Government of Yukon enters into an agreement to fund a non-governmental organization to provide services, it signs what is called a "transfer payment agreement". These agreements set out expectations of both the Government of Yukon and the NGO. They lay out the amounts that will be transferred, where those amounts are allowed to be spent, and the services the government expects the NGO to deliver in return for that money. An essential component of a transfer payment agreement is a requirement for the NGO to submit regular reports on the funds spent throughout the year. These reports, called "variance reports", indicate whether or not the NGO is spending the money in accordance with the terms of agreement.

Mr. Speaker, are the variance reports called for in a department's transfer payment agreements required or optional?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the question with respect to NGOs. What I can say

is that we have worked with NGOs that are not in compliance. We work with Community Services and the NGOs to ensure that they have the resources they need to continue the services as defined by the transfer payment agreement. The variances are certainly required as part of the contribution agreement; however, there are some flexibilities when the NGO is not in compliance by a few days or a few weeks. We allow for flexibility as long as they are making best efforts and the services are being delivered continuously as defined under the agreements.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for her response. This past summer, the Department of Health and Social Services wrote a letter detailing the findings of the department's financial investigation of Many Rivers. In the letter, the department indicated that there were issues with Many Rivers' compliance with reporting requirements, and I quote: "Reporting requirements state that quarterly variance reports and forecasts were to be submitted and these variance reports were to show actual expenditures to date compared against budget." The letter goes on to say that Yukon never received these variance reports.

Mr. Speaker, why did this government continue to fund Many Rivers despite not receiving the necessary variance reports during the 2018-19 transfer payment time frame? Did they at any point consider ending the funding agreement with Many Rivers due to their non-compliance of that payment agreement?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** First, I would like to thank the members of our community and the board of Many Rivers. They have some 50 years of experience working in the Yukon to deliver essential services as we have arranged and as the previous government arranged. They have done exceptional work for Yukoners.

In terms of how we govern ourselves and what we do in providing high-quality counselling services through our government for Yukoners — we have a responsibility to ensure that the services that are provided and the use of taxpayers' funding is properly managed and managed appropriately. So what we have done is we've asked Many Rivers — as defined under the *Societies Act* and as defined under the transfer payment agreement — to provide us with the necessary variances. We have worked with them and they have been in compliance for a number of years. Most recently, they were not in compliance, and since the time they were out of compliance — I will let my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, speak specifically to when they went out of compliance and what actions were taken there, but I can say that, as a government, we have dedicated all of our resources to ensure that we provide supports to Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** The reality is that, in the spring of this year, a group of citizens dedicated to preserving the legacy and the work of this respected NGO stepped forward to form a new board for Many Rivers. They were led to believe that the Yukon government was working with this new board of volunteers and that this government was supportive of their efforts. What they got was a letter from the department informing them that Many Rivers was in deep debt and that the new board would have to

pay back that debt without government support or any indication of a way out. The Department of Health and Social Services was responsible for financial oversight of Many Rivers. It took no action when Many Rivers became non-compliant and then turned around and laid the responsibility at the feet of citizens trying to do the right thing.

Will the minister acknowledge that her department failed to provide adequate financial oversight and finally apologize to those volunteers who were led to believe they —

**Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I want to just take a moment to acknowledge the board members of Many Rivers. As indicated by the member opposite, they stepped forward to do some good work and to try to bring Many Rivers into compliance. The variance reports are required before payments are made in the payment schedule. That's the law. Many Rivers did not comply, and then we stopped payments. So it wouldn't make sense. The last payment that was issued to Many Rivers was in October 2018 for half a million dollars — \$509,000. What we did not see was a third quarter report payment that really identified how the funds were expensed out. So the new board did not submit the appropriate reports. We worked with them. We worked with their financial advisor to try to bring them into compliance, like we do with all of our NGOs.

We will ensure that we provide services to Yukoners, and we are doing that by mending some supports that we have in place right now with the Canadian Mental Health Association — Yukon chapter — and All Genders Yukon. We are doing the work that Yukoners require and we will continue to do that.

#### Question re: Whistle Bend school

**Mr. Kent:** I have some questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works regarding planning for the Whistle Bend school. Earlier this year the government issued a tender for an owner's advisor for the Whistle Bend school project. They quickly cancelled that tender, as they realized they hadn't lived up to or fulfilled any of their promised consultations with area residents. Since that time, a project advisory committee has been established and the RFP was retendered last week.

Can the minister tell us how many times the advisory committee has met? What changes, if any, have been made to the RFP as a result of those meetings?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm very happy to rise on the floor of the Legislative Assembly this afternoon to answer my good colleague's questions on the Whistle Bend school.

So as part of Government of Yukon's five-year capital plan, we will be building the first new Whitehorse elementary school in more than 20 years in Whistle Bend — a school for the community and the surrounding area. To inform our decisions as we plan for the school, we will be working with representatives from the Yukon First Nation governments, the City of Whitehorse, and the Whistle Bend community through the project advisory committee that my good colleague mentioned a few moments ago.

We have met with this committee three times — most recently, on October 1, 2019. This committee has been developed with a community focus, and we will work with this

committee on cultural and community needs for a new school until a school council has been established.

As the member opposite mentioned in his tribute this afternoon, there are new ways to ignite learning in our children. This school is going to do that. We have not built a school in more than 20 years, and we have to make sure that the school meets the needs of the changing learning environment in which we find ourselves.

**Mr. Kent:** So we wrote the minister on September 4 about aspects of the project advisory committee. The Minister of Education advised us in a letter dated September 25 that — and I quote: “This committee has been developed with a community focus and will provide recommendations on cultural and community needs as we plan for this new school.” — something that the minister just mentioned in his earlier response. However, in last week’s press release, the government announced that the committee would advise on community needs in terms of functionality as well as cultural and community spaces.

Obviously, these are two different mandates, so it is not entirely clear what this committee is actually advising on. Is it just to vaguely recommend on community needs, as the minister said in her letter and earlier today, or is it to weigh in and provide recommendations on what spaces should actually be included in the facility and their functionality?

Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works provide us with the terms of reference or mandate letter for this committee that shows exactly what they are advising on?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am really happy to be discussing this tremendous opportunity for Yukon citizens and for the citizens of Whitehorse. We are building a new school, Mr. Speaker — the first elementary school in more than two decades in Whistle Bend — a new community, a new school, a new way of learning. I think that is a great thing to talk about this afternoon. It is a very important project for our government, and I know it is a very important project for the citizens of Whistle Bend. It is a high priority for this government.

Highways and Public Works will be working with Education to incorporate feedback from stakeholders and the project advisory committee throughout the project. The school will shape the community for decades to come, so we are taking the time we need to get it right. We look forward to the community’s feedback on this important project.

The committee will continue to meet, and we have set up the process going forward so that their input will be incorporated in the building that eventually results in Whistle Bend.

**Mr. Kent:** We look forward to receiving either a mandate letter or terms of reference so that the project advisory committee and other Yukoners know exactly what they will be advising on.

We also asked in our letter why no members of the Yukon Teachers’ Association have been invited to participate on the planning committee. In the local media this morning, the minister spoke about the need for modern learning spaces being incorporated into the design, and teachers should have a voice on the advisory committee if it is tasked with looking at the

functionality of the school and how modern learning spaces will be incorporated. The input of teachers into the design of this new school will be essential in making sure that it is a successful project.

Will the minister correct this oversight and appoint representatives of the Yukon Teachers’ Association to this committee immediately?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am more than happy to continue talking about this really exciting project in Whistle Bend that will shape education for the city for decades to come. It will actually provide a template for other schools, I’m sure, that we are building. This is a tremendous project. It is a priority for this government, and we have taken the time to get it right.

As the member opposite knows — because we have responded to him in writing — my colleague the Minister of Education has responded to him in writing and said that the purpose of this committee is to share information and gather perspectives from the local community, First Nation governments, and external partners on this project. We invited partner organizations to be represented on this committee based on their direct connection with the future school. He also knows — because my colleague did respond — saying that the perspectives of educators are important and need to be represented as we work to modernize learning spaces in Yukon schools. To date, we are involved in broad engagement with the Yukon Teachers’ Association through the Advisory Committee for Education, which has a modernizing learning spaces working group.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CONSIDERATION OF SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House, pursuant to provisions of Standing Order 26(2), that consideration of a motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, if not concluded today, will take place on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Mr. Gallina:** Mr. Speaker, I move:

THAT the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to

offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

**Mr. Gallina:** Honourable members, friends, and colleagues, I am humbled to address and reply to the Speech from the Throne made by Yukon's Commissioner. I am happy to see my wife, Sarah Gallina, join us for these deliberations.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third throne speech delivered to members of this Assembly during the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To me, this most recent speech represents many things, but above all, I feel the strong sense of pride among Yukoners and where this territory is today, especially when I witness the trials and tribulations taking shape throughout the world around us.

As elected officials, we have been entrusted with the responsibility to represent all Yukoners, and as the Commissioner clearly outlined, this government is listening to Yukoners and doing the hard work needed to tackle the diverse challenges we face every day.

In the Speech from the Throne, we heard of the many successes of Yukoners throughout the territory, the strong foundation this government has built over the recent years, and the measures this government will undertake to continue that success.

Mr. Speaker, as I relate the throne speech to my riding of Porter Creek Centre, I know of many Yukoners who stand out and contribute to the greater community. There are many accomplishments and significant advances this government has delivered upon in the fastest-growing riding in the territory.

Teagan Vallevand is an artist and influential young First Nation woman who has strong roots in Porter Creek Centre. She is with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and belongs to the Gaanaxtedi Raven Clan. Teagan learned how to bead from Florence Moses and the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre sewing circle. As a young woman, Teagan has found fulfillment through beading in many ways — as a means to express herself, a form of meditation, and a way to reclaim and stay connected to her culture no matter where she is.

During the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, she was Miss Kwanlin Dün/Shakat and won First Princess. For all of her Queen activities, she tried to indigenize each of her outfits as much as possible. She wore a moose hide dress to the civic dinner that was worn by former Yukon Commissioner Judy Gingell in 1995. She chose to wear regalia in part of a more accurate portrayal of history. She made this decision thinking of the young people in her community. She thought that by having culture incorporated, they would be able to see themselves in her and then be able to see Rendezvous as something that they can be a part of.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of Teagan for her passion in celebrating her culture and heritage.

I am also proud of the work that this government is doing to advance reconciliation. In the Speech from the Throne, the Commissioner spoke about how this government remains focused on reconciliation with Yukon First Nation people. This government has worked hard to rebuild our relationships with Yukon First Nations on the basis of respect and cooperation.

The *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* has been finalized with four First Nation governments, following a complete breakdown of government-to-government relationships.

The Yukon Forum has been revitalized to collaborate on shared priorities. This includes an agreement that clarifies how resource royalties are shared under chapter 23 of the final agreements.

In full partnership with First Nations and alongside industry, we are developing a mineral development strategy for Yukon. First Nation chiefs have joined ministers in meetings with federal ministers, and this government has established National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in Yukon.

The government has created a new Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives position in the Department of Education in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. There is now a Chiefs Committee on Education to improve education delivery for First Nation students.

The number of children living in government care has been reduced, and there has been an increase in extended family care agreements so that relatives caring for children now receive the equivalent to foster parents. Both of these actions recognize the value of keeping children in their home communities and within their own culture.

Finally, recognizing the important aspect justice has in reconciliation, we are working with the Council of Yukon First Nations to expand capacity to create reports for indigenous offenders.

Mr. Speaker, as the Commissioner stated in her Speech from the Throne, your government remains focused on reconciliation with Yukon First Nation people.

Community associations throughout the territory provide an effective forum for engaged citizens to advance neighbourhood priorities. Zara Soukoroff is the president of the Porter Creek Community Association. She has lived in Porter Creek most of her life and resides in Porter Creek Centre with her husband and her son. Zara has been the president of the community association for a year and a half. She is proud of the work the association has accomplished. She has worked hard to increase community engagement around firesmaring and tree-planting initiatives in the neighbourhood. Zara and association members have hosted successful community garbage cleanups, and they are especially proud of the partnership that was created with the Whistle Bend Community Association to host the City of Whitehorse all-candidates forum prior to the last municipal election.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of Yukon students is a priority for the Porter Creek Community Association, and I know that it is a priority for the City of Whitehorse and for this government. Through collaboration with community stakeholders, this government has increased safety measures in and around Yukon schools. At Holy Family School in Porter Creek Centre, portable solar panel radar signs have begun to be used. "Stop and look" signs have been painted around crosswalks to remind children to stop and look before crossing. A user guide was developed for parents to improve



traffic flow and safety in pick-up and drop-off areas, and last year, blue no-parking zones were painted by crosswalks to remind people not to park in the areas immediately around crosswalks. This government is committed to ensuring that Yukon schoolchildren have a safe environment, especially around school drop-off and pick-up areas.

Mr. Speaker, Remy Rodden is a name that you may recognize. Remy is a constituent of Porter Creek Centre and has worked as the manager of environmental education in youth programs for the Yukon government. He is also well-known around the territory for his songs focused on environmental protection. This June, he was recognized alongside colleague Morris Lamroch for their work in the Yukon Youth Conservation Corps, as well as the conservation action team camps.

I would like to thank Remy for all of the work he's done bringing awareness to the importance of the environment and for doing so in a fun way that appeals to all people of all ages. I wish Remy all the best in his retirement from the Yukon government, and I really look forward to following his music and other work in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, as the Commissioner stated, this government recognizes that there is a climate emergency, and Yukoners have known this for many years. We know the climate is in crisis and the north is warming faster than the rest of the country. This government understands the importance of acting on climate change, and we are working to develop a climate change, energy, and green economy strategy in partnership with Yukon First Nations, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities. These actions will be focused on reducing Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to the effects of climate change, and supporting Yukon businesses and individuals to participate in the green economy.

In addition, this government is already taking steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and grow a green economy. This government will invest \$120 million in joint federal and territorial funding for energy efficiency improvements to residential, commercial, First Nation, and municipal buildings in the territory over four years.

This government is committed to supporting zero waste emission vehicles on our roads. Last year, electric vehicle charging stations were installed in the Yukon government's main administration building and the Yukon Transportation Museum. The government is now working with Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Northern Vision Development, and the federal government to install three new fast-charging stations in Carcross and Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, the essence of this government's commitment to climate change, energy, and green economy resides in the milestones that Yukoners celebrated this summer when the Peel land use plan was signed and Victoria Gold's Eagle project received their amended water licence and came into production. These significant events display that, with a responsible approach, both the environment and economy can be priorities to make our life better here in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, as I continue to highlight those Yukoners who contribute positively to the quality of life we enjoy in

Porter Creek Centre, I would like to recognize the Whistle Bend continuing care team, who earlier this year were celebrated for outstanding service and received the Premier's award of excellence and innovation.

The Whistle Bend Place project was an incredibly complex and diverse file. Whistle Bend Place is the first of its kind in northern Canada. Not only did the continuing care team deliver this project on time and underbudget, but they also recruited over 200 new employees during a period of record shortage for health care staff nationally. I'm incredibly proud to have this state-of-the-art facility in my riding which helps many Yukoners to age in place while receiving exceptional care.

Mr. Speaker, today Whistle Bend Place offers a variety of programs available to both residents in our long-term care homes and community members. The programming is designed to support Yukoners to live happy and healthy lives. The community day program offers Yukoners daily recreational activities, therapeutic programs, socialization, and help in maintaining daily routines and independence. Daily activities are culturally relevant and include pet visits, therapy, as well as "Let's Get Fit!", brain games, and walks that are specifically designed to achieve mental, physical, and social goals for participants.

First Nation programming is also under development at Whistle Bend Place. This will involve more culturally focused individual and social activities, meeting spiritual needs through services and ceremonies in the healing room, as well as increased staff knowledge and sensitivity. Whistle Bend Place has hosted a number of get-togethers that include residents and elders from several First Nations. These events are well-attended and greatly enjoyed, offering opportunities to keep up connections and friendships.

As well, another program running at Whistle Bend Place is the intergenerational program with Chickadees, who operate out of the facility three days a week. Yukoners enjoy the variety of programming available to them at Whistle Bend Place, and a wide spectrum of programming opportunities is another way this government can contribute to healthy and happy lives.

Mr. Speaker, another key community contributor in Porter Creek Centre is Katherine Williams. Katherine is the president of the Whistle Bend Community Association, and she resides in the neighbourhood with her husband and young family. Katherine tells me she is proud of the way Whistle Bend residents have stepped up to shape this growing neighbourhood. Katherine and association volunteers plan parks, are active members on the Whistle Bend school project committee, advocate for road safety, and have regularly engaged with the City of Whitehorse in discussions around the city's official community plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Whistle Bend school and Whistle Bend lot developments are two significant initiatives that impact the lives of neighbourhood residents and, in many ways, Yukoners throughout the territory.

As part of the government's five-year capital plan, we will be building the first new Whitehorse elementary school in over 20 years in Whistle Bend, a school for the community and surrounding area. Today, the way children learn has evolved

significantly from 20 years ago, and a new school in Whistle Bend should fully represent the most effective ways of teaching younger generations — our most precious assets.

To inform the decisions being made while planning is happening for the school, we will work with representatives from Yukon First Nation governments, the City of Whitehorse, and the Whistle Bend community through this project advisory committee. We will work with the subcommittee until a school council has been established to ensure that the school meets student programming and cultural and community needs.

The Government of Yukon has budgeted \$1.6 million to begin planning and design for the school, and we anticipate construction of the school to begin in 2021. The school will provide capacity and flexibility to begin renovating or replacing priority schools that are aging or need seismic mitigation work. A new elementary school in Whistle Bend will have far-reaching impacts beyond the neighbourhood itself. This government is committed to listening to the community and prioritizing the needs of Yukon students.

Mr. Speaker, this government is working hard to increase the number of lots available to Yukoners by continuing our Whistle Bend land development work. On July 30, 2019, we released 42 single lots, nine multi-family lots, 10 duplex lots, and 13 townhouse lots. To complete phases 3 and 4, we expect to release 119 more lots this fall, which will include 88 single-family lots, four multi-family lots, and 27 townhouse lots. In addition, most of the 34 commercial lots along Keno Way are expected to be released in early 2020. Furthermore, we will be adding to the inventory of lots in late summer to early fall of 2020, with the release of most of the phase 5 lots.

Since Whistle Bend's first phase in 2012, the neighbourhood has provided more than 420 building lots, allowing for more than 620 homes to be built. This government continues to work hard to address the lot availability needs here in Whitehorse and throughout the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, as I begin to close my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I will take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Porter Creek Centre for allowing me to represent them here in the Assembly and inform them of the activities I engaged in over the summer.

Shortly after the Spring Sitting concluded, I joined my Liberal caucus colleagues and visited a number of Yukon communities and attended many community events. My goal was to engage with Yukoners, listen to their stories, and foster the strong personal connection that this team has worked hard to establish with people throughout the territory.

In May, the Association of Yukon Communities held their 44<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting in beautiful Haines Junction. What a great opportunity it was to meet with municipal and community leaders, hear presentations, and participate in dynamic discussions around community safety, wildfire management, community planning, and developing tourism opportunities.

I attended Yukon Mining Days in Watson Lake and Ross River during National Mining Week. I want to thank the many community partners and industry stakeholders for hosting an informative and collaborative set of events and workshops. In

particular, I would like to thank Yukon Women in Mining, the Yukon Mining Alliance, the Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce, Yukon College, G-P Distributing, the staff at Energy, Mines and Resources, the Town of Watson Lake, the community of Ross River, the Liard First Nation, and the Ross River Dena Council.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about the importance this government has placed on revitalizing the Yukon Forum, fostering reconciliation to collaborate on shared priorities. In May and September, I was honoured to represent Porter Creek Centre constituents at Yukon Forums held in Carmacks and Teslin. This marks the second year of implementing the joint action plan of the Yukon Forum. At these forums, leaders discuss several shared priorities such as justice, family and children's services, and Yukon Days — a yearly meeting of Yukon leaders with federal ministers in Ottawa. As well, discussions took place on climate change and the development of a more robust intergovernmental collaboration in this area.

We've seen a signed memorandum of understanding to collaborate on heritage management and continued conversation on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Yukon's joint education action plan, as well as the comprehensive review of Health and Social Services and legislation around resources.

Another significant event that I celebrated this summer was the Peel land use plan signing ceremony in Mayo, Yukon. Leaders from the governments of Yukon, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council gathered in Mayo, Yukon to officially sign the plan and celebrate their shared accomplishment. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Catherine McKenna, also joined in this historic signing ceremony, which took place on the traditional territory of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. My colleagues and I campaigned on committing to accept the final recommended plan, and it's an honour to deliver on that commitment for the benefit of all Yukoners.

I have the privilege of being one of Yukon's designated representatives with PNWER — the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. This summer, I attended the 2019 annual summit in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where over 500 regional legislators, business leaders, and key decision-makers came together to explore shared challenges in their region, discuss best practices, strengthen regional relationships, and develop action plans for addressing challenges in the future.

The region is comprised of Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan as well as the US states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. PNWER is recognized as the model for regional and bi-national cooperation, providing a platform for collaboration among public, private, academic, and non-profit stakeholders to work together as a region in pursuit of common goals.

During the summit, I made two presentations: one on the importance of funding the Shakwak highway and the other on renewable energy projects in Yukon communities. The Shakwak highway presentation allowed me to connect with US lawmakers and help them truly understand the significance of

this stretch of road that is essentially the main overland transportation artery into Alaska from the lower 48.

I subsequently had three meetings with the Lieutenant Governor of Alaska, Kevin Meyer, who came away from those conversations with a deeper understanding of the importance of the Shakwak highway and committed to explore avenues of funding and state and federal appropriation bills. In August, I received word that the Shakwak highway project was included in a US appropriations bill which could potentially bring renewed funds for this highway for the first time in many years.

During my renewable energy projects presentation, I highlighted successful projects, including the Old Crow solar project and the desire from the community to move away from diesel-fuelled energy — the bioenergy system in Teslin that is being hailed as a world leading biomass heating project — and Kluane First Nation's wind project that involves the installation of three 100-kilowatt capacity wind turbines. I was able to garner awareness about the success of these projects and use the recent Pembina report, which gave Yukon top marks when it comes to transitioning remote communities away from diesel energy.

In a round-up of events in community gatherings, I want to say thank you to those Yukoners who hosted me at events which included the Kwanlin Dün First Nation's playground opening, annual general meetings for the Child Development Centre, Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon, the Challenge Disability Resource Group, and the Canadian Mental Health Association of Yukon. Thank you to those volunteers who hosted me at the Whitehorse Brain Tumour Walk, the Whistle Bend community association barbecue, the Yukon Conservation Society barbecue, and the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon barbecue where the fetal alcohol spectrum action plan for the Yukon was released, setting out seven priorities in a coordinated approach to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder here in the territory.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Sarah, who has joined us here today, my four daughters — who I've coined the "Galina girls" — my father Peter, and my friends who support me in the role as MLA, for, without their commitment, encouragement, and high-fives, I would not be able to serve in the capacity that I do today. For this support, I am truly grateful.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from other members of this House on their replies to the recent Speech from the Throne and hearing about ways we can work together to enrich the lives of Yukoners in this beautiful territory we call home.

**Ms. White:** It's a pleasure to stand and speak in this House again. I'm just noticing that today is October 7. It was five days from now that I was first elected in 2011 — so many moons ago. It feels like quite a long time ago, to be perfectly honest. As I stand here, it's with reflection about what I have seen in those years — two different governments, two very different ways of being, and a multitude of throne speeches.

When I think about the riding of Takhini-Kopper King, it only gets better for me. As an example, my community Facebook group right now is having a conversation on a waste-

free Halloween. You can imagine how an entire neighbourhood could participate in this conversation, including parents piping in and saying, "Bulk candy, although appreciated, would not be allowed to be consumed." Cake raffles, activities including — I think there's going to be bonfires with marshmallows — my house. We'll have a bonfire, hot chocolate — compostable cups — just for anyone who is looking for something to do on Halloween.

We all come from these different places and we all have the deep privilege of representing different areas. They all have their strengths; they all have their beauty; they all have the things that are a little bit harder. I was just thinking about how delightful the barbecue was at 600 College Drive — which is a seniors complex — last Friday, when seniors and college students met for the very first time — despite the fact that the seniors complex has been there since 2007. I am incredibly grateful to the people of Takhini-Kopper King, who not only elected me the first time — just about eight years ago — but we're on the cusp of November, when we had the 2016 election.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in a unique position today as we respond to another throne speech from the Liberal government — a government that was first elected in November 2016, about three years ago. Unique because this hasn't been common practice in Yukon to prorogue the second session of the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and press "restart" midway through. A brave new world, one could say. I, along with Yukoners, listened intently as the throne speech was read last week. A throne speech after all is an opportunity to lay out what's ahead of government. There's a long list to accomplish in a year if the election is to be held next fall, Mr. Speaker — and that would be the beauty of fixed election dates: knowing the timelines. I will keep putting out the pitch for the election next fall.

I won't use Oscar Wilde's full quote here, but he said in part that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. So consider us flattered, Mr. Speaker. There are many, many issues that we as the Yukon New Democratic Party have championed over the years that were echoed in the throne speech — issues that we considered so important that they were included in the 2016 NDP election platform, and they are the same issues that we've consistently brought up in discussions in this House. We were pleasantly surprised to hear the Yukon NDP commitments included in the throne speech. We heard that this government would now begin working toward the electrification of the Alaska Highway, a commitment that was included in our 2016 election platform and one that my colleague for Whitehorse Centre — and previously my colleague who represented Mayo-Tatchun — would speak to very fondly. It was a vision exercise — the electrification of the Alaska Highway — imagine what that could do.

We heard that this government will address the impacts of off-road vehicles by developing an effective regulatory regime. They said the first step will be to designate sensitive ecological areas where off-road vehicles will not be permitted. Well, Mr. Speaker, it should be no surprise to anyone that this too was included as a commitment in our 2016 election platform. This has been a topic that we and the Minister of EMR have

discussed numerous times since he was first elected. I remind this House that a select committee on the safe operation and use of off-road vehicles tabled a final report in March 2011 — over nine years ago. The questions will be: When will we see action on this issue, and when will sensitive ecological areas be protected from off-road vehicles?

I'm not sure how many times we've asked when this government would be creating a Yukon species at risk act, but I can assure you that it predates this current government. This spring, in response to a CPAWS report on the importance of a made-in-Yukon species at risk act, the minister told the media that it was in the works. You can imagine our surprise at the time. I'm pleased to see this commitment included in the throne speech and equally pleased to point out that this commitment was also included in our 2016 election platform. My question will be — and the minister can anticipate this, I'm sure — when will a Yukon-made species at risk act be tabled in this House? We're looking for timelines.

We were pleased at the announcement to implement a ban on single-use bags — one that I championed myself and one that citizens and local businesses support. The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce heard from their members that they were in support of a ban versus a charge on single-use bags because they said it would be easier for them in the long run. We look forward to seeing more restrictions when it comes to single-use plastics, not only on bags. We know that the plastics in our landfills, our community transfer stations, and recycling centres is an ever-growing problem. As the Minister for Community Services knows, solutions exist. They might not be easy, but we can definitely implement them if we choose to.

Mr. Speaker, the stewardship of our lands and the protection of our air and water has always been a priority for the Yukon NDP, and we will continue to press this government on substantive commitments and clear actions to address the current concerns of Yukoners. I was saddened that I couldn't be at the signing ceremony for the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. I say this because I have been to many, many things for the Peel — in defence of the Peel and in support of the Peel. When we talk about our own decisions and our choices and how we choose to proceed in the world, I — along with other colleagues in this House — was at the Public Accounts Committee in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It ended on a Tuesday, and then less than a week later, I was going to a wedding in Winnipeg, and the idea of flying across the country — to fly back across the country seemed absurd really. My colleague the Member for Whitehorse Centre and I road-tripped across Ontario. If anyone ever complains about the Alaska Highway, I tell them to take a look at the Trans Canada Highway next to Lake Superior and then talk to me about roads, because the Alaska Highway is not so bad.

So I was sad to miss the Peel signing ceremony. I was super honoured to be able to give a statement that was read. I did, however, have the great privilege to participate recently at the party at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. I do tell people on a regular basis that I have skills — actual skills — that can be used by the community, and I was happy to make the cake for the celebration. For anyone who has ever had the great fortune

of being in the Peel area — you land at McClusky Lake and you go down the creek — you line down the creek — and it is where the Wind River starts. There is this beautiful spot where you can be in a field full of flowers and wild grasses, and you look across at the mountain. I didn't realize that it was quite as iconic as it was, except that every person who had been there recognized my image from the cake and they all knew where it was. It was just in that area on the side of the Wind.

We appreciate that the land use plan has been signed, and we look forward — we now have two completed land use plans out of eight, so we have six to go. Land use plans are critical. They are critical for a whole bunch of different reasons.

It was great to hear that this government will be proposing amendments to the small business investment tax credit. I would like to point out that this was brought forward and brought under an NDP government. Improving and expanding this act was part of our last election platform, because when we support small businesses through this program, we see the jobs that it creates for Yukoners. Waiting another year for changes to a program that could assist local small businesses, however, is not going to help those small businesses now. My hope is that there is no wait, we make those small changes, and we continue to support the small businesses in Yukon.

When it comes to mining, we have heard over and over again how the NDP are against mining. Mr. Speaker, that is just not true. I have had the good fortune of working on the ground in the mining industry. I have been the camp cook on multiple sites — including in the Dublin Gulch area, so it is interesting to know that it has the big development now. So what you have heard is untrue.

The Yukon NDP has only asked for what is fair: an environmentally sound plan, a security and remediation plan that doesn't leave Yukoners on the hook, a hiring plan that prioritizes Yukoners, and a fair return on our resources.

To be clear, the Yukon NDP has never been against mining. We are not. We still are not. I am still not. I have seen really fantastic things. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun has seen fantastic things happening in his community, including a vibrancy in the local economy, which is exciting. A good friend of mine — her soap business is booming because of the mine activity — how exciting is that? That is just one of those interesting things.

We were really pleased to read the Yukon mineral development strategy discussion paper, a document that reflects many of the concerns and questions that we have raised. We met and had a great discussion with the independent panel last week, and we wish them well with the mountains of work that they have ahead of them. Their timeline, what they are hoping to accomplish, and what they are planning on accomplishing are incredible. It will be fascinating to see how it all works out.

In the throne speech, we heard how well the hospital and the new Whistle Bend care facility are working together. We were told of shorter wait times in the hospital and shorter hospital stays. Well, Mr. Speaker, we disagree. We disagree based on people's personal experiences. We have been told the stories of seniors admitted to the hospital, waiting days in the emergency room before they were able to be transferred to a

ward because there was a shortage of beds. I wonder how that is better. We have heard of staff burnout and the lack of time that they spend with patients, both at the hospital and at the care facility. We have heard that there are nurse shortages within home care, and we are concerned about how that impacts clients who are at the hospital who could otherwise go to their homes with the proper support. They can't access that support, so they are staying in an acute care bed and feeling terrible about it.

We believe that all of these employees do the best work that they can, but we believe that they need to be better supported by this government. Whether we re-evaluate our hiring policies, whether we look at scheduling, whether we look at policies that exist within the care facility — all of those things need to be addressed to make sure that we can better support Yukon patients.

We were incredibly pleased to hear that a nurse practitioner has now been hired and stationed out in the community of Mayo. We are pleased to hear this, because we knew that there had been a couple of events that had happened that were just too much for the nursing station from the mine. The mine site of Victoria Gold had a couple of accidents, and Mayo couldn't deal with them at the time. We were really happy to hear about the nurse practitioner who has been stationed out there. We hope that we see that echoed in other communities. If I am not mistaken, there are still two communities in Yukon that only have one nurse on at a time and sometimes for months on end.

There were other things that we heard in the Speech from the Throne. We heard about the Housing First facility being opened this fall. I am not sure if we are talking about October 21 as this fall, or if we are talking about the first snowfall as this fall, or if we are talking about close to Christmas as fall. What we really want to know is when it's going to open its doors. Right now, what we have — not just in Whitehorse, but in the territory as a whole — is a housing shortage — a crisis — again.

We understand that when the first call for the initial proposal was released for the Housing First facility, no one applied. We had conversations with different organizations in town that were interested in applying, but after they read the initial document, they did not apply. What we want to know is: What has changed? Who is going to run the facility, and what model will they be using? What will it be based on? Because this is really important. We are seeing right now a downtown core that is struggling. To be perfectly honest, it is struggling. We want to know how the Housing First facility is going to help to address that and how it will best address the concerns that have been raised.

We have heard other concerns. We can talk about the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. One of the things that was not addressed in the throne speech was the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. Last effort, when I asked — I don't think all the transitional units were occupied. Again, we have a housing crisis. We have shortage of housing. We don't have available housing. We have unaffordable housing, yet this facility that the government owns had open transitional housing units. That's a question we should be asking: How is government

going to address that in the near future, the mid future, and the far future? How are we going to address those issues?

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, I had this really exciting meeting with a couple of folks the other day who had been trying to reach out to government, and they had not really been successful. Currently — right now — they are building a 12-plex in Porter Creek that is rental units. They are aiming to make them between what is viewed as social housing rates and market rates — trying to make them more affordable than that. The most exciting thing about this — and this is an important note — they are moving forward with building 81 units in Whistle Bend, hopefully starting next year. They are independent people building rental accommodation — rental housing — not accommodation, sorry — not hotels — they're building rental units.

As they go through this and have the conversations with CMHC — I connected them — I was very pleased I was able to connect with the Yukon Housing Corporation. As they had the conversations, some of their questions were around the housing initiative, because it says that they need to have the doors open in 18 months. Well, that might make sense for smaller scale projects, but if we're talking about 81 units, that just might not be feasible. My hope is that government is flexible enough to take a look at that — take a look at what's being proposed and what is being committed to — and support that project.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday on the opening day, there was a really colourful group of young people outside of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. They were here because they wanted to remind legislators that it had been 178 days since they tabled their petition. These were the young people from Porter Creek Secondary School and F.H. Collins Secondary School GSA, and they wanted to remind legislators — us in this House — that it had been 178 days since they tabled their petition. Imagine their elation and their surprise when, in the Speech from the Throne, it said that we were banning conversion therapy. It's absolutely a no-brainer, but their concern is that they had sent a letter to government in the spring and they didn't hear back. So my hope is that maybe the minister can go up and let them know — that she can give them the chance to be elated about the work that they did. Because I didn't know that conversion therapy could still happen until I was named on the radio. Let's be clear: I was named on a CBC interview, and then I became the champion because they picked me. I am grateful that they picked me, but that was not set up.

The young people were outside this Chamber last week because they wanted to remind us that it had been 178 days since they tabled their petition, so I appreciate that this government does so many online questionnaires and requests for information, but I would like to make the pitch to government that it has to go both ways. So if we are going to make those great big beautiful decisions, we need to make sure that we have conversation with those partners and people affected.

I was pleased to hear about the electric buses for the City of Whitehorse and how we were going to move forward on that. Again, I had a conversation and realized that this was the first

the City of Whitehorse had heard of it. Zero Waste Yukon hadn't heard about the ban on single-use plastic bags. I think there are some times where the government — instead of just asking people for information, we could let them know.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about what we didn't hear in the throne speech. Citizens, businesses, and NGOs have voiced their concerns about what is happening at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, which I mentioned already. There have been meetings and consultations, but what are the plans to address these concerns? Is it the intention of this government to continue to staff and run this facility? If we thought that giving the Salvation Army a calendar year was long enough and that it should have been working — keep in mind that the Yukon government took over that facility on January 1, so we are well into that first year. So when will programming exist? When will that facility run like we hope it will? When I say “we”, I think I am speaking for the entire community. This is not a partisan issue. We want to make sure that people have dignity, the right to housing, and the right to safety and security, so how does that work? How do we make sure that we are taking into account what it's doing to the downtown core? How do we reflect that? How do we look at that? Those are issues that weren't raised in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, you might be aware — you might not be aware; you might have a family doctor. Congratulations, if you do. But there is a doctor shortage right now in Yukon again. You know, it is great to hear that the one nurse practitioner is going to Mayo. Again, I have a question for the Hospital Corporation: How many nurse practitioners are currently on staff at the hospital? How many nurse practitioners are working in Yukon? In Ontario, it would be — I'm saying that we could look at Ontario as an example; I'm not sure that I would look to Ontario for a lot of examples — but they have nurse practitioner clinics where they are run by nurse practitioners. You go in, you have your intake appointment, and you get put where you need to be. So the first point of contact isn't a doctor. The first point of contact is a nurse practitioner. It is more of a holistic approach. You have access to physiotherapy if you need it, chiropractic services, and psychological services.

We know that there is a doctor shortage, but we know right now that we aren't seeing — for example, in the City of Whitehorse, a walk-in clinic run by nurse practitioners. There is so much that can be done utilizing the health professionals who we have — like nurse practitioners — or empowering them to work within their full scope of practice, and that would lessen the load on the Emergency department. You should never have to go to the Emergency department to get a prescription filled, but that is what is happening. The most expensive place to possibly go to get a prescription filled is the Emergency department. No one ideally wants to be there for that, because it's an Emergency department and you are not an emergency and you know that, but you have nowhere else to go.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to leave it at that right now. There are lots of questions for the next number of months or weeks or days that we sit here. There are questions about process and there are a lot of questions about policy. I have a lot of questions

about policy, actually — especially around the Whistle Bend care facility.

We look forward to having these conversations. We look forward again to hearing what everyone in this Chamber has to say. You know, the short pitch — happy anniversary to those of us who came in in the 2011 general election — and everyone else. We're also getting closer to the 2016 general election, right? So three years since the election. Mr. Speaker, some things have changed, some things haven't. I look forward to seeing the supplementaries, because then I get to know which departments I actually get to ask questions of — so I am looking forward to those. As always, I look forward to the briefings from the officials.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time, and I look forward to other people's responses.

**Mr. Hutton:** I would like to start by saying thank you and mahsi' cho to all the constituents from Keno, Mayo, Stewart Crossing, Pelly, and Carmacks. It truly is an honour for me to be their voice in this Legislative Assembly.

Much has been said and much will be said about the great work that our government has done this afternoon and about how we have advanced our platform commitment toward healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities. I totally agree with the great work our government has done, but I want to talk about the other part as well. It is the people who make our communities great, so throughout my reply to the Speech from the Throne this afternoon, I will be talking about some of the outstanding people who inhabit the Mayo-Tatchun riding.

I would like to start today by thanking the very dedicated team at Yukon Protective Services. The Ethel Lake-Crooked Creek fire — very fresh in my memory here, because it was only three weeks ago that I was out there with pumps, hoses, and sprinklers set up around my cabin. I want to say a heartfelt and sincere thank you, not just on behalf of myself, on behalf of all the residents of Ethel Lake who have cabins out there, the residents of Stewart Crossing, and the people in Mayo. Thank you to Director Damien Burns from Wildland Fire Management; Keith Fickling and Doug Cote, the ignition planning team; and Daniel Adamson and Guy Couture, who worked tirelessly the first night they were out there to ensure that every structure at Ethel Lake had protection around it.

The other crew who provided support were Rob Westberg, Adam Leary, Logan — sorry, I didn't get your last name — from Haines Junction — but you will know who you are — and Frank Parent, the 72-year-old wonder from Haines Junction. Frank, at 72 years of age, passed the territorial fitness standard this year, which enabled him to continue working with the wildland fire program on initial attack crews — just an amazing fellow. Way to go, Frank. I am really happy that you were out there.

I am very thankful to have the opportunity today to reflect on the good work that this government has done, and I look forward to what can be accomplished in the coming years. There are many accomplishments that I'm proud to be a part of. Highlights for me include the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* signing. I wish you could have been there too, Kate

— it was an absolutely fantastic day in Mayo. Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I wish you could have been there as well. I am so glad that I was able to play my small part in making this happen. I really believe that we have given a gift to all future generations.

I want to mention a couple of people who didn't get mentioned at the signing ceremony: Geri-Lee Buyck, who was part of the youth group for the Peel, and Jimmy Johnny, who was absolutely instrumental as the voice of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the voice of the Peel. Thank you, Geri-Lee and Jimmy, for all the work that you did and for all the years that you participated.

This year, I participated in multiple community visits throughout the territory, meeting with municipalities, First Nation governments, and residents. I really valued the opportunity to sit down with folks in the communities and to have face-to-face discussions about issues that matter to them. I am very pleased in the investments that have been made throughout our territory and specifically in our small rural communities. My colleagues have accomplished an outstanding amount of work in our territory in these past few years. We have had over 62 visits by ministers or the Premier to communities in the Mayo-Tatchun riding, from Keno to Mayo to Stewart Crossing to Pelly to Carmacks. Thank you very much to my colleagues for coming there. I know my communities really appreciate the opportunity to talk to you first-hand, so thank you.

I look forward to seeing this great work continue and I'm pleased to see a fresh set of priorities — a very inclusive set of priorities at that, as was noted again by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. As time passes, it's only natural that priorities evolve. A major shift that we're seeing right now is a discussion around our changing climate and understanding how best to address this major issue that affects us on a global scale. How are we ensuring that we are doing our part to combat the negative impacts of climate change? The residual effects of climate change are substantial and far-reaching.

I would say that I experienced them first-hand when I saw fire behaviour on September 10 that, in a 35-year career with Wildland Fire Management, I never saw during the peak of fire season up here. This year, I witnessed a backing crown fire on September 10 out there, and a fire that travelled 15 kilometres in a matter of hours. This is absolutely extreme fire behaviour that is outside the scope of the Yukon fire management program. This is the kind of fire behaviour that they deal with in Australia on a regular basis, where they have 40 degrees Celsius temperatures. I am afraid that this is going to be part of our new reality with climate change — that seasons like this one, which we consider extraordinary, are going to become much more ordinary 10 years down the road. We have to be able to adapt to that. Our fire program has to be able to adapt to it. Our communities and our citizens need to be able to adapt.

I am going to send a public service message out there right now to anyone who has a cabin out in the Yukon wilderness: Get over your love affair with spruce and pine, fall in love with willow, birch, and aspen. That is really going to help. As much as those trees are beautiful, birch, aspen, and willow are a

tremendous barrier to fire. You have a much better chance of saving your property if it is surrounded by those species — just a word to everyone out there.

The world is changing. What Wildland Fire was able to protect in the past, they may not be able to protect in the future, so I just want to put it out there to every individual to do your part and help Wildland Fire with their job. Firesmart around cabins, firesmart around properties, put a tin roof on your house, and don't put your woodpiles on your deck.

I am very proud of the commitment we have made to create a youth panel on climate change. Young people around the world are leading the charge on climate change because they are the ones who are going to inherit the mess that we've left behind for them. The bad decisions of the past and the bad choices that we made — unfortunately, now our children and grandchildren are going to suffer the consequences and pay the price. When they talk to us about what we need to do to adapt and make this world a better place, we need to listen very intently to what the young people have to say, because our times are not so much longer in this world, but they have to look after it for a long time to come. So we need to help them.

I'm so proud of the advocacy work that I've seen the youth in our territory participate in around climate change. In my own community, Geri-Lee Buyck — our community is absolutely proud of the work that she has done, so mahsi'cho, Geri-Lee. She's one of the people who was key in participating in the youth group on the Peel. I can't think of a better gift to give the planet when it comes to climate change than the protection that we did for the Peel watershed. If nothing else, we have a baseline up there so that they can look at an area of the planet that hasn't been destroyed and see if there's some way of fixing all the other places that we've devastated and bringing them back to what's there in the Peel.

Reflecting back on my first reply to the throne speech on April 24, 2017, the other priority that remains foremost in my mind is rebuilding our relationship with First Nations and working on reconciliation. We've come an incredibly long way in the past couple of years, but there's still a lot of work to be done. Twenty-five years after the agreements were signed, we're still nowhere near achieving our goal of a representative workforce.

Reconciliation is a set of tasks and a work that we can spend the rest of our lives on, and we're not going to complete that job of reconciliation. It took 150 or 200 years to get us down this path and it's going to take us some time to get back up it.

I would like to talk about a young lady from my community who was recognized this fall for her commitment to having a positive impact on her home community of Mayo. Emily Blanchard has taken the initiative to be a strong role model and a leader for the youth in our community. She has a passion for childhood education and is always working to be a positive influence on the growth and development of the youth in Mayo, especially through her work at the community daycare. She's also a very enthusiastic learner, always trying to develop and improve her own skillset. Emily displays effortless joy and enthusiasm in everything that she does, which plays a

key role in teaching younger children to stay engaged and enthused in their activities. She's a true ambassador for our community and a leader for all those who look up to her.

I was very pleased to attend Emily's graduation ceremony at J.V. Clark School in Mayo this June. She performed a beautiful song on piano that she wrote herself and she looked fantastic in her traditional Northern Tutchone regalia. Good on you, Emily. Congratulations. We need more people like you in our territory.

I would also like to take a moment to highlight a constituent from Carmacks, George Skookum. This year, the Hon. Angélique Bernard, Commissioner of the Yukon, presented George with a Commissioner's Award for his volunteer service during the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Whitehorse on May 8, 2019, at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre during the coaches' reception. George was nominated by Marilyn Lawrence and Andrew Glada for his decades-long dedication to coaching youth baseball and hockey in Carmacks. His volunteer efforts have included coordinating travel to tournaments outside Yukon and driving players to games in Whitehorse.

In addition to volunteering as a coach in his community, George is a volunteer board member for the Yukon Native Hockey tournament, a volunteer board member for the Carmacks Curling Club, the Carmacks recreation board, Tantalus recycling centre, and the Yukon College campus committee. George also sits as a councillor on the Village of Carmacks council.

George also teaches local youth to have pride and confidence in themselves and to take pride in their First Nation culture. It's people like George who really make our communities healthy, thriving, vibrant, and sustainable communities. Thank you for everything you've done, George, and everything you will do.

I had the privilege of participating in this year's festivities celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Carmacks as a municipality. A huge shout-out to all the volunteers in Carmacks who helped back the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Carmacks being incorporated as such a great success. As you've heard me say many times before in this House: Volunteers are so important. They really make our communities a wonderful place to live.

I was so pleased to see my friend Bonnie Cooper recognized and gifted with a jacket from the Village of Carmacks for 47 years of volunteer service in Carmacks. Bonnie was volunteering for 12 years before the Village of Carmacks became incorporated as a municipality. She served us 12 years while Carmacks was a local improvement district. She's not done yet. She's going to be there for a few more years. I'm hoping there will be another opportunity to tribute Bonnie for 60 years of volunteer service in Carmacks.

On August 22, we celebrated a very significant milestone in my home community of Mayo, and that was the signing of the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. I'm so proud of the work my colleagues and our government have done on this file. This plan will guide future use of land and resources in the Peel watershed planning region, which covers over 67,000 square kilometres of ecologically sensitive land in northeast

Yukon. It was a truly humbling and moving experience as we got together in Mayo on the banks of the Stewart River on the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation to celebrate the signing of this plan.

After 15 years of hard work and dedication from so many elders, youth, and staff — many of whom sadly are not here with us today — they carried the battle for protection all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. It's a fantastic accomplishment and a gift to the entire world if this area can be effectively managed to preserve its ecological integrity. Mahsi' cho and thank you to everyone who supported this plan. It really encourages me to see what's possible when so many people and various levels of government can work together with one mind and one heart.

Last month, I was really pleased to hear our Minister responsible for Yukon Energy Corporation announce that 31 kilometres of the Mayo-McQuesten transmission line will be replaced. In addition to improving the quality and reliability of service to residents of Mayo and Keno, the upgraded transmission line will promote sustainable development in Yukon by providing hydro-generated electricity to industrial customers such as Victoria Gold, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this work, the transmission line between Mayo and McQuesten will be upgraded to support up to 138,000 kilovolts. It's great to see the collaboration happening between our governments on important projects like this that support Yukon's commitment to a cleaner energy future.

I would like to give a shout-out to John McConnell, Mark Ayranto, Sally Howson, and all the other staff at Victoria Gold for the amazing accomplishment. They're leaders in our territory and incorporate social responsibility and community enrichment initiatives. Every Student, Every Day has been an excellent program that is funded by Victoria Gold, and it helps recognize students for their attendance in schools and encourages people to attend school — so thank you, Victoria Gold.

It was amazing to see they have accomplished their gold pour. It was quite amazing to see John McConnell standing there with a 1,000-ounce gold bar in his hand worth \$1.5 million.

Another great initiative from Victoria Gold is to bring Yukoners home to work. It's fantastic. My own son, with his millwright ticket, has travelled all across this country from BC to Manitoba to Ontario to get work as a millwright. He has now been with Victoria Gold for five months out there, and with any luck, he may be there for his entire career. We're looking forward to at least 20 or 30 years of a really vibrant economy in our little community, and it's largely in part — thank you — to Victoria Gold. Mayo is the busiest I've ever seen it since the mine shut down at United Keno Hill Mines in 1989.

As the members opposite also mentioned, some of the people who have benefited — Joella Hogan from the Yukon Soaps Company is doing wonderful with her company, and part of it is because of all the renewed activity in the area. I'm so happy to say that the first new store that's going to open in Mayo in probably the past 30 years — Yukon Soaps is going to



have a little shop in Mayo. Thank you, Joella, for everything that you've done and for persevering in your business.

Ewing Transport — four generations of the Ewing family have served us in construction in Mayo, and Victoria Gold has given them the opportunity to expand that company and to ensure its vibrant future. Dick Ewing has three sons of his own who are working out there, and the company will be in good hands if he ever decides he wants to retire. Again, thank you, Victoria Gold.

Wilf's Contracting, I have to mention as well — Wilf Tuck is a man who has served our community for 50 years with his trucking company. As we do the work on the transmission line and we do the work on the highways, these contractors who have struggled for so many years to stay alive in our community now have a real opportunity to build up their businesses and maybe pass them on to future generations. For a small community like Mayo, that's a fantastic thing — to know that there's life down the road for these companies. Thank you very much, Victoria Gold.

We have seen strong investments in our communities over the past couple of years — more investments than we have seen for decades before that. I am pleased to see several major infrastructure investments throughout my riding, one of those being the close to \$160 million of upgrades that will begin next year on the north Klondike Highway. I guess the number itself tells you maybe for how long they haven't done any work on that road — that they need this amount of money to upgrade it now. They are not building a new highway; they are just upgrading a highway that was already there but was ignored for many years.

This project involves reconstructing and rehabilitating critical portions of highway between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway cut-off. This highway is heavily impacted by increasing levels of thawing permafrost. The north Klondike Highway is a vital link in our territory, and I know it is a road well-travelled by my constituents. Not only will this project make the north Klondike Highway safer and more efficient, it will also reduce the costs of highway maintenance.

The brush-clearing and vegetation removal alongside the right-of-way — I can absolutely personally attest to this — have made that highway much safer than it has been for the past 15 years. The lines of sight are much better now, especially on the dark, narrow sections now. Thank you to my colleague, Minister Mostyn, for the great work on the north Klondike Highway.

The Carmacks bypass road project is ready to go. It is the first under the Resource Gateway partnership with the federal government. The Government of Yukon and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation have reached an agreement for the proposed Carmacks bypass project. The agreement enables the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to access potential contracting, education, and training benefits associated with the project. The Yukon government has also agreed to provide funding so that the First Nation can participate effectively in the planning, design, assessment, and regulatory processes for the proposed project.

The construction of the bypass is dependent on the Government of Yukon receiving the agreed-to funding from the Government of Canada for the Yukon Resource Gateway project. Each of the Yukon Resource Gateway project components will be subject to the territory's assessment and regulatory processes, which include opportunities for public input and consultation with affected First Nations.

This agreement is one of a series of project agreements that we are hoping to finalize with affected First Nations. The Carmacks bypass will be a road from south of Carmacks to the existing Freegold Road north of Carmacks so that mine haul trucks will be able to bypass the community. It will also improve access to the Mount Nansen site to assist in remediation efforts. This new road, along with other new and improved roads related to the Yukon Resource Gateway project, will help to enhance the development of Yukon's mineral resource sector.

This summer, the Government of Yukon received the first of two \$8.25-million annual instalments of the federal gas tax fund, along with a top-up of \$16.5 million made available through the Government of Canada's budget in 2019. This top-up doubles the amount of money for municipalities, unincorporated communities, and First Nations in Yukon. Municipalities and First Nations within my riding were extremely pleased to see the doubling of the gas tax fund allocations this year. This helped our communities tremendously. The federal gas tax fund is flexible in allowing communities to apply funding to their most pressing local needs. Communities can invest across 18 different project categories, including recreation, water systems, and roads. They can also use the funds immediately for priority projects, bank them for later use, pool the dollars with other communities for shared infrastructure projects, or use them to finance major infrastructure expenditures. Through this fund, my riding of Mayo-Tatchun saw investments of over \$2.5 million.

This summer, we also saw significant investments in water and waste-water infrastructure improvements in both Mayo and Carmacks. Carmacks received a total of \$1.25 million toward their recreation centre water treatment system. Mayo received over \$8.6 million for water, sewer, and road upgrades for phase 3, area 3.

The Carmacks recreation centre — I am so happy to see this project started. The cement forms have gone up. This is going to be a major benefit to the community, not just for recreation but for health and wellness. I am so happy to see that finally getting built in Carmacks.

As I mentioned earlier, reconciliation with First Nations is a priority to me, and I'm very proud that it has been a priority of this government. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 62 called on government to establish senior level positions dedicated to aboriginal content and education. I was very pleased to see the creation of a new position within the Department of Education as a response to this call to action.

This position is the Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives. It's a position with the Department of Education. The Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations

Initiatives will work in partnership with all Yukon First Nations on their collective and individual educational priorities and help to implement initiatives that support the success of First Nation learners.

I'm very proud of our government's partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education on this important initiative to advance reconciliation. I'm really looking forward to seeing all that can be accomplished by the creation of this specialized position.

I will say a few words about community safety. I would like to talk for a moment about the 2019-20 policing priorities. Priority number five was to foster meaningful relationships within First Nations and throughout the communities. Lines of communication between the First Nations, communities, and the Yukon RCMP continue to be strengthened. Constructive dialogue and relationship-building remains a priority of all detachments. Local orientation of new police officers is consistently carried out in close coordination with First Nation community leaders and other stakeholders.

The creation of community tripartite agreements and letters of expectation for First Nation communities — it's incredibly important to me that we are taking all necessary steps to ensure citizens in our communities feel safe and supported.

As many of you will be aware, all of the communities in my riding have dealt with some very devastating situations these past few years. I'm really inspired by the initiative that some of the communities are taking to deal with these issues proactively. Selkirk First Nation has recently implemented a community safety officer program. I want to give a shout-out to Gina Nagano for all the hard work that she has done with this and a shout-out to some folks in Pelly Crossing who are community safety officers and were instrumental in helping to get the program set up. Thank you, Darcy and Ellie Marcotte, and a big shout-out to David Bennett as well. The work these community safety officers do complements the work that the RCMP does in the communities. It has already paid huge dividends in the community of Pelly Crossing. Without a doubt, I can tell you one life has been saved because a community safety officer program was implemented.

As far as I'm concerned, it's a pilot project now, but it's a success already, and it should be funded for the next 10 years, based on the saving of that one life alone. That's a huge thing for our small communities. We have lost too many lives; we can't afford to lose any more, so if the community safety officer program is going to save them for us, I would like to see one in every community out there.

Selkirk was the first in the Yukon to complete a community safety plan under Canada's community safety planning initiative. I'm really proud of the work that our government has done to work collaboratively with the Selkirk First Nation to complete the safety planning process that started earlier this year. The Selkirk First Nation's plan includes a security safety program that employs local people to help identify problems in the community and to intervene in situations before they escalate.

It is really great to see community members helping other community members and doing what they can to be proactive

and engaged when it comes to promoting safety within our rural Yukon communities.

This year, residents of Mayo saw some significant changes in health care delivery. Early in the year, our doctor had some medical issues of his own and was forced into early retirement. In June, we were so lucky to have a nurse practitioner begin working full-time at the community health centre in the Village of Mayo. This is the first health care centre in the Yukon to be staffed by a nurse practitioner. This role is also supported by three nurses, as well as visiting physicians who come to the community on a rotational basis.

I can tell you, in my own first-hand experience, on my first visit to the nurse practitioner, she has a lot of time to spend with her patients. There's no rushing to the next patient, to the next fee-for-service. It is so important in our small communities, where we have had doctors and nurses rotating in and out, to have somebody there who can take the time — whether it is two hours or three hours — to spend with you. Some of us — our medical histories get a little lengthy in the communities. You can't go over it in 10 or 15 minutes. To have somebody there who cares so much and is willing to take the time and do it — I can say that I have heard absolutely nothing but positive remarks about the new nurse practitioner in Mayo and the service that she is providing to the clients there. I really hope that if it works so well in Mayo, we can get these nurse practitioners into every other community that needs them and maybe here in Whitehorse. If there are not enough doctors to go around, and if these nurse practitioners can work to the full scope of their practice, they may be part of the solution. If you have a nurse practitioner, you don't need a family doctor, and that is a tremendous new initiative. I am so happy we have started it here.

The nurse practitioner is able to provide more comprehensive care in the community, reduce the workload for physicians, reduce wait-times for clients, and really increase the options for health care in the communities — so thank you to my colleague, Minister Frost, for getting us our nurse practitioner in Mayo.

Last month, we saw the federal government launch the co-developed Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. The framework sets out a long-term strategic vision that will guide the Government of Canada's activities and investments in the Arctic to 2030 and beyond and will better align Canada's national and international policy objectives with the priorities of indigenous peoples and Arctic and northern residents. For the first time, the federal government worked collaboratively with indigenous representatives and six territorial and provincial governments to define and co-develop this long-term vision.

It is wonderful to see such meaningful collaboration between multiple levels of government.

Everyone will be happy to know that I am drawing to the conclusion. I started talking about people, and I will end talking about people. I just want to give a shout-out to every volunteer across every community in the territory. You volunteers make our communities a fantastic place to live in. You take time away from your families, you take time away from things that you

like to do for your personal enjoyment, and you sacrifice all that for the safety, security, health, and benefit of us — so my sincere heartfelt thank you to all those volunteers across the territory. We really do appreciate the work that you do.

I want to say thank you to the residents of Keno City. They get this year's award for engagement. The entire community came out to meet with me, Minister Streicker, and the Premier. When you accomplish that goal in Whitehorse, let me know. I think that is a record that is going to stand. I think they will keep that award for a long time to come. Great work to the people in Keno. Nobody is more engaged than you folks are.

I just want to end with recognition of two or three amazing people from my communities. The Yukon permanent art collection added six new works this year. Two of them — I am very proud to say — came from people, artists, in my communities. I want to give a huge shout-out and congratulations to Kaylyn Baker. Your work is absolutely fantastic. It is the most beautiful work that I have seen around the territory in the last few years. Keep up the good work. You are an absolutely amazing talent.

Virginia Mitford from Mayo — congratulations on having a piece of work added to the permanent art collection here. This is a young lady who grew up in the wilderness on a trapline with her parents, many miles up the Stewart River — where the Lansing River joins the Stewart. She is just an amazing talent, so I wanted to make sure that Virginia gets mentioned. She spent her childhood on a remote trapline in the Yukon with her family and dog team. Working with a variety of media — namely print-making, photography, and drawing — she examines her own personal history within broader concepts of feminism, nostalgia, and change. After graduating from Memorial University with a BFA in Visual Arts, Virginia has taken part in artists' residencies in Montreal, across Newfoundland, and Mayo.

Last but certainly not least, a big shout-out to a young woman of Northern Tutchone descent, with her roots in Pelly Crossing. Samantha Lee Dawson joined Turko & Company as an associate in 2018. Her practice focus is trial and appeal work, criminal, prison, and administrative law in both BC and Yukon. Samantha — who is Tlingit and Northern Tutchone from the Selkirk First Nation in Central Yukon — was awarded her Juris Doctor from Allard Law at UBC in 2017. Ms. Dawson also completed an aboriginal law specialization while at law school. She completed her summer articles at the UBC Indigenous Community Legal Clinic and her full-time articles at Myers & Co. in Vancouver. She was called to the BC bar in 2018. Congratulations, Samantha — you make us all proud. I believe she is the only First Nation lawyer practising aboriginal law in the Province of British Columbia at this current time. Amazing work, amazing perseverance — thank you.

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Just a gentle reminder — specifically to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, but of course to all members as well — I don't think much disorder was generated, but the current members of the House are referred to either by their

ridings or by their Cabinet responsibilities. Just a gentle reminder to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Are there any further replies to the throne speech?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I am really pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne delivered on behalf of our government on October 3.

I know that the Speaker has acknowledged the traditional territory, but I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional lands of the Kwanlin Dün and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and to express deep gratitude for their continued generosity in hosting us on their traditional territory and allowing us to do this important business on behalf of Yukoners here.

I would like to start with some personal reflections in terms of my riding and my responsibilities as an MLA. I am absolutely dedicated to my work to make Yukoners' lives better. I am so honoured to be in a position where I can make good things happen for Yukoners and for the Mountainview community. It is a privilege to be representing all of those good folks who live within my riding. I take my role seriously, and I don't forget that it was given to me by the incredible people in my riding. I have three very important busy portfolios that I will speak about in a few moments, but I just want to express my gratitude and my commitment to Mountainview.

We have been working on many constituency caseworks and personal issues. We opened a number of constituency files, and I feel really grateful that people within my riding are feeling safe to come to us and talk to us about what is important to them.

When I was chosen as the MLA for Mountainview, I understood that the highway was a major issue. I worked relentlessly with the Minister of Highways and Public Works and all of my Cabinet colleagues to deliver a very much needed highway upgrade. This was a big project to undertake, and the Yukon government and I made it a priority. We have taken time to hear from constituents and we have reflected these concerns in our plans for this work. This is not a new issue, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is moving ahead with this work.

I absolutely appreciate all the time that was spent by folks from within the Mountainview community and all of the time that they've spent in advocacy of safe highway crossings. This is why we opened a thorough dialogue, particularly with the community of Hillcrest, but also Valleyview, Granger, and all of the areas that are within that area. I just want to say that there will be a technical panel this week called "Paving the Future: Transportation and Safety in the Yukon" with experts in public safety and transportation planning. A second open house is scheduled to take place at the Transportation Museum on October 16 as well. A second public open house will keep the residents of the Mountainview riding informed and engaged throughout the design process. We will be able to see how their input has shaped the project.

The highway is one of many improvements in our community, and there are many others that have happened over the last while. For instance, last May, Kwanlin Dün First Nation celebrated the opening of a new community playground partly

funded by the Government of Yukon. In July, I stood with our MP, Larry Bagnell, to announce a \$19.3 million investment from the Government of Canada, along with investment from the Yukon government and Kwanlin Dün for the creation of a new community space in McIntyre. When I reflect on this, I can't help but think how much we have achieved so far, and I really appreciate that we have much more to do, and there are a lot of opportunities for more precious opportunities to make a positive impact on Yukoners' lives.

Before I move on to my portfolio areas, I just want to say how much I appreciate the support of my family — particularly my sons, Jedrek and Colin. I have said this before — and I will probably say it many more times — anything I do is because of them. To my broader family and for all the support that they have given me over these last few years — and of course my friends — last year, when I had the chance to address the Legislative Assembly in more general terms, I talked about how time spent with friends and family is generally the first thing that we give up, so I have worked really hard over this last year to not give it up so easily and to really take the time and be able to spend time with those who love me and support me.

On that note, I would like to use this opportunity to highlight the important work that I have undertaken in each of my three portfolios that truly show this government's commitment to serving Yukoners and making their lives better.

I will begin with Tourism and Culture. Tourism continues to be a major economic engine within Yukon's economy. It is Yukon's second largest industry and our largest private sector employer — 13.5 percent of Yukoners are employed by the tourism sector, which is the highest in Canada, and 4.4 percent of our gross domestic product is attributable to tourism, which is the second highest in Canada, only behind Prince Edward Island. As the recently released results of the Yukon visitor exit survey show, the collective efforts of Yukon tourism operators, industry partners, and the Department of Tourism and Culture are paying off. Since the last survey in 2012-13, we have seen a 25-percent increase in visitors to Yukon and a 37-percent increase in visitor spending.

With the Yukon tourism development strategy as our road map, Yukon's appeal as a sustainable, year-round, world-class travel destination offering transformational experiences to visitors will continue to grow. A crucial element in growing this visitation is engagement and cooperation with our stakeholders. This government knows the values of partnerships to help implement Yukon's strategy. In the last year, we have signed MOUs with Destination Canada, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, and Parks Canada.

Another priority laid out in the strategy was to establish a task force to recommend an improved governance model for tourism that will best lead the territory. In response, our government appointed a seven-member task force in March to explore tourism governance models that would align the efforts of government and industry to maximize efficiency in destination management that supports tourism industry growth. After an extensive review of the various options available, the task force came back with the recommendation for a made-in-

Yukon governance model that incorporates the best of both worlds, continuing as a line department of government and establishing a strategic tourism advisory board appointed by Cabinet following the YG boards and committees selection process. Supplementing this governance model were recommendations about enhancing internal efficiencies to improve flexibility and to respond to rapidly changing market conditions, balanced with the accountability that Yukoners expect from their government.

I want to personally thank all of the members of the task force as well as the support staff of the Department of Tourism and Culture for their work on this project. My heartfelt thanks go to each of the task force members for their dedication and guidance: Vicki Hancock, as our independent chair; Michelle Kolla, Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce; Marilyn Jensen from the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association; Rich Thompson with NVD Limited Partnership; Ben Ryan from Air North; Deputy Minister Justin Ferbey with Economic Development; and of course our Deputy Minister Valerie Royle with the Department of Tourism and Culture. I'm proud to say that this government has accepted the task force recommendations and will implement them as soon as possible.

I am also grateful for the work of all of the members of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* steering committee, who will continue to provide oversight of the strategy until the new model is in place, which is targeted for April 1, 2020.

The Government of Yukon is committed to taking a one-government approach to tourism development under the strategy. Many of this government's initiatives have an impact on tourism. For example, new growth in agriculture will feed into the culinary tourism sector and provide opportunities for agri-tourism products. The Peel land use plan provides opportunities for sustainable, no-footprint tourism offerings. Paving the Dawson runway opens up that region of our territory to more year-round visitors. \$160 million of upgrades to the north Klondike Highway will provide a better experience for our rubber-tire visitors.

The transition of the Yukon university provides opportunities for tourism programming to grow the industry's workforce right here at home. By moving forward with these and other initiatives by government and our stakeholder partners, tourism will continue to provide Yukon with sustainable diversified growth that balances economic development with environmental, community, and cultural values.

Of course, the vital part of Yukon's cultural identity is that of First Nations. We continue to support revitalizing, maintaining, and celebrating First Nation knowledge, languages, and culture. In particular, the promotion of First Nation artistic expression contributes to reconciliation and a stronger, richer society for all Yukoners.

This summer, we saw the completion of a project three years in the making: the re-raising and renaming of the restored BC Centennial totem on National Indigenous Peoples Day. The pole has a new name, meaning "peace totem pole" in the Tsimshian language. The ceremonial work brought together

master carvers, conservators, local knowledge-keepers, families, and community members and was a deeply spiritual, moving experience for all of us who had the opportunity to be a part of this amazing project.

Meanwhile, work continues on the development of a creative and cultural industry strategy that will provide a solid economic foundation for Yukon's cultural activity to flourish. Creative and cultural industries are a distinct and important part of Yukon identity and are also direct contributors to our economy. This is particularly important as a foundation of economic empowerment for women in Yukon communities, especially indigenous women. This is why our government cited the creative and cultural industry strategy along with the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* as solutions in our final submission to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

In collaboration with the departments of Economic Development and Education, we have now begun our community engagement sessions. The draft strategy coming out of these sessions is anticipated before year-end.

Turning to heritage — since this House last sat, Mr. Speaker, our government and Yukon First Nations signed a heritage MOU on May 30 at the Yukon Forum. This MOU lays the foundation for all parties to work toward a clear and constructive process for heritage matters throughout the territory, including archaeological and palaeontological discoveries, cultural artifacts, and the stewardship of heritage and historic sites. The members of the heritage working group — which includes representatives from 11 self-governing First Nations and representatives from Tourism and Culture and the Executive Council Office's Aboriginal Relations — are to be commended for their work in developing this MOU.

Our heritage resources and historic sites are incredibly important parts of my portfolio and are being regularly impacted by the passage of time and our changing climate. I was very proud to accompany the Tourism and Culture research and restoration team on their annual trip to Herschel Island this summer to see these impacts first-hand. It was fascinating to mark the changes this area has seen over the years and really drove home the importance of the team's efforts to preserve and document the island's history. Likewise, the archaeology and palaeontology units had another productive field season. As they unfold, I really look forward to sharing with you some of the exciting finds made by the ice patch research group as well as our archaeology and palaeontology teams throughout the territory.

Turning now to the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, where a major focus is on a review of our two major pieces of legislation — the *Workers' Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* — the *Workers' Compensation Act* governs the board's business, compensation, and return-to-work efforts, while the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* provides the prevention system to help workplaces stay healthy and safe. Members may recall that 2017 marked 100 years of the workers' compensation system.

We have a system that equally balances the rights and interests of workers and employers. It fosters the prosperity of Yukon businesses by caring for injured workers and returning them to their workplace as quickly as it healthy and safe. The system works. We have seen workplace injury and illness rates dropping for years in the Yukon. Our workers and employers continue to get better at establishing and practising injury prevention measures. The spirit of safety is deeply rooted in the territory's workplaces.

Historically, the focus has been on our workers' physical well-being. We are working hard to expand that focus. Mental health is a key concern for this government. An amendment to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in 2017 opened the door to developing important new regulations aimed at the prevention of psychological injuries in the workplace. The Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working toward developing such regulations for Yukon workplaces. This summer, a public engagement took place, and drafting of a new regulation is underway and will help prevent violence and harassment, significant causes of workplace psychological injury.

All of these legislative and regulatory changes, along with the day-to-day work of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, are critical to enabling our employers to remain competitive and our workers protected in an ever-evolving global economic climate.

In terms of the Women's Directorate — finally turning to my third portfolio — the Women's Directorate works toward gender equality by providing expert advice, analysis, and training within government, but also by supporting equality-seeking organizations.

This year, the Women's Directorate is leading major projects that will have incredible impacts on equality in the territory. As we all know, the national inquiry's final report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was released on June 3, 2019, leaving our country with 231 ambitious and impactful calls for justice.

In Yukon, the Women's Directorate is working closely with the Yukon advisory committee to respond to the final report, with clear actions for Yukon. The Yukon advisory committee is comprised of representatives of Government of Yukon, indigenous women's organizations, First Nations, and family members of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I am honoured to co-chair this group.

The Yukon advisory committee has played an active role in supporting Yukon families and the work of the national inquiry and is now working hard to develop an action plan for all of Yukon. Yukon is leading the way across the country. Unlike many of our provincial counterparts, we have an historic declaration signed by 26 representatives of government and community organizations pledging their commitment to address violence against indigenous women. We are committed to having an action plan developed by March 2020. We also believe in doing this work in a decolonizing way, in a way that holds up and recognizes the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and that brings all the relevant stakeholders to the table.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners, including the federal and First Nation governments, to ensure that the stories that our family members shared with the commission continue to be heard and respected so that, together, we can create meaningful change. Now is the time for action.

Work continues on the development and implementation of the sexual assault response team, also known as SART. The Women's Directorate, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Justice, and external partners such as the Whitehorse General Hospital, the RCMP, and Kwanlin Dün First Nation are working collaboratively and actively as the SART implementation committee.

The member agencies of SART are committed to providing a coordinated and collaborative response for all those victimized by sexual violence and to supporting them along whichever path they choose. SART represents a new approach in government, working across departments and agencies in order to reorient services with victims' needs and choices at the centre.

Through SART, victims are able to access support through any agency that provides services and they are able to navigate the programs in a way that they choose. Our goal is to create a gold standard for holistic care on a reasonable timeline without compromising the quality of service, client safety, or privacy.

Key components of the SART implementation are well underway. As a result of our government's SART initiative, victims of sexualized violence in Whitehorse and rural communities already have priority access to mental wellness care through our mental wellness and substance use hubs. We now have a team of specially trained medical care providers. We are developing a toll-free, 24/7 support line for victims of sexual assault anywhere in the territory which you can call from anywhere in the territory if you need support or assistance.

Better coordination of existing medical and victim services is being supported by two specialized staff — a victim support coordinator and a clinical coordinator. They are working in partnership to ensure that there is continuity of care and wraparound services for victims of sexualized assault.

We are working at the Women's Directorate to lead the development of an inter-agency protocol, recognizing that moving to a victim-centred approach takes work. It requires all parties involved spelling out how we work together, then making change internally to ensure victims of sexualized assault are always treated with dignity and supported to navigate the process they choose.

The third major project we are working on is an LGBTQ2S+ action plan for Yukon government. The action plan will be based on engagement with Yukon's LGBTQ2S+ community and will focus on non-discrimination and will include inclusivity both within Yukon government services but also for Yukon government as an employer.

As we do this work, we operate on the principle "nothing about us without us". An advisory coalition committee of Yukon LGBTQ2S+ organizations was created to help oversee the public engagement and action plan development. We also talked directly to LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners from January to June

2019, and LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and allies participated in a public engagement led by the non-profit organization QMUNITY. From the results of that work, we conducted an online public survey. The survey was used to prioritize what programs and services were needed most, and we certainly saw some clear themes.

Yukoners told us that there is a need for education and training in many sectors, including health and education. We also saw that there is a need to increase funding for community groups, including an LGBTQ2S+ resource community centre. Yukoners made it clear that they're ready for action and are ready to work together to create a more inclusive community.

An action plan will be developed in the next six months. We will lead work with other departments to address policy and program improvements. We will also determine legislative priorities for future legislative Sittings.

Throughout the public engagement, Yukoners made it clear that banning conversion therapy is a top priority. We also heard from young citizens right here in the Legislative Assembly that we must take action to prevent this from happening here.

I want to commend again the students of Porter Creek Secondary School and F.H. Collins who created a campaign and petition to ban conversion therapy in Yukon. I absolutely applaud them for their passion and commitment to an important cause, for taking part in our democratic system, and for helping to make Yukon a more inclusive place.

I did hear the Leader of the Third Party state that there was no reply. We gave a verbal reply to that petition, and I was very clear about our commitment. I was clear that our government does not support conversion therapy. We have studied conversion therapy legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions in order to determine the right measure for the Yukon context. We are committed to developing and tabling legislation in the spring of 2020. This is a priority for the Government of Yukon and one that I'm absolutely committed to at every level. I certainly will reach out to the students if they felt that they were not replied to. I felt that we were very clear in our reply to these young people, and I again hold up their efforts. This is exactly what we need to see in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the significant undertakings and contributions of the departments I proudly oversee in a government which I am proud to be part of with a vision for the territory I'm proud to stand behind. I want to say how much of a pleasure it has been to work alongside all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly. I have probably said it before and I will likely say it again: Yukoners got it right. We are a very close family, and the Legislative Assembly gives us opportunity to be together each and every day and to work hard on behalf of Yukoners.

I thank you for the opportunity to remark on these highlights and I look forward to discussing further details with members opposite.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** In the Speech from the Throne, the Commissioner began by acknowledging the contributions of past Premier Dennis Fentie. I would just like to begin by

commenting on a couple of things that Premier Fentie did that I was involved with. One of them was that he — along with the MLA for beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, past MLA Patrick Rouble — helped to introduce or build the Marsh Lake Community Centre. We had in the Legislature today the person who built that community centre. It has been really great for our community. I would like to acknowledge Premier Fentie's contribution to that.

The other thing that happened that I would like to acknowledge is that Premier Fentie took on the role as Minister of Environment, which I thought was an unusual move. At the time that happened, there were the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meetings in Montreal, which is when the Kyoto Protocol came into force. Then-Premier Fentie was at that meeting — I also happened to be part of the Canadian delegation at that time — to talk about Canada's north, climate change, and the concerns we were seeing. This was 2006. Out of that conference, the Premier came back and signed the Montreal climate change declaration, which was, I think, instrumental to us as a territory moving forward on the path toward developing our climate change action plan and was really the beginning of us in this Legislature acknowledging the concerns of climate change and what we were facing.

The Commissioner's throne speech went on to acknowledge some of the anniversaries of our municipalities — Carmacks, Teslin, Watson Lake, Mayo, and Haines Junction all celebrated 35 years, and Faro celebrated a wonderful 50 years. I have had the pleasure of getting to all those communities this past summer and fall. It was great to see them in their celebrations.

The Commissioner also went on to acknowledge more great Yukoners and two young community members from my riding — two of the recipients of the 2019 Commissioner's Award for Outstanding Youth Achievement. They are the brothers Micah and Caius Taggart-Cox — Micah being the elder and Caius being the younger — although I noticed the other day at the United Way pancake breakfast that Caius has now overtaken Micah in height.

Another Yukoner who got an acknowledgement at the Association of Yukon Communities' annual general meeting was the 2019 Hanseatic Award winner, Mr. Perry Savoie, for outstanding contributions to the advancements of the Yukon municipal government. He did so with many years of service on the Marsh Lake Local Advisory Council. It was lovely to see him receive that award.

I am going to talk about first responders and firefighters later on in my remarks, Mr. Acting Speaker, but Claire Desmarais was one of the recipients of the volunteer 2019 Community Safety Awards for improving safety and wellness. She is one of our volunteer firefighters for Mount Lorne and she also happens to support the Ember Fire Academy, which trains young women to become first responders.

Just last month, the Marsh Lake Fire Rescue was celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and they hosted a training competition in Marsh Lake and Mount Lorne. They, including Claire Desmarais, won the competition for the second year in a row, beating out Marsh Lake's team. Our fire chief was teasing

them about this, because the Marsh Lake fire department went first, so the Mount Lorne fire department got to see how that vehicle rescue was done.

I also had some great times this summer volunteering around my riding. I volunteered at Haa Kusteeyi, which was the July inland Tlingit celebration held in Carcross this year. I guess it was not in my riding, but I got to volunteer alongside most of my riding at the Atlin music festival. I also did my annual volunteering at our landfill transfer station and at the Carcross Art House.

Thinking about the throne speech, I would like to speak about the importance of our communities. Let me start with Women's History Month, the exhibit that just opened in the lobby this noon hour, and the tributes we heard from all parties here in the Legislature today. I think the theme for this year's celebration is #MakeAnImpact — if I heard colleagues correctly today during the tribute. I just want to talk about an impact that I think exists in our communities.

I want to start for a second with the Northwest Territories. One week ago, they had their territorial elections in the Northwest Territories, and I would like to congratulate them. They went from being the jurisdiction with the fewest women representatives in their Legislature — two of 19 — to becoming the jurisdiction with the most women having seats, with nine of 19 seats being held by women. I think that is a tremendous achievement, just surpassed by our municipalities here and our local advisory councils, which are just over 50 percent elected.

For Yukon communities, it is a testament to the diversity of the citizens of our municipalities and communities — that they have such a diverse representation.

I have been counting up the number of times I have been getting to communities. I just finished my fall tour — or late summer tour — to communities, and this summer, I surpassed 100 community visits. That's not counting Whitehorse; I am counting when I go in the role as minister to travel to communities to talk to those communities — to municipalities and First Nations, local advisory councils, and community groups.

It was really great this last community tour, because the Premier joined with almost every trip — I'll have to check back to make sure — but he was there and it was really well-received. Another thing we set up with this round of visits was that we welcomed joint First Nation chief and council meetings alongside municipal council mayor and council meetings. It was terrific, because there are many shared priorities, and it's great when we can get together and have those conversations.

We really want to make sure that, as we're investing in our communities, those investments are serving as many of our citizens as possible. So the more we can coordinate, I think the better we get investment in our communities.

Just a couple of little shout-outs to echo some of what I heard from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun — we had a lovely home-cooked meal in Watson Lake at our meeting with mayor and council, and Keno was amazing in that — I don't know that they had quite 100 percent of the community out for that visit, but it had to be over 90 percent of the community out for that visit, and I think it will set a record for some time to come.

The other thing I think was absolutely amazing from that visit was that they haven't had a volunteer fire department for some time, having lacked volunteers, and out of that visit, they stepped up and there are now 11, which I think is probably about half of that community now volunteering for the fire department. We were very happy with that, and we agreed to send training to them, rather than have them come down to receive training. I will also note that, the day after that meeting, we were in Pelly meeting with the Selkirk First Nation, and we got another nine volunteers for firefighting from Pelly — again, absolutely amazing.

I will talk more, Mr. Speaker, about our communities when I speak about our investments in infrastructure and also about climate change and about working with our municipalities and First Nations — but first let me talk about people and how they make our world better here in the territory.

This morning, we raised the Arctic Winter Games flag, both at the City of Whitehorse and at the Tourism and Culture building next to the Legislature. Starting tomorrow, I believe, we have the second mission conference for the Arctic Winter Games where all the chefs from all of the teams are here, across all jurisdictions, where we come together to share progress to date and a vision for the upcoming games from March 15 to 21, 2020, and to look at all of the venues and make sure that things are on track.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I will say here today that I'm hoping that all of us as MLAs will be volunteering at the games. I have asked the Arctic Winter Games team to come up with some great ways that all of us can be involved — handing out ulus, volunteering generally — and I'll share that list of ways to be involved with all MLAs.

Another way I want to talk about the people of the territory is with respect to inclusion. Inclusion has always been a priority for government, including our government, and we have made many strides on the LGBTQ2S+ file — amending legislation to include more appropriate and inclusive terminology and intent. We brought municipal and First Nation governments into trilateral meetings to discuss local priorities.

Aussi, monsieur le Président, le gouvernement du Yukon est fier de pouvoir doter le territoire d'une nouvelle école secondaire francophone pour soutenir les langues officielles et pour offrir aux familles le choix de la langue d'enseignement de leurs enfants. Et ce ne sont là que quelques exemples. Depuis que je suis responsable de la Direction des services en français, le nombre de postes désignés bilingues est passé de 6 à 73 : nous offrons un meilleur service à la population yukonnaise. Deux postes de première ligne ont été créés pour les services de santé en partenariat avec le ministère de la Santé et des Affaires sociales.

J'aimerais exprimer ma gratitude à la Direction des services en français pour tous ses efforts et accomplissements. Le Yukon a présidé deux années de suite la Conférence ministérielle provinciale et territoriale sur la francophonie canadienne, garantissant de façon continue l'appui fédéral à la francophonie yukonnaise.

La richesse culturelle de notre territoire est énorme, et notre gouvernement souhaite renforcer le sentiment

d'appartenance à la communauté que ressentent nos citoyens, qu'ils soient autochtones, francophones, philippins, LGBTQ2S+ ou autres. C'est ainsi que notre territoire peut être plus inclusif, compréhensif et accessible, et favoriser l'innovation et la créativité. Je suis impatient de voir ce que les prochaines années nous réservent.

As a member of the government, I appreciated the throne speech — which of course is not a surprise — but one of the things that I was not anticipating was the amazing diversity of all Yukoners who filled this Legislature to overflowing — Yukoners who ranged in age, job, background, interests, orientations, and political stripes. It is great to see in the territory and it was great to see in this House. I would like to acknowledge that we were so full that the mayor of the City of Whitehorse was not able to attend and he sent his regrets.

In the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner discussed the upcoming *Liquor Act* — I will wait to discuss that further here in the Legislature. I was interested to hear a motion from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin today about alcohol. I am really looking forward to that debate here in the Legislature. One of the things that I will note is that we sought to meet with both the private sector and those who are involved as producers and licensees and blended that with a conversation with those who provide supports for people who deal with addictions and some of the harms related to alcohol. We had a great conversation with everyone at the table, and it was out of that conversation that we took the decision to build social responsibility throughout the act. I look forward to that conversation.

After the throne speech, in the lobby, I spoke with some of the midwives who had come to attend the throne speech. Let me say that we remain committed to midwifery — regulated and funded midwifery. It is a commitment in our platform, in our mandate letters, and to all Yukoners. I would like to also say thank you very much to the great work by the midwifery advisory committee.

This past spring, we amended the *Employment Standards Act* to support Yukoners in taking advantage of federal employment insurance benefits, such as maternity, parental, and compassionate care leave — confident that their jobs are protected. We will now start the work to look at inclusion of other leave protection provisions in Yukon's legislation and, in particular, for domestic violence leave.

Another thing mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, and as requested, the Government of Yukon is now evaluating the possibility of introducing legislation that would enable the northern employee benefits services multi-employer pension plan to be offered for territorial public sector organizations — other than the Yukon government — such as Yukon College, Yukon Hospital Corporation, municipalities, First Nation governments as well as non-profit employers. The northern employee benefits service plan is already in place in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. As we consider the possibility of this plan here in the Yukon, due diligence is important to ensure that it is a viable option in the interests of Yukon employees and employers.



Mr. Speaker, we will be coming up on one year since cannabis was legalized here in the territory. Thanks to Yukoners and to the active private sector, and a big thanks to the Cannabis Yukon staff. As planned, we are closing the government retail store, and it's going to be happening on October 17. We will be keeping online sales for accessibility to our communities. I have spoken in this Legislature before about the success of displacing the black market. To date, lots of work to go on that, but it has been going well. I've also been talking about our other priority of maintaining focus on Yukoners' health and safety. I think we've been very successful, and I think that's due in large part to the retailers that we've had — both the Yukon government and now the private retailers. I just want to give a shout-out to them.

I have noted previously that we have had the highest per capita sales of all jurisdictions across the country. That is no longer correct. It is now Prince Edward Island. I would like to congratulate them. The Yukon is now in second place across the country. This really has nothing to do with the amount of cannabis that is being consumed in the territory. It has everything to do with how much we've been able to displace the illicit market. I would like to continue to encourage Yukoners to move away from the black market and move toward one of our private retailers. Congratulations to our third private retailer, which opened up recently — Fire and Flower here in Whitehorse — alongside Canna Space and the Dawson City cannabis store.

Let me turn for a moment to talk about the issue of housing and just to add some more information around housing and land development based on comments from the throne speech. We're working hard to increase the number of lots available to Yukoners by continuing our land development, both in Whistle Bend and across all communities. On July 30, 2019, we released 44 single-family lots, several multi-family lots, 10 duplex lots, and 13 townhouse lots. I can let this House know that we received 278 applications for all but two of those lots, so it was very well-received.

By the way, some of these lots that were supplied to the public were much smaller, meaning the design was to have lot density. The planning was done by the City of Whitehorse and we worked to develop the lots in conjunction with the private sector. Because these were smaller lots, it also meant that they had a far lower price. For example, the townhouse lots averaged \$58,000 and that's a very important thing if you're on the housing spectrum and you're looking for a way to enter into the housing market in home ownership. It is important that we provide some access for lots that are more accessible for first-time homebuyers.

This year, we are releasing more than 200 lots in Whistle Bend, with more work underway in Yukon communities for lot releases this year and next. I note that we have been investing nearly \$20 million per year for the past two years, and this year, we will continue with that. What I will say is that I look forward to more to come in the supplementary budget, but the way that compares is that from 2013 to 2017, there was an average of about \$6 million per year toward lot development, meaning we

have tripled our investment in lot development over the last couple of years and we intend to keep up with this investment.

I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek North for her motion today for support of the private sector in lot development. I agree with that direction. I think I have said that here in this Legislature. I will check back to make sure. Generally speaking, the government as the lot developer doesn't mean that we're physically doing the work. I mean, typically it's contracted out. So the lion's share of that investment that I named earlier is going to the private sector, but we do want to see private sector taking on development from start to finish. I look forward to that motion coming forward.

I would also like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for her comments of encouragement to support the private sector initiatives in creating rental units.

Let me turn now to the climate crisis and speak about why it is so important to integrate how we work on the economy — and all facets of our budget — with a climate mitigation and adaptation lens. Let me begin that by talking about trees.

This past weekend, we had a lot of snow out in Southern Lakes. I know there was a lot of snow generally across the territory — in the Southern Lakes, if I can compare it, was even more intense than here in Whitehorse. I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek North's comments and echo her thanks to ATCO, Yukon Energy, and Highways and Public Works for working hard to try to keep us safe. It was heavy, wet snow, and a lot of trees came down across a lot of power lines. Once power went out at Marsh Lake, I was helping neighbours to take off trees from their power lines. We had a dozen trees come down in my yard alone. It was really quite something. I have never seen it like that before. While I recognize clearly that it is weather, it still feels like a new type of extreme in our climate.

Let me compare that to earlier this year, when we had low water volumes across the territory. That was really because of a low snow year last winter. It affected our trees as well, and it did it in a completely different way. We had very dry conditions across the territory, and it ended up in a very heavy fire year. This summer, the Yukon was faced with one of its most complex and challenging fire seasons in the past 15 years. More than 115 wildfires burned over 275,000 hectares of forest, much of that area in critical action zones requiring full suppression efforts.

Climate change is exacerbating by creating more extremes, and we see it affecting us in very different ways but very tangible and real ways. How do we work to convert these environmental liabilities into opportunities? I am going to speak a little bit about that, but let me back up for a second, because I want to just add some personal perspective on this issue of climate change and why I think we are in a crisis today.

Personally, I have spent more than 30 years researching and educating about climate change and, in particular, the realities of climate change that we face here in the north. I have taught at Yukon College, at the University of the West Indies, and the University of New Brunswick. I have managed research offices across all three territories. I once had the privilege to act

as a reviewer for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's fourth assessment report, which is the big science report that talks about the effects of climate change. I was asked to review, in particular, the research work that is done across the north. Even though I am now an elected official, I still end up being invited to speak on climate change at Yukon College and schools, so it is an issue that I try to stay very much up on.

Why a crisis? Well, the issue of climate change, as we identified it two decades ago — it was clear for us at the time that it was man-made, but we expressed that the need was to shift the energy economy away from fossil fuels. That is a huge ask — to ask not just the Yukon and not just Canada, but the entire world. It is a very complicated question, and so there was some concern about whether or not climate change was happening as fast as it was. For the next cycle of that Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, we looked to try to see how fast climate change was happening. Certainly by 15 years ago, we knew that it was happening quite rapidly and we shared that science back with our citizens and political leaders, and still, we didn't quite get action on climate change. The challenge now is that, because we have waited so long to really get at it, if we don't act soon, the harms of climate change will come, regardless. We are already facing many of the challenges of climate change. The issue is not the challenge of acting; the issue is the challenge of not acting.

I am going to add just two anecdotal stories about my work around climate change over the years. One has to do with youth because I have been really impressed by Canadian youth and — and I think I acknowledged earlier maybe in the tribute today Greta Thunberg and her efforts to create a climate strike, and that has caught on across the world, including here in the Yukon. I really appreciate this energy that young people are bringing to this issue of climate change. It doesn't mean that we don't have challenges in finding those solutions, but it is, for me, an indication that we are willing to have those hard conversations about how to change.

One of the things that happened back at that meeting that I spoke about earlier, about Premier Fentie at the United Nations framework convention on climate change, which was held in Montreal in 2006 — I was asked to come and speak to a Canadian youth conference just ahead of the UN conference to help get youth ready for engaging during the convention. I remember giving some discussion about the impacts of climate change across Canada — in particular, how they were affecting the north. There were several youth from the Yukon who were attending that conference. I vividly remember sitting in on one of their sessions, where they were discussing actions and how to get there. One young person stood up and said — I won't be able to quote it exactly, but I'll paraphrase — oh my gosh, we've got to do something; we've been talking about this for half an hour already.

The thing that was both kind of poignant — in a good and bad way — was that a half-hour of discussion compared to, at that point, the 15 or nearly 20 years I had been working on that issue just held in stark relief that we weren't making progress on this. We haven't made significant progress in the past 15 years. But it also said to me that, when youth get involved,

they're going to bring an energy and an intention to really start to move things forward.

The second anecdote that I will share is with respect to another time when I was asked to come and give a couple of talks. I was invited to speak at a conference in Anchorage on how we will adapt to climate change across the north. In fact, I was presenting on Whitehorse and adaptation work that is happening — or planning work that had happened here for the community of Whitehorse, but at the same time, I was asked to give a bit of a keynote address or lecture at the University of Alaska's Anchorage campus on climate change.

I was getting ready to go to the university and head down there and give that talk, and I picked up one of the local papers, and there the headline said that all climate change scientists are snake oil salesmen. That quote came from Sarah Palin, who had previously been a vice presidential candidate in a US election.

So I switched my talk from "climate change science" to "snake oil science" and gave this talk at the University of Alaska in Anchorage and really tried to talk about this challenge of trying to be evidence-based in our thinking while, at the same time, acknowledging that the public wasn't there. The conclusion I have ultimately come to is that, when we don't acknowledge the evidence of science or traditional knowledge, then I think we undermine our democracy or our democratic systems, because what happens is the public listens to people talking and they get confused about whether there really is an issue or not, whether climate change, as an issue, is real, whether it is man-made, and whether we need to do something about it.

Let me say very clearly here in this Legislature today that it is a very difficult issue. It is a challenge for all of us that we face, because we are asking to shift from fossil fuels to a low-carbon — in fact, to a no-carbon — economy. That is not done simply. It takes a great deal of effort because our economy is so integrated with fossil fuels, but there are ways in which we can move much more aggressively toward dealing with it. We have to, because we have to start turning the curve on our emissions. I think, as citizens of the globe, we all share that responsibility, or else we will face a tragedy of the commons, and as citizens of Canada, I think we share that responsibility, and equally, as citizens of the Yukon, we share that challenge.

I really just want to say again, thank you so much to the youth — to stand up and hold us to account to make that transition.

We had two motions tabled today, so maybe we will end up back in that debate. I look forward to hearing all parties on that debate. I haven't heard from the Official Opposition, so I look forward to hearing that.

So how are we working to turn these environmental liabilities into opportunities? I'm going to talk about several ways that's happening with all of them. I will discuss how we're working in partnership with both municipalities and First Nations.

The first has to do with infrastructure. We've invested more on infrastructure these last two years than we did in the previous four. We have infrastructure projects happening across the Yukon, from arenas to aquifers, from asphalt

overlays, from bailers to batteries, from compost to compactors, and we're investing in a lot of infrastructure.

We've moved now from our focus on the clean water and waste-water fund and we're moving more above ground from below ground. One of the things that I'm really excited about is the investment in retrofits to municipal and First Nation buildings. The reason is that these projects typically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the cost of heating the buildings, so they're a win-win for our communities. We have projects in Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Whitehorse — with the city hall, the new services building — and we're scoping for Teslin Tlingit Council right now.

As indicated from the Commissioner's Speech from the Throne, next year we will create an energy retrofit loan program which will allow us to get an increase in the energy efficiency and fuel switching for private residences and commercial buildings. The great news there is that we can provide the capital to allow that change to take place. Our homeowners can pay it back over time based on the savings that they get from reducing their fuel bills, and at the same time, we'll switch off of fossil fuels. It's a win-win.

I'll talk for a moment about electric buses. I think in the throne speech we talked about more electric buses. I think, to be fair, we don't have electric buses yet, so it should be supporting electric buses. We have about \$10 million left in the public transit infrastructure fund. After we announced this past summer the purchase of some replacement diesel buses and the city hall transit hub, the city and Community Services spoke at that time about the need for research into electric buses and how they would fit into the city's existing transit system. For the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I recall that even being in the news. We now have a feasibility study for electric buses underway which I believe will support the city in planning. It's exploring a range of issues from batteries, charging technologies, simulations and utility supply requirements, power requirements, maintenance, logistics, training, and of course lifecycle costs.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we're working on a territory-wide waste management system and how to improve recycling. I was really happy that we landed with a ban on single-use bags. Let me be very clear: a ban on single-use bags. We might start with plastic, but we will be getting to paper as well and I look forward to that conversation as we get to those regulations.

Lastly, let me talk about wildfire. I would like to acknowledge the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for his help. He gave some great shout-outs to some of the wildland fire crews and the folks who were involved, but I would like to thank him and his neighbours for the work that they did to help protect Ethel Lake. I started talking about the fire year and the type of season we had, but when we got pyroclastic clouds happening in September, that was quite something. What we need to do is find a way to reduce that risk. We are working as a department right now to review —

**Speaker:** 30 seconds.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker — to review all of those projects and we're going to come up with the resiliency plan for each community. What we can do is

reduce that fuel load, reduce the risk, turn around and take that wood and make biomass out of it, and then turn around and heat buildings across the territory. That's the way we take an environmental liability and turn it into an opportunity.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the hallowed Chamber which is on the cusp of celebrating 40 years of responsible government. Admittedly, the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday is, for me, a long time ago.

We're here to respond to the throne speech. Throne speeches have been called by parliamentary governments in the Commonwealth since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They represent a new beginning. They formally explain why we as politicians are coming together again in October 2019. They touch on where this government has been and where we are going. This afternoon, I will explore that a little bit.

I represent a wonderful compact little riding in Whitehorse. It is in many ways the whole territory concentrated into a tight little bundle. Whitehorse West has a rich political history and has been represented by many distinguished MLAs: Ken McKinnon, who sadly passed away earlier this year; Flo Whyard, Tony Penikett, Dave Sloan, Dennis Schneider, and Elaine Taylor. I've known every one of them. I've bantered with all of them and I've even debated a few. Theirs is a formidable legacy of representation and public service to citizens of Whitehorse West. I recognize and honour that legacy and I assure you that I take it very seriously.

I've been ambling at streets since being elected, including this summer talking to residents and listening to their stories, learning about their lives. They are a thoughtful, talented bunch. Some are succeeding on an international level. Constituents like 18-year-old Dylan Cozens who, through hard work honing his on-ice skills here in Whitehorse, Tsawwassen, and Abbotsford, BC, and eventually with the Western Hockey League's Lethbridge Hurricanes, became a top draft pick of the National Hockey League's Buffalo Sabres in June. Cozens was the first Yukoner selected as an NHL first-round draft choice.

Others — Nicky Perry and Zoë Armstrong — are excelling locally showing and selling paintings at Arts Underground.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it has been an enriching summer. I've spoken to educators, police officers, architects, pilots, bikers, mothers, fathers, retirees, counsellors, doctors, speech-language pathologists, conservation officers, mental health workers, designers, bankers, environmentalists, landlords, and on and on. I've heard their hopes and dreams and their concerns and complaints. I've heard their perspectives about the warming climate. I've heard their support for the Peel watershed land use plan. I've heard their concerns about traffic, poor driving practices, and speeding on our city streets. I've learned it is difficult to take a wheelchair downtown from Logan and why. I've heard about the urgent need for lots in the city and in the territory and for housing and for affordable rents.

I've heard about energy development and the need to shift to alternative energies like solar, geothermal, and biomass. I've heard about our food supply and the importance of nutrition for children. I've heard people ask for a ban on plastic bags. I've heard about the need to put tipping fees on rural landfills and

how to do a better job recycling the stuff we all buy. I've heard all this and more besides. These conversations have been rich and respectful and they extend beyond Whitehorse West. I've been speaking with residents in Riverdale and in Hillcrest, talking to residents about improvements we're making to the Alaska Highway. I've been in Porter Creek, where I learned much from a weather expert and, a few doors later, how climate change is simply not happening.

That in turn led to a great conversation about melting permafrost, bridges that now cross dry riverbeds — which the Premier was speaking about earlier — and the fire threat in the Southern Lakes and what we can do to mitigate it, which my colleagues have been speaking about all afternoon. This summer, I have been to Ross River, Carmacks, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Tagish, and Dawson. I've met with town councils, mayors, chiefs, local area councils, and residents. I have been to Ottawa representing the interests of the territory on Parliament Hill. I've spoken to my counterparts in the NWT, BC, and Alaska. I have learned a lot from many, many people. I've done my best to feed relevant information back to my incredible colleagues, who I respect immensely. I seem to learn something new from them every week.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I love those who I work with, and I love and respect the people who I represent in Whitehorse West — those who voted for me and those who didn't. This job demands balance and good judgment and that can't be done without a solid understanding brought about from a range of perspectives from all Yukoners. In the end, they are all my constituents and they all have a right to a voice, so I will provide it here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. After a busy summer of conversations, here is my take on what, together, we have achieved in this territory over the last several years and where we are going.

Together, Mr. Speaker, we are working hard to tackle the challenges before us, and none are more important than the climate crisis. As important as planning is, we on these benches know we can't wait, so many preliminary actions underlying the upcoming planning document are already in process. A big early step will be to expand the number of fast electrical charging stations. We have already started putting these in place. We are going to expand and continue that effort. I am happy to say that our government is looking at how to fully electrify the Alaska Highway. It is currently very difficult to drive an electric car from the south all the way to the Yukon, with some large blackout areas where no charging stations exist in both BC and the Yukon. I have discussed this with my colleagues from across the country. I have reached out to my counterpart in BC, the Minister of Transportation in BC, to discuss this gap, and I am confident that we will make this happen and we will get charging stations in these blackout zones. I know this, Mr. Speaker, because it has to happen. Electric cars are not hypothetical; they are happening right now, and we are going to have to adapt to make sure they can get to the territory.

Highways and Public Works is putting charging stations in all our new buildings. We are retrofitting public buildings to increase their energy efficiency. Since 2017, we have done

detailed assessments on 26 buildings, and another 10 are planned in 2019. Over the next four years, we will be partnering with the federal government through the small communities fund to finance building retrofits, heating equipment upgrades, renewable energy technology, and energy conservation measures. We are also examining the way we design and build buildings. We are starting to look at the materials we build with and assessing their impact on the environment and climate. We are strengthening building standards so that our new buildings are more efficient to heat and to operate. We will install alternative heating systems. As my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne and Southern Lakes, has noted, biomass will lessen our dependence on fossil fuels.

This is an important point to dive into for a moment. Why is biomass becoming a viable heating system? Well, it's because the carbon-pricing model installed by the federal government is raising the price of diesel fuel and, by so doing, is making alternative energy solutions such as biomass more competitive. The carbon-pricing model is making other alternative energy sources more competitive. The corollary for that is that no-carbon pricing — suddenly these alternative energy systems are no longer as viable or as attractive for our consumers, businesses, or this government to support. When you put a price on pollution, people quickly look for cleaner, greener options. Transition happens simply and efficiently.

Starting this year, we are beginning to buy electric vehicles for the Yukon government fleet. We have started speaking to local vendors about their capacity to obtain and service these vehicles. That capacity is thin at the moment but will grow as the government expands its fleet and the availability of charging stations. These moves and more besides are not a panacea. They will not, in and of themselves, solve the huge issues facing our territory, our nation, and the planet, but they are steps toward the goal that are immediate and frankly should have begun years and years ago.

On a side note, the Department of Highways and Public Works has been adding a few fat tire bikes to its fleet, and some employees are using them instead of cars to commute between their offices and the main administration building. Again, this is insignificant in its direct effect, but a pedal in the right direction. It is, to me, a huge positive shift in corporate mindset and leadership.

I was recently with my government colleagues in beautiful Mayo to witness the signing of the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. I can report to anyone who surprisingly chose to give this celebration a pass that they missed something remarkable. It was a momentous day for the territory. It was a momentous day for its First Nations. It was a momentous day for its communities. It was a momentous day for its citizens throughout the territory. It marked a culmination of years of court battles and community activism. It marked an uphill battle against victory and an uphill battle against an intransigent government that willfully ran roughshod over the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — a government incapable of balancing the economy and the environment, a government that publicly disparaged environmental groups and the legitimate interests of First Nations.

I don't mind telling you that watching all affected First Nation leaders join Yukon's Premier in a poignant ceremony that saw them mix water from all the rivers of the region into a single beautiful decanter brought a tear to my eye.

I have advocated for this day as a journalist. I had fought for it as an employee of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, alongside Mike Dehn, Gill Cracknell, Jody Overduin, and others — Chief Simon Mervyn, for example.

The Peel cause pulled me into the Liberal Party and led me to run for office, and there in Mayo, I reflected on this thread — its importance to me and so many others — some of whom are no longer alive to see it. People like Dehn and Juri Peepre. Collectively we persevered and, in the end, preserved — in the midst of a global climate crisis — a wild watershed roughly the size of Nova Scotia, a watershed of critical importance to four Yukon First Nations, a watershed of critical importance to the territory and the NWT, a watershed that will, in the future, be of critical importance to Canada.

In Mayo, we celebrated that historic victory, and I share the belief of all leaders who took the time to attend the celebration there — that it will be a legacy for future generations. That event was joyous.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to shift gears for a second. In my first mandate letter, I was charged with improving the safety and economic viability of airports. Well, this government passed the *Public Airports Act* and now we have moved to the next stage with the establishment of the aviation advisory committee. We significantly increased capital investment in our airports from \$30 million from a five-year average of about \$5 million. Today, total spending on airports is an incredible \$43 million a year.

We replaced the old skyway that links the terminal with jets. We are modernizing the Whitehorse airport's baggage-handling equipment, a basement job that was inexplicably cut from the building's renovations undertaken years ago — important work, but not visible, I suppose. Soon we will have to rebuild the runway of the Whitehorse International Airport, a huge multi-year project. Luckily, Highways staff are getting good at paving runways, Mr. Speaker.

I was in Dawson City recently for the Gold Show. That was on the May Victoria Day weekend. It was great speaking with industry, the community, and civil servants who took part in the event, giving up precious time with their families over that long weekend.

I was also in Dawson City a couple of weeks ago to open its new maintenance facility and the paved runway. Earlier this year, we paved the way to the future of tourism, mining, commerce, and travel to the Klondike valley. I have to say, after we took office, we were surprised to discover how little actual work or preliminary planning had been done on this long-discussed project. Still, we made a promise and we deliver on our promises. So we began the hard work required to pave Dawson's runway. We learned that improved, year-long maintenance was required on the airstrip. New runway-clearing equipment was necessary and an all-weather garage was needed to store that gear, so we started phase 1.

Phase 2 was paving the runway. It was great to hear how the runway has eased the jangled nerves of maintenance staff who were responsible for keeping that gravel strip ready to receive jets. It was also good to hear from Joe Sparling about how Air North expects the maintenance costs of his aircraft to be reduced because the gravel took its toll on the aircraft.

As well, the aircraft now flying to the Klondike are lighter and more fuel efficient. Getting to this point was not easy. The Dawson paving project took years of planning. Highways and Public Works staff worked with pilots and airlines to minimize disruption and ensure tourist packages were not compromised.

The paving was executed, Mr. Speaker, in a single week. Working alongside dedicated Highways and Public Works staff, Associated Engineering, TSL Contractors, and Skookum Asphalt executed the whole project beautifully. I have heard from the industry that this paving would not have been possible in that fashion without our new capital plan and the fact that we are now tendering contracts earlier in the year. This government is beginning to see results from new thoughtfully planned approaches to capital spending and procurement processes such as the successful completion of complicated high-stakes construction jobs in rural Yukon — jobs like the long-promised, and now delivered, Dawson City runway paving project.

Over two years, we are investing about \$3 million for improving the Mayo airport, which has seen increased traffic from the Eagle Gold mine and exploration in the district. This work will help our application for Transport Canada to certify the aerodrome as an airport. Once certified, it will allow airlines, including Alkan and Air North, to begin scheduled flights to and from Mayo. With all the increased mining activity in the region driving our incredible economy, we feel it is vital to make these improvements.

There has been a spike in activity in Mayo over the past two years. Aircraft movements increased 14 percent between 2017 and 2019.

With the support of the federal government, there is money to plan and build new roads to resource sites in the Yukon. We are doing this in close partnership with First Nations and communities. These are not projects that we undertake lightly. We are aware of the need to balance the environment with development. My colleagues and I have met with the Yukon Conservation Society and experts from across the country — indeed, across the continent — with experience mitigating the ecological effects of road development and minimizing the impact roads have on animals. The department is also starting to develop ways to tackle invasive species along its roadways, minimizing the spread of these plants. This work is in its infancy, but I expect it to grow in sophistication and effectiveness as our knowledge grows and our practices become more established.

We are also building more sophisticated technology into our roads to allow us to remotely monitor far-flung stretches of our highway system. This gives us more information to better inform our budgeting processes and should reduce future costs.

As well, as you have probably learned, we are spending roughly \$5 million a year over the next five years to clear brush,

improve line painting, install barriers, and install reflective measures along our roads. This roadside safety program is already making our roads safer and it brings consistency to managing the highway system that hasn't been seen in the Yukon in the past.

The long and winding road from Carmacks to Dawson is one of the most heavily used highways in the Yukon. It unites family and friends, carries Yukoners to dentists and to doctors. It brings goods and metals to market and to mines, introducing tourists to some of the territory's history and greatest treasures. It is roughly 400 kilometres of narrow, rough-hewn, cracked, undulated, and pitted chipseal that hasn't seen much foundation improvement through the last 20 years or so.

We have heard from Yukoners how dangerous the road can be, and I have personally been told by businesses and industry how the weight restrictions have driven up costs and impeded supply in the Klondike region and in Mayo. Our government is taking action. Working closely with our federal colleagues, we have secured the largest single capital project funding in the territory's history. Starting next year, we will begin a \$157-million upgrade to roughly one-quarter of the north Klondike Highway.

We will focus on seven sections of road from just before Pelly Crossing to just before Dawson City. We will improve the roadbed; we will improve culverts; we will replace bridges. The result will be a road that is safer, a road that connects mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, to grandparents, aunts and uncles; a road that can handle heavy equipment going to our gold properties in Mayo and Dawson; a road that can handle heavier grocery deliveries to our northern communities with shorter weight restriction periods; a long and winding road worthy of the many Yukoners who travel it every day.

I can also say and report that it was wonderful talking with the Ross River Dena Council about the road that links their community to Faro. The Ross River Dena Council and its development corporation are deeply involved in the hundreds of millions of dollars of reclamation and stabilization work kicking into gear at the former lead zinc mine in Faro.

They are providing fuel to the venture, and its trucks and citizens will be driving between Ross River and Faro more than ever before, so it is important that we begin improving the road between the two communities. We have done engineering work, as I have reported, for this stretch of highway, and we intend to begin improvements next year.

I will now touch briefly on the north Alaska Highway, a stretch of road often called Shakwak. We have worked very hard to lobby the United States for restoration of the funding for that stretch of road that serves as the sole land access to the state. Alaska and the US government want that road built to an industrial standard, and frankly, the Yukon doesn't need it at that standard. So the Premier, the Member for Porter Creek South, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, and I have been lobbying our colleagues in the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region about the importance of this issue. We heard about that earlier this afternoon. I have been doing media interviews in Alaska; we have spoken with the Alaskan transportation officials and the state governor. The team at Highways and

Public Works has been working together with their colleagues in Alaska on applications under various US federal funding programs.

It has been an extraordinary effort, and it is bearing fruit. For the first time in a decade, Shakwak has a line item in a US budget bill. This is a good step forward, but it remains to be seen if funding will be allocated to that item. That said, we remain cautiously optimistic that our approach to this file will be successful and will lead to US-funded roadwork on this stretch of the Alaska Highway that will benefit the territory, Alaska, and the continent.

Next year, we will continue our effort to work on the Yukon Resource Gateway project. This is not one project. It is a spectrum of work to support resource development projects throughout the Yukon. We are doing this work in close partnership with First Nations, communities, and industry. In fact, industry has key investment in projects that will ultimately assist their developments. Over the past summer, my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and I met with officials in Ottawa to negotiate flexibility on projects with signed project agreements with First Nations. We have received written assurance of this new flexibility on Gateway funding, and that is going to assist us in proceeding with work around the Yukon. We have completed the first project agreement with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation for the Carmacks bypass, so next year, we will start construction on that work, which will cost more than \$20 million. Preliminary planning and design work are already underway, and the work, combined with other roadwork and earthwork projects around the territory, promises a stellar year for communities, First Nations, and industry next year.

When it comes to bridges, we are nearing completion of the Nares bridge in Carcross and the Fox Creek bridge north of town. They should be done in the next few weeks. This spring we completed a historic charter with the Teslin Tlingit Council on the Nisutlin Bay bridge.

Throughout this agreement, our two governments are working together to build a safer and more reliable structure that can accommodate increased traffic and will improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. This year, we will spend more than \$750,000 on design work.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Cathers:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask all members to join me in welcoming to the House a long-time Member of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Elaine Taylor — a long-time colleague of mine, of course, in the previous Legislative Assembly.

Please welcome her here today.

*Applause*

## Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** While it is contemporaneous, I would just remind all members: That's not a point of order. It is just that members would alert me in writing that they wish to introduce a visitor to the Assembly. I understand that, in these

circumstances, time might have been of the essence. I understand why it may have been done in this instance, but generally speaking, members know that they should be providing a written notice to the Speaker. I will certainly endeavour to accommodate them expeditiously.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am relieved. For a second, I thought I had done something horrendously wrong.

As I was saying, this year, we will spend almost \$1 million — more than \$750,000 — on design work on the Nisutlin Bay bridge, an extremely important project to the community of Teslin and to this government.

Mr. Speaker, I have often said that we inherited a 21<sup>st</sup> century institution working with 19<sup>th</sup> century tools. So much of the government's information is stored in filing cabinets, and it is a constant frustration for the civil service — and indeed for our offices as well — to compile good information with which to make decisions. Mr. Speaker, that is changing.

A modern, responsible government must disclose more information, not less. We have increased the budget for information and technology. We continue to move programs online. The Public Service Commission's HR system is getting a needed upgrade this year at a cost \$225,000 so we can better track employee data. We updated the government's public website, yukon.ca, and refinements continue to be made. We are launching an online tender management system. You can now renew your vehicle registration online. Last year, there were more than 7,000 online registrations. The Yukon 511 road condition portal has seen a significant upgrade, and there will be improvements to the posting of Yukon legislation online. The Yukon lobbyist registry will be going online, as will student financial aid information. We are also pulling together a digital service to help citizens find a family doctor in the territory.

This summer, we launched the government's open data portal. It allows anyone, anywhere, to freely access and share government information. There are now more than 1,100 data sets available, and we are consolidating information currently scattered across many public websites so that even more stuff can be accessed through this valuable online portal. This initiative supports research and innovation by providing easy access to scientific and statistical data.

So there is much work in progress to innovate and make it easier for citizens to access government information and services. We are also well into executing the Dempster fibre line, which will lessen the threat of Internet disruptions in the Yukon and the NWT.

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

*Debate on motion re Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

**The following sessional papers were tabled October 7, 2019:**

34-3-6

*Yukon Legislative Assembly Respectful Conduct — Members' Services Board* (June 12, 2019) (Speaker Clarke)

34-3-7

*Yukon Liquor Corporation Annual report — April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019* (Streicker)

34-3-8

*Cannabis Yukon Annual report — Yukon Liquor Corporation — April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019* (Streicker)

**The following documents were filed October 7, 2019:**

34-3-1

Whistle Bend School Planning Committee, letter re (dated September 4, 2019) from Scott Kent, Member for Copperbelt South, to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Education, and Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Highways and Public Works (Kent)

34-3-2

Whistle Bend School Planning Committee, letter re (dated September 25, 2019) from Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Education, to Scott Kent, Member for Copperbelt South (Kent)

**Written notice was given of the following motions October 7, 2019:**

Motion No. 23

Re: neonicotinoids ban (White)

Motion No. 24

Re: Yukon Workers' Memorial (White)