



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Tuesday, October 8, 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

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

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

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New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 8, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, we have a number of individuals who are visiting us today as we celebrate the activities over the weekend for BreakOut West. I would ask Members of the Legislative Assembly to help me in welcoming some distinguished artists and organizers, and then we can maybe give them a hand when we are done — there are a number of people here.

I would like to welcome Hank Karr and Hank Karr Jr., his son. I think that you will see that he has something in his hand, which we will talk about in a little bit. Also there are: Katie Newman; my friend and well-known artist Ray Park; Frank Schwertner is here as well to support organizers; also Elyssia Sasaki; Patricia Cunning; Suki Wellman; Cindy Billingham; and Debbie Peters. Thank you all for coming here today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could all please welcome some folks who are here for Fire Prevention Week. We have with us: James Paterson, the Yukon fire marshal; Mike Sparks, operation manager; Peter Wright, regional protection manager in Watson Lake; Caleb Tomlinson, fire behaviour specialist and incident commander on the Bear Creek fire; Keith Fickling, regional protection manager for Southern Lakes and incident commander on the Stewart Crossing fire; Doug Cote, emergency response officer; Brian Douglas, regional protection officer; Chris Boland, air attack officer; Linda Brandvold, senior regional finance administrator; Jani Djokic, chair of Yukon First Nation wildfire; we also have Emily Dorosz; Vern Marshall; Mark Hill; John Wright, Devin Bailey; Colin Erhardt, who heads up our FireSmart program; and Deputy Minister Matt King.

Noting that we are going to be tabling the *Corrections Act* today, we have with us in the gallery Mr. Al Lucier, Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Justice and Public Safety. We have Andrea Monteiro, the director of Corrections, and we also have with us Mr. Howard Sapers, recently the independent advisor of corrections reform in Ontario and previously the corrections investigator of Canada — welcome.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to recognize Caleb today too on behalf of the constituents of Klune and especially those residents of Haines Junction. Good job and thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors? Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of BreakOut West Music Festival and Western Canadian Music Awards

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the BreakOut West Canadian Music Festival and Conference as well as the Western Canadian Music Awards. BreakOut West celebrates the best of Canadian musical talent and the industry that supports it, offering education for artists through daytime conference sessions and a showcase opportunity for selected musicians to perform for industry professionals and local music fans. BreakOut West and the Western Canadian Music Awards took place in Whitehorse from October 2 to 6.

Our government is proud to have supported BreakOut West. Through the Department of Economic Development, we contributed \$510,000 over two fiscal years toward hosting the event. Government of Yukon chose to support this event as part of our efforts to build the industry and support economic diversification here in Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, BreakOut West was attended by more than 100 delegates and more than 50 musicians. They rocked downtown for three consecutive nights at venues throughout Whitehorse, delivering over 120 performances, in addition to providing ample networking opportunities for Yukon musicians, including the Magnum Opus Management networking reception, hosted by Debbie Peters. I would also like to congratulate Debbie on her 20th anniversary of Magnum Opus Management.

BreakOut West also proved to be a welcome economic boon for our business community's hotels, restaurants, tour operators and retail stores, among others.

I would also like to thank the Western Canadian Music Alliance and BreakOut West team for hosting these events in Whitehorse this past weekend. The hard-working Yukon host committee deserves special thanks, including: Colin Asselstine, who is, I think, taking a break after working very hard on this and he did a fantastic job chairing; Angela Drainville, who did a phenomenal job rallying Music Yukon and doing a tremendous amount of work from start to finish on this major event; Elyssia Sasaki, who is here with us today; Rémie Cherepak; Virginie Hamel; Patricia Cunning — and I have to say that the venue at MacBride Museum was phenomenal for the kickoff and was an amazing start to the activities; and Alexis Hougen; Scott Maynard; Patrick Matheson; Claire Ness; Fiona Solon; Suki Wellman, who is here with us today as well; Iris Merritt from our Department of Economic Development; and, as well, Cindy Billingham, who is here with us today.

I also wish to extend a big thank you to Music Yukon's board and staff and to our local music industry for its tremendous support, to Yukon Brewing and Air North — two of this year's generous sponsors — and to the many enthusiastic volunteers without whom BreakOut West would not have been possible.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize two Yukoners who received prestigious Western Canadian Music Awards. The unrivalled and iconic Hank Karr received the 2019 Heritage Award. Hank is a familiar face in Yukon's music industry and has a long history in the north. His contributions were recognized, and the Canucks, his backup band, presented the award while an impressive standing ovation took place.

Another deserving Yukoner, Duncan Sinclair, received the 2019 Kevin Walters Industry Builder Award. To anyone in the music industry in the Yukon, this came as no surprise. Duncan has long been a tireless advocate for arts and culture, through Jazz Yukon and just about every other avenue possible. Duncan has made immeasurable contributions to the music community in Yukon. Again, the audience at the industry awards jumped to their feet to applaud, and I know that Minister Dendys said that it was very emotional — both awards.

Mr. Speaker, BreakOut West and the Western Canadian Music Awards were an absolute success and Yukoners should be proud of our local industry.

As Hank Karr sings in *Where Do You Go After Yukon*, the 2020 events will take place in Winnipeg, and we look forward to supporting the Yukon musicians who will travel to Manitoba and participate next year.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party and the Yukon Party to also pay tribute to the whirlwind of activity that is BreakOut West. Having a major celebration of Canadian musical talent like BreakOut West touch down in Whitehorse, along with the communities outside of our capital, does not just happen. It is the result of an intense amount of collaborative and cooperative work across many, many parts of the community we call Yukon.

Last week's smorgasbord of great music, opportunities to connect and to promote, workshops, old, new and creative venues, bustling restaurants and hotels, and full airplanes speaks volumes to the power of what I like to refer to — Stuart McLean, the beloved storyteller who used to refer to a fictional independent bookstore — it was called the Vinyl Café, the world's smallest record store, whose motto was "We may not be big, but we're small."

Mr. Speaker, that is our strength — Yukon does it better because we know we must and because we know we can. Yukon's second term serving as host to BreakOut West is testimony to the power and value of connection and of serving people well.

In addition to the amazing recognition of Mr. Hank Karr, I also know that I was not alone in being delighted to hear that, at long last, one of Yukon's quiet but powerful forces in building Yukon's music scene — a voice for the importance of recognizing the arts and culture sector as a vital part of Yukon's

economy — was being recognized with a major music industry award of BreakOut West. The award of the Kevin Walters Industry Builder Award to Duncan Sinclair was perhaps, as he said in a CBC interview, totally unexpected — unexpected to him perhaps, but long overdue in the minds of many throughout Yukon.

In typical Duncan Sinclair fashion, he deflected the personal honour that this award bestows to a reflection of what music and what the music and culture sector as a whole offers to Yukon. He spoke of the joy that music brings to the listener and to the performer — his pleasure at being able to work with others to open doors for those with special talents. Duncan Sinclair has been involved with many aspects of Yukon's cultural scene, but it is perhaps from his involvement with the many faces of jazz in Yukon that most of us know and admire his contribution. Yukon is made stronger when those who are held up for recognition in turn acknowledge that you can't do anything alone and that we are stronger together.

BreakOut West is another singular example of what can happen when Yukon's amazingly diverse and deep arts and culture community works together along with all the many volunteers and increasingly — and importantly — willing partners from various government and business sectors in recognition of the reality that music is no longer part of the fringe of Yukon's cultural economy — it is integral to a successful, diverse community and to our economy.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon firefighters and Fire Prevention Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise to pay tribute to Yukon's wildland and structural firefighters at the end of a complex and challenging fire season.

Climate change is increasing the risk to our communities with seasons like 2019 — longer, hotter, and dryer. This year 117 fires burned over 280,000 hectares of land — a 65-percent increase over the 10-year average and three times the area burned last year. Thirty-five of these fires were preventable human-caused events. We had two evacuations at Ethel Lake and at the Snag Creek campground. We also had evacuation alerts for Keno, Elsa, Haines Junction, and Stewart Crossing.

Thank you to all of the amazing Wildland Fire Management branch crew and staff who worked tirelessly during this long and difficult season. Thank you to our First Nation partners and crews and thank you to the businesses and individuals who provided aircraft, heavy equipment, catering services, and camp facilities. You are all critical to our fire management efforts.

Yesterday marked the start of Fire Prevention Week, so I also want to acknowledge the territory's structural firefighters — a shout-out to our municipal firefighters — both volunteers and career fire chiefs and professionals — for work they do inside and outside of our municipal boundaries. Yukon Fire Marshal James Paterson and his team support another 15 volunteer fire departments and four special operations groups across the territory with over 150 volunteers — 150 and growing, Mr. Speaker.

During Fire Prevention Week, I encourage all of us to keep our homes safe. Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Make sure our chimneys, roofs, and gutters are clear.

To every wildland and structural firefighter, thank you. You demonstrate the best of Yukon spirit. On behalf of all Yukoners, we are grateful for your commitment and professionalism in prevention, preparedness, and response. Listening yesterday to my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, I thought it would be very appropriate, Mr. Speaker, to share his genuine and personal words to close this tribute to our Yukon firefighters — and I quote: “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...” — Pauls — “...from Haines Junction 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.”

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased today to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Fire Prevention Week and give thanks to our municipal volunteer and wildland fire crew personnel for the work that they do throughout the year.

This year, Fire Prevention Week is built around the campaign theme “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape!” to educate families and individuals about ways to quickly and safely escape a home fire. Make a plan and familiarize all family members about how to follow that plan in the event of an emergency. Not only is fire prevention important, but taking the steps to ensure that your whole family knows what to do in case of fire can save lives. Take the time to go over risks and proper use of kitchen appliances, electronics, candles, matches, lighters, and any other household items that could be hazardous if used improperly. Go over what to do if there is a fire in your home and ensure that your children are aware of the consequences of a fire, as well as the importance of a plan in case of a fire. Ensure that they know how to get themselves to safety and have them practise escape routes.

This year was another notable year for wildland fire, as we saw considerable fire activity throughout the Yukon, especially

in the north. It is important to note that many of these fires were human-caused. We all have a responsibility to prevent wildfires through our own actions. This includes properly extinguishing your campfires and being careful with anything that may start a fire. It is important to recognize that even a stray spark from a cigarette can sometimes start a fire.

I would like to commend all those involved in wildland fire suppression, including Wildland Fire Management crews, Yukon First Nation wildfire crews, and volunteer fire departments as well as Yukon businesses involved in fire response. I would like to thank all of the people involved for their work this year. I would also like to recognize and thank the Yukon Fire Marshal’s Office and our municipal and volunteer fire departments across the Yukon for all the work they do to raise awareness and educate during Fire Prevention Week, as well as the work they do throughout the year in protecting our homes and communities.

Thank you to all of you for your work.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to acknowledge annual Fire Prevention Week in Canada and to celebrate and focus on the good work done by those at Yukon Wildland Fire Management and Protective Services. We know that in our ever-changing climate, the risk of forest fire increases. With the effects of climate change, Wildland Fire Management is experiencing longer seasons, as we saw this September. Three weeks ago, Yukoners saw a wildland fire ignite in the Ethel Lake-Crooked Creek area, putting people and property at risk — a wildfire, Mr. Speaker, igniting after what was considered the end of the fire season. The fire grew fast enough to prompt a week-long evacuation alert in the area.

This year’s fire season was described as one of the territory’s most complex and challenging seasons in the last 15 years. Thirty-five of those fires were human-caused, which is disappointing, as those fires are 100-percent preventable. We know that climate change will impact fire behaviours and we know that we must now adapt, act, and be prepared for the unexpected.

As we move into uncharted times, firefighters will need to adapt to changing conditions and officials will need to develop and communicate community wildfire protection plans. As members of this Assembly, we share responsibility for ensuring that all Yukoners are aware of emergency evacuation procedures and plans, and we pledge to work with our colleagues across the way in government and other service providers as we all prepare for fire season 2020.

We want to express our thanks to all of those who willingly risk their lives on our behalf in fighting wildfires, as well as those in support roles — from communications people to Emergency Measures staff on the ground — prepared to assist Yukoners impacted by wildland fires.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Pursuant to section 12(3) of the *Arts Centre Act*, I have for tabling the 2018-19 Yukon Arts Centre annual report. Further, I have for tabling the 2018-19 annual report for the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have for tabling the *2019-20 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update*.

Mr. Cathers: I rise today to table several documents. The first is a letter from the Leader of the Official Opposition to the Premier, dated April 5, 2019, regarding electoral reform. The second is a letter from the Leader of the Official Opposition to the Premier, dated May 3, 2019, regarding electoral reform. The third document is a letter from the Leader of the Official Opposition to the Premier, dated June 16, 2019, regarding electoral reform. The fourth document is a letter from the Leader of the Official Opposition to the Premier, dated July 11, 2019, regarding electoral reform. Finally, the fifth document is a letter from the Leader of the Official Opposition to the Premier, dated July 15, 2019, also regarding electoral reform.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling the procedures for the project advisory committee on the Whistle Bend elementary 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. 6: *Act to Amend the Corrections Act, 2009* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Justice, I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Corrections Act, 2009*, be introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Acting Minister of Justice that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Corrections Act, 2009*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to

Bill No. 200: *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 200 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to establish regulations requiring drivers to equip their vehicles with winter tires or mud and snow tires from October 1 to April 30.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reduce community reliance on diesel energy.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Climate change, energy, and green economy strategy

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our Liberal government is in the process of developing a climate change, energy, and green economy strategy for Yukon. The strategy is being developed in partnership with Yukon First Nations and municipal governments, and it will guide our government's actions over the next 10 years.

We are very pleased that the strategy will be implemented with input from the Yukon youth, as the Premier announced yesterday. We are developing this strategy because we know Yukoners are concerned about the effects of climate change and they want the government to take action. Yukoners also recognize that we cannot take action to address climate change without at the same time considering how our economy will remain strong and resilient and how we will meet the energy needs of our growing territory.

Yukon is currently enjoying a period of population and economic growth and with that comes increased demand for energy. The Yukon Energy Corporation is currently developing a plan to meet Yukon's future energy needs with a mixture of projects. One that has generated a lot of attention is a proposal to build a new 20-megawatt thermal generation facility in the Whitehorse area.

There is a need to continue to provide safe and reliable electricity at peak periods of consumption and in the case of emergency. A new thermal generation facility could meet these needs but Yukoners have expressed concerns about this project. At a time when we need to focus on the future and how to meet our energy needs in the face of climate change emergency, many Yukoners question the value of making capital investments in the burning of fossil fuels.

The Yukon Energy Corporation engaged with Yukoners this summer with their plan and heard a range of feedback. This complemented the technical, environmental, and socio-economic research they conducted on the potential of the thermal facility in Whitehorse.

Today I'm pleased to inform Yukoners that I have received notification from the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors that they have decided against building a new 20-megawatt thermal generation facility. Yukon Energy Corporation will focus instead on options to add or replace capacity to Yukon's existing generation facilities as the diesel facilities reach end-of-life.

In the interim, Yukon Energy will continue to rent diesel generators as necessary to ensure adequate backup power is available in the case of emergency in our territory.

I want to thank the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors for engaging Yukoners and for their leadership on this important issue. We will continue to work with the Yukon Energy Corporation to ensure that Yukoners have access to safe, reliable, and affordable electricity as our territory continues to grow.

We will continue to work with all of our partners to develop a strategy that will allow us to meet Yukon's energy needs in a way that address climate change and supports the growth of a green economy.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond today.

Now that the government has announced the fact that they are going to cancel the 20-megawatt thermal generation facility, we do have a number of questions. Obviously, our territory has grown a lot over the last several years and the population is increasing. The new community of Whistle Bend is massive and there is a large mine that will be connecting to the territorial grid, so power generation is now at a premium. We want to know: What is the government's plan to deal with power generation demands going forward? We need to have enough energy in place in case of an emergency, such as if one of our existing facilities experiences a failure. As we enter the winter season, these issues are going to be at the front of mind, as no one wants to be stuck without power, particularly those who use electric heat in the middle of minus 40 weather.

We also have some questions about the government's plan to rent more diesel generators. In the Liberal's second throne speech, they promised — and I quote: "Our goal is to eliminate diesel as a primary source of energy in Yukon."

So our question would be: How many diesel generators will the Liberals be renting? How much will that cost? How does this align with their commitment to eliminate diesel as a primary source of energy?

We also have some questions about how much has been spent on consultation so far. With respect to consultations, we know that those were flawed from the start. As we have pointed out, previous notifications for the open houses began on May 21, with the first open house taking place on June 1 and the final open house taking place on June 6. That is only a total of 13 business days from the beginning of the consultation to the conclusion of the consultation. We do not believe that such a short and limited consultation can be considered to be meaningful engagement. In fact, we have heard from many Yukoners who were not even aware the open houses were taking place until after they had concluded.

Further, all four of the open houses were held in Whitehorse — Whitehorse only. This is in line with the Liberal Party's Whitehorse-only approach, of course, to government. Any decision on Yukon Energy's future will have short- and long-term impacts on all Yukoners, not just those who live in the city. Major decisions like this affect all Yukoners. In the interest of fairness, all communities deserve to have their voices, concerns, and questions heard as well. That's why we wrote the minister in June, indicating as much. His response can be summed up as "Well, too bad, so sad."

Hopefully in his response today, the minister can elaborate on why he didn't think the residents of Haines Junction, Watson Lake, or Mayo should be given the opportunity to be consulted on our energy future. That said, we would still be interested in seeing the "what we heard" document.

With that, I will wrap up my comments.

Ms. White: When the Yukon Energy Corporation announced that it was contemplating the purchase of a new thermal backup generation plant, a lot of people were rightly frustrated. Many Yukoners believe that the Yukon Energy Corporation's LNG plant built in 2015 was already compromised enough, and it seemed as though Yukon Energy Corporation's renewable energy projects were taking a back seat to non-renewable projects. Our submission to the Yukon Energy Corporation echoed these concerns.

While we recognize that the Yukon will be requiring more energy to meet emergency scenarios — both baseload and peak winter load — we questioned how we as a territory could meet the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets necessary to limit the extreme effects of climate change while also investing in a permanent legacy fossil fuel-generating facility.

The Yukon NDP is supportive of the decision made by the Yukon Energy Corporation. It gives the Yukon the ability to more easily decommission its thermal-generation assets as we transition toward more renewable options. It is our hope that renting generators in the short term will allow Yukon Energy to take the steps necessary to establish renewable alternatives to fossil fuels. While this decision by the Yukon Energy Corporation represents a success and an opportunity, it also represents a challenge — a challenge to us as elected officials to push for more investments in renewable energy and creative ways to reduce our peak winter load, which partially spurred the need for this project.

Mr. Speaker, as opposition members, it's our job to hold the government to account, but that also means recognizing the good decisions. So, on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I would like to commend the board of the Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Energy Corporation itself, and the minister responsible for their leadership on this issue.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I appreciate that approach to exchanges in the Legislative Assembly.

I will maybe start by just touching on the fact that the 20-megawatt facility was part of what was called the "integrated resource plan". The integrated resource plan was actually a plan

that was put in place. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on it and it concluded just before the election in 2016. For the Member for Kluane — the actual consultation to start on that particular project was actually done while the member was in Cabinet and it was done over 16 months. I know one of his colleagues who was previously in charge of that could bring him up to speed on the consultation that they did. Essentially, we went back out with a plan that had already been fully put together, and now we are of course changing that plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors has informed me that they have decided against building a 20-megawatt thermal generation facility. While of course there is a need to continue safe and reliable electricity at peak periods of consumption in emergency situations, the Energy Corporation will instead focus on options to add or replace capacity to Yukon's existing generation facilities. This is good news for Yukoners, as many of them question the value of making capital investments in the burning of fossil fuels and would rather pursue renewable energy options for Yukon.

There remains a need for us to provide safe and reliable electricity at peak periods of consumption and in the case of an emergency, especially as our population continues to grow.

As I said, we will continue to work with the Yukon Energy Corporation, and work of course is well underway. Our Liberal government introduced the innovative renewable energy initiative to provide \$1.5 million per year to support local small-scale renewable energy projects. This program has supported projects in Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Whitehorse, Carcross, Teslin, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City, and Old Crow. Through this program, in partnership with First Nations, communities, and private sector organizations, we are increasing the availability of renewable energy and reducing community reliance on diesel.

Earlier this year, the Yukon Energy Corporation announced the new residential demand response program in partnership with the Yukon Development Corporation and ATCO Electric Yukon and funding support from the Government of Canada. This innovative program will make the territory's electrical grid more efficient by equipping up to 400 homes with smart devices that will allow Yukon Energy Corporation to shift participating customers' energy demand to off-peak hours and meet Yukon's growing energy capacity needs in a cost-effective and sustainable way. Reducing demand and increasing efficiency are key as we work to reduce Yukon's carbon footprint. All Yukoners have a stake in the territory's energy future, and this innovative program will empower individuals to be mindful of consumption while helping us to move forward in a more economically and environmentally sustainable future.

Of course, we have also announced the battery energy storage system, which will be coming online in the next number of years, as well as the 31-kilometre section of the Mayo-McQuesten transmission line. For the most part, we are fast-tracking these projects, but some of the infrastructure has a bit of a lead time on order — but funds are in place and ready to move.

I would once again like to thank the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors for their leadership regarding the proposal on a geothermal generation facility. We look forward to continuing to work with Yukon Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I will table the letter for the records of the Assembly that I received from the Yukon Energy Corporation's board.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Health care review

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday we pointed out that the Liberals are considering bringing in a \$900-per-person health care tax. We asked the Liberals to take this option off the table, but they have refused.

Yukoners are already paying out of pocket for medical travel, and many are finding it difficult to afford health care. They can't afford to start paying massive health care premiums as well, and the Liberals really do need to rule this out.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services rule out bringing in a \$900-per-person health care tax — yes or no?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I won't do is commit to anything here in the Legislative Assembly. I will allow the process to evolve through the comprehensive health review. We will look within our system as we look at service delivery models. We are essentially trying to look at bringing effective services and collaborate health care services to all Yukon communities, and that is the parity we want. We want to see the services that we see here in the city brought to our communities. Those are things that we are doing for Yukoners, and we will continue to work in good faith with our partners. We will consult with Yukoners as we evolve as a government and as we look at essential service delivery models.

Mr. Hassard: It is unfortunate that the minister will not commit to anything in this Legislature. There is nothing stopping the Liberals from ruling out this \$900-per-person health care tax right here and right now, Mr. Speaker. The website really is crystal clear. Yukoners are being asked whether they support a fee for basic health care services, and more specifically, the government floats the idea of charging Yukoners a \$900-per-person annual health premium.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please make a commitment, stop passing the buck, and commit that they will not introduce a tax for basic health care systems?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Maybe I can remind the member opposite that, during the health review in 2008, the Minister of Health and Social Services — then-Minister Brad Cathers — made a commitment around increasing fees and fines and services —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: Not only did the minister just contravene the Standing Orders by mentioning a member by name, she completely invented and misrepresented the facts.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: As we know, it is not the Speaker's role to engage in a fact-finding exercise here. However, the Member for Lake Laberge is quite correct with respect to the current members not identifying each other by name.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to what the comprehensive health review and the panel is proposing — they are not proposing to address a \$900 tax, as an example. No, we are not proposing to do that. They have not made those recommendations.

We will get those interim recommendations at the end of the year. At that time, we will consider the recommendations that they bring forward. They will do that through consultation with Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: I think the minister should have a look at the website. She also needs to understand that this Liberal government was elected to make decisions. We know that they have a reputation of being directionless and unable to make decisions, but there is nothing stopping them right now from ruling out this \$900-per-person health care tax.

Mr. Speaker, they have the power to do that, so will they do the right thing and rule out these massive new health care premiums right now?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is acknowledge all of the processes and all of the program adjustments that we've made over course of the last two-plus years. We have ensured that Yukoners are taken care of where they reside. We have looked at collaborative care models. We have looked at specialized services within our communities. We will continue to ensure that Yukoners are happy and healthy where they reside within our communities.

We will look at it and we will make effective decisions. I am happy to say that we have made the necessary decisions to bring the program supports to our communities. We will continue to do that and we will continue to do it through our stakeholder groups who are partners with Yukon First Nations, for example, as well as our municipalities and our Yukon aging population who have given us specific instruction and direction on what we should do for service delivery.

Family and children's services is another example — look at how many children we have in care compared to the 389 that were in support under the previous leadership. We now have 80 children in care. Those are some of the positive, successful decisions that have been made, and they were made by the good servants of our government.

Question re: Health care review

Ms. McLeod: On October 2, the Liberals issued a press release entitled: "Second phase of comprehensive health review begins." According to the terms of reference for the comprehensive health review, which are available publicly on the government website, phase 2 was supposed to begin in

February 2019, so it would appear that the comprehensive health review is eight months behind schedule.

Can the minister tell us why the health review is so far behind schedule?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am happy to say that we are working through the comprehensive health review process. We have an independent expert panel which is leading the process. We will continue to work with them in good faith on the targets that they have set for themselves. We will ensure that, as the panel begins its consultation in Yukon communities, we will give them the support that they require and allow them the autonomy to go ahead and do just that within the time frame they set for themselves. I encourage all Yukoners to participate in that process.

Ms. McLeod: We know that the Liberals' health care review is looking for cuts and looking to bring in new fees, but the Liberals have also completely mismanaged the review and it has been plagued with constant delays.

On October 4 last year, the minister said that the health review would be completed by the fall of 2019. Then a few weeks later, she said that we will have a comprehensive final report and an implementation plan by the end of October 2019. Then a week later, she said the final report was expected by late 2019. Then this past March, she told the Assembly that the review will be completed by the end of 2019. Then in April, she said that the final report will be provided by March 2020. That is five delays so far, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister please tell us if the comprehensive health care review is still on schedule for a final report by March 2020?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The independent expert panel has launched a process. They have gone through an engagement with Yukoners. This second phase will allow them further discussions.

With respect to timelines, the panel recommended that we cooperate and work with them on their schedule, and that's exactly what we're doing. We have a target of having some interim recommendations to us by the end of year, and we still anticipate that they will have the report to us by the end of March of this next year, so that would be March 2020.

Ms. McLeod: The terms of reference for the comprehensive health review read, and I quote: "Preliminary Recommendations to inform the 2020/21 budget". According to these terms, draft recommendations are to be completed by December 2019.

So, is the panel still on track to deliver preliminary recommendations by December 2019 so that they can inform the budget, and will the Liberals commit to releasing these recommendations publicly?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to just acknowledge the hundreds of Yukoners who have participated in the process. The recommendations that came from the independent Financial Advisory Panel recommended that we go through this process. We now have an independent review happening. We will allow that review to take effect, as well as look — over the next several months — at talking to our stakeholder groups through this process. Once we implement and once we look at

the recommendations, we will certainly take that under advisement. We will take it into consideration as we look at our fiscal budgets and come in alignment with better collaborative care models for Yukoners.

I just want to take a moment to acknowledge the great work up to this point, and we will continue to ensure that we keep as transparent as possible with Yukoners and give them the information they require as we wrap this up in March 2020.

Question re: Energy demand-side management

Ms. White: Last spring, the Yukon NDP raised concerns about the Yukon Utilities Board's ruling that limited Yukon Energy Corporation's ability to carry out demand-side management programs. To our knowledge, that decision still stands. This summer, while attending a meeting about Yukon's energy future hosted by Yukoners Concerned, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that he would issue an order-in-council to allow the Yukon Energy Corporation to pursue demand-side management projects. So far, that order-in-council has not materialized.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government not yet issued an order-in-council to allow Yukon Energy Corporation to pursue further demand-side management projects?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Utilities Board has actually not yet delivered a final decision about Yukon Energy's 2017-18 general rate application. On September 25, 2019, the Yukon Utilities Board chose not to make a decision on updated rates until an additional review of Yukon's low-water reserve fund could be completed. The Yukon's low-water reserve fund is a contingency fund used to smooth the cost impact of using LNG or diesel during low-water years. This delay will again compound the impact of any rate increase on customers in the coming years, and the process to review the low-water reserve fund is expected to last until the end of November 2019.

With that, the Yukon Development Corporation team has been directed to prepare a series of options that are consistent with my comments this summer when the Leader of the Third Party and I attended a Yukoners Concerned event around renewable energy.

Ms. White: Just two weeks ago, we saw hundreds gather in downtown Whitehorse to demand immediate action on climate change. People around the world are frustrated because they believe their governments are not acting with the urgency necessary to confront this problem. Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist from Sweden, summed it up perfectly, saying: "I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is."

An order-in-council is a way for the minister to take immediate action to remove the barriers to demand-side management — one of the best tools we have in our toolbox to reduce carbon emissions and lower peak demand.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government act and issue the necessary order-in-council to allow the Yukon Energy Corporation to pursue demand-side management projects?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. I think one thing that is key to identify here is that the projects around demand-side management,

whether it is hoping to sign up 400 houses to do work with Yukon Energy Corporation on shaving peaks — all of that work is still continuing. The real question is: Do we have the ability to take costs associated with demand-side management and bring that to rates? Our commitment to the projects is still there, as is our commitment in our mandate to increase the availability of renewable energy and reduce community reliance on diesel.

Again, the innovative renewable energy initiative was launched in January 2018 with an annual budget of \$1.5 million. This is what has given us the ability to focus on projects in Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Whitehorse, Teslin, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City, Old Crow — Carcross, which is not listed here — the battery project — and of course all the while building the foundation that we needed, which was the independent power policy.

I think that the members of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources' Energy Solutions Centre — the people who work there need to be commended with the amount of work that they have accomplished in this short period of time. They are all committed and have the same values about the Yukon, so we are committed to moving forward in an appropriate manner.

Ms. White: Unfortunately, signing an order-in-council to allow the Yukon Energy Corporation to conduct demand-side management projects is just treating the symptoms of a much bigger problem, and that is the Yukon Utilities Board's flawed mandate. The Yukon Utilities Board's mandate is a product of a bygone era from before we understood the implications of unchecked global and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Utilities Board's sole mandate is to ensure that the customer receives a fair price for a monopolized service, and as such, it only examines the impact a project could have on the cost of power. This mandate does not factor in the potential social or environmental benefits of a proposed project, nor the shortfalls of a project.

Mr. Speaker, does this government support changing the Yukon Utilities Board's mandate to ensure that it considers both the environmental and social impacts in its decision-making process?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What I will commit to is having a perspective that is consistent with what one should have when they're going through a period of transition, and we are in a transitional period — not just in Yukon and not just in this country, but on this planet.

With that, I have an obligation to review all of the processes around me that I'm responsible for and to look to see if those processes can be improved upon. I think that the member opposite makes some very, very strong points — many of them, I agree with.

Once again, we're going to let the Utilities Board complete the process that they're involved in right now. I have made that commitment publicly. I have not wavered at looking at a potential order-in-council.

We are investigating the processes that are in place with utilities boards — jurisdiction to jurisdiction — to understand

how demand-side management is being handled, as well as contemplating what has happened in this long history with the Alberta utilities board and investigating all the options that are available to us. I look forward to coming back to the Legislative Assembly and reporting on that.

Question re: Powerline safety

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday during his response to the Speech from the Throne, the Minister of Community Services was talking about this past weekend's snowstorm and said the following — and I quote: "Once power went out at Marsh Lake, I was helping neighbours to take off trees from their power lines." Taking trees off powerlines is an extremely dangerous job and should only be done by professionals.

Can the minister tell us how many trees he removed from powerlines and who advised him that this was an acceptable thing to do? Has he heard ATCO's pleas to Yukoners not to approach any downed trees on or near powerlines?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I don't think I'm rising as the Minister of Community Services except to say that I think safety is very important.

There was a tree down across a powerline that is our powerline. It's not the utility — well, it's our responsibility. The tree was across the powerline that is shared between my neighbour's and my powerline. I will certainly check to make sure that things were done safely.

I agree with the member opposite that we should always make sure to do things safely. The power was out, so there was no power at that time. In fact, power didn't come on for another 24 hours, so that wasn't the issue. It was just the one tree; however, there were several other trees which were threatening powerlines, so I worked with neighbours to try to relieve snow and ice from those trees and to try to put in some supports to stop those trees from also falling on the powerlines.

What I want to say is thank you so much to the crews at ATCO and Yukon Energy — and by the way to Highways and Public Works — for doing a great job to help our communities get power back on in a time when there was a problem.

Question re: Independent Commission on Electoral Reform

Mr. Cathers: Today I tabled five letters to the Official Opposition sent to the Premier over the course of the spring and summer on electoral reform. In those letters we detail our preference for a non-partisan commission that has an equal and fair say from all political parties so that no one party can stack the deck in their favour. The Third Party has also sent letters to the Premier, and we have debated this topic several times in the House. So it was surprising to hear the Premier suggest yesterday that opposition parties have not provided input or advice on how to create a non-biased and non-partisan commission.

Despite our repeated attempts over the spring and summer to get the Premier to work with opposition parties, he ignored us and blazed ahead with a panel handpicked by the Liberals. We have suggested a model similar to the independent Electoral District Boundaries Commission or a model similar

to the all-party Members' Services Board process — which has traditionally looked at *Elections Act* changes — as two of the models that we would suggest.

The Premier has had some time to realize the error of his ways. Will he agree to our proposals today?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I have said, I have reached out to opposition parties to once again discuss the opportunities to work together on our commitment to an independent commission that enjoys a greater level of support of all parties. We can continue to hear from the members opposite what their concerns or issues are in the Legislative Assembly. I'm glad to have that debate here in the Legislative Assembly, or we could coordinate a time when they're willing to come and meet with me to have this discussion so that we can advance this conversation and get this process back on track.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier's preferred approach to electoral reform consultations has been to informally swing by opposition offices to have a quick chat and to call that "consultation". This has the effect of ensuring that there is no written record and avoiding access-to-information legislation in the process. When you are looking at major changes to our democracy, there should be a written record so the public knows how and why decisions are made.

Throughout the summer, the Premier continued to try this informal consultation process, despite our repeated requests that it be done in writing. We wrote to the Premier on June 16, July 1, and again on July 15 asking the Premier specific questions. He still has yet to reply to our July 15 letter. Each time, the Premier refused to answer questions in writing, put down specific questions in writing, or provide details, so we are left wondering: Why was the Premier afraid to have a written record of his consultations on electoral reform — or I should say his so-called "consultations" on electrical reform?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm not afraid at all to have scheduled meetings. I actually said that I would do that, so it is interesting to see the members opposite saying that I won't. What you see, in my position as Premier, is my ability to be flexible. I came down informally. I apologize if that is not the way that the members opposite would like to see that; however, that is pretty much the only way that I ever met a minister when the Yukon Party was in power. That will change; that will have minutes and meetings. There is no problem there. I committed to that. I am willing to work with the opposition.

What we are seeing here, though, is that the members opposite would rather make this a partisan and political issue here in the Legislative Assembly as opposed to telling me when they would like to meet so that we can get on with this and actually get the commission working again.

Mr. Cathers: I have to remind the member that we have been very clear in writing repeatedly that we wanted this to be put in writing, and the Premier has still not replied to our July 15 letter.

It has been apparent to us from the start that the Premier was never actually working in good faith on the electoral reform process. The fact of the matter is that the Premier has a track record of saying one thing in a meeting and then saying

another thing publicly. That is one of the reasons that we asked that there be a written record of this, and we made that request multiple times.

Any process that may change the way that Yukoners vote or how their votes are counted will have long-lasting impacts, so a written record is important so that no one party can misrepresent another party's input and so the public can see the facts.

Here is our position on the terms of reference: We have been clear that they should be established through an all-party consensus. We reached consensus with the opposition on changes to the *Elections Act* in 2015. Surely the Premier could do that with terms of reference for a commission. Will the Premier commit that terms of reference for any commission will be established through all-party consensus?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I need to say at this point again that election reform is an extremely important issue for many Yukoners. My point is to get past politicians and get into the ideas of Yukoners and to make Yukoners part of the process as opposed to politicians.

We keep on hearing the member opposite going back to his briefing note — going back to his notes written in his office — but I did explain very well that, again, we are willing to move forward and we are willing to have the meetings that he keeps on asking me to have. We have said we would. I don't know what the stall is on their behalf, but let's have that meeting. Let's come into a room together and talk on the record with recording officers from both opposition parties to make sure that everybody is having the same conversation in the room about how we are going to move forward on an independent commission. That's what we committed to do, Mr. Speaker.

What you are seeing here is a government that is willing to reach out and work with the opposition, and what we are seeing is an opposition that would rather spend a lot of time delaying the process, making this political as opposed to allowing it to actually get out to Yukoners — which is really who should be making the decision on electoral reform, not a Yukon Party that has already made up its decision.

Question re: Capital plan for schools

Mr. Kent: The Minister of Education told this House two years ago that she was working on a 10-year capital plan for schools. This was in response to questions that we asked about a promised school revitalization plan that, according to her own annual report, was due to be completed in the summer of 2017.

As we haven't been provided with a copy of this plan, can the Minister of Highways and Public Works let us know when we can expect it?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am very happy this afternoon to get the opportunity to talk about how we are planning in this government now — something that is relatively novel to this Yukon government. We are very happy to be doing it.

The five-year capital plan is making capital spending more transparent and allowing government, industry, and Yukoners more time to plan important projects. The five-year capital plan provides greater certainty and promotes a strategic approach to

the forecasting and timing of procurement. The capital plan will routinely change as priorities, circumstances, and needs change.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2019, we met and shared details of the plan with Yukon First Nations, and we will continue to provide Yukoners with updated information on government's planned capital investments over the next five years.

Mr. Kent: Unfortunately, the lack of detail and the wishy-washy nature of the five-year capital concepts are exactly why we are asking to see the 10-year school plan that the government committed to in this House. The two five-year capital concepts tabled by this government tell two very different tales when it comes to capital construction for school projects. The first one referenced replacements of Holy Family and Christ the King Elementary; the second one deleted those plans and instead had plans for a Whistle Bend school.

The Liberals like to brag about how awesome these five-year concepts are because they claim they give certainty to contractors and the Yukon public.

Can the minister tell us which five-year capital concept contractors should be following for this certainty?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The long-term capital plans that we have developed over the last couple of years in Highways and Public Works — working as one government with Finance and the other departments in the government — allow us to better plan, forecast, and time procurement processes. We will put tenders out earlier so that vendors are better able to provide and plan for seasonal contracts and so the Yukon government is able to leverage the best time of the year for construction. As capital plans change and mature, we will work to meet those project and vendor needs.

This means, for example, that we will spread out bridge projects rather than tender them all together. The five-year capital plan for 2019-20 to 2023-24 includes a range of strategic investments across the territory to help fulfill our commitments to Yukoners. That includes land development and investments in the Whistle Bend subdivision expansion; education — investments in the French first language secondary school, school portables, and planning for a Whistle Bend elementary school that will support growing student enrolment. We are supporting the health and wellness of Yukoners through our investments and upgrades to Meditech — the Yukon Hospital Corporation's health information system — planning for a new secure medical unit, and other things.

Mr. Kent: We have heard that meetings have started to take place with a few school communities about school planning in Whitehorse. We've also heard that, after the Whistle Bend school in Whitehorse, the government is going to focus on either renovations or replacements of Whitehorse Elementary School, even though Whitehorse Elementary doesn't even make the latest five-year concept.

What we have heard though is that two other schools referred to only as "Whitehorse 1" and "Whitehorse 2" in the internal documents have been inserted into the long-term capital planning.

Can the minister confirm that this is the case, and rather than making school communities in Whitehorse face off with one another in some sort of “hunger games” to get a new school, will they sit down with representatives of all school communities in one meeting and share their 10-year capital plan?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Planning is something that really was not executed very well in the past, and we are putting a lot of time and effort into doing this so that the community knows — so that contractors know, so school communities know — so that the communities around the territory know what this government is doing and they can actually start to plan their projects as well.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, we are investing in community and First Nation infrastructure projects such as firehalls, water and sewer upgrades, and recreational infrastructure. You can see this in our five-year capital plan. We will continue to protect Yukoners and their properties through investments in flood mitigation, RCMP detachments — which I know is a matter that the members opposite — it’s sort of an obligation they neglected but one that we’re not going to neglect, Mr. Speaker. We’re going to actually build the RCMP detachments that we committed to building.

The new Whitehorse air tanker base — transportation infrastructure investments such as the Yukon Resource Gateway Project and targeted airport investments in Whitehorse, Mayo, and Dawson will generate long-term economic opportunities and improve safety.

Energy investments such as the energy retrofits and our funding initiatives aim to develop local renewable energy generation and will reduce energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels.

Mr. Speaker, we’re also making information technology investments that will help us improve service delivery to the public and modernize learning spaces in Yukon.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members’ business

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 9, 2019. They are Motion No. 19, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, and Motion No. 15, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 9, 2019. It is Motion No. 23, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Motion No. 22 — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, moved by Mr. Gallina; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Mostyn.

Speaker: Minister of Highways and Public Works, you have 12 minutes and 36 seconds remaining.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy to rise again to address the Speech from the Throne that the Premier introduced at the beginning of this session.

As I was saying yesterday, we are well into executing on the Dempster fibre line, which will lessen the threat of Internet disruptions in the Yukon and the NWT. Crews are already on the ground carrying out brushing, surveying, and geotechnical work. This is a massive project, Mr. Speaker, across more than 700 kilometres of remote terrain, including several mountain ranges, rivers, streams, and permafrost. When it is complete, it will improve Yukoners’ ability to participate in the digital economy and improve access to government services. These and other initiatives are why the Canadian Federation of Independent Business ranked Whitehorse number one in the country for innovation and entrepreneurship.

We have done much to improve the way government does business. I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to address the Canadian Construction Association annual meeting, and there I talked about our industry, First Nations, and how we were working together as a territory to improve procurement — the way we buy goods and services. I was buoyed by the response I got from those attending the meeting. They applauded our approach, knowledge, and support for our local economy.

There is plenty we are doing, Mr. Speaker, and it is apparently unlike anywhere else in the country. We launched the Yukon’s first five-year capital plan, which we were just discussing a few moments ago — a plan we continue to refine and improve. That plan is making capital spending more transparent and more predictable and allowing governments, industry, and Yukoners to have more time to plan important projects.

Last spring, we met and shared details of the plan with Yukon First Nations, and I will use that to segue into the First Nation procurement policy. Since last December, we have partnered with Yukon First Nations to develop this policy within our broader procurement policy. The objective is to build business capacity for Yukon First Nations and ensure that they are better able to compete for public contracts. This is a first for the Yukon government and is another demonstration of our commitment as a government to reconciliation. The technical working group has had strong attendance from Yukon First Nations and development corporations. The work is progressing at the pace this working group has set, and we are taking the time needed to get the work right. We have already done much to improve the overall procurement approach of the

government, including local provisions to help give credit to local knowledge, experience, and hiring local.

Our new procurement policy responds to each of the Procurement Advisory Panel's 11 recommendations and creates greater consistency in the way we procure goods and services. It aligns with our trade agreement commitment. It supports the Yukon economy by making it easier for businesses to compete for and secure government contracts. We have become the first jurisdiction in the country to use the regional economic development exceptions. This is a tool that allows us to restrict contracts of up to \$1 million to local competition without falling awry of trade agreements.

Through the procurement business committee, industry, and First Nation engagement, we have improved the selection criteria for those selections. We have revised the bid challenge process, we have defined a "Yukon business" in a way that follows the money, and we have improved consistency around the bid depository, around bonding, and around addenda to make it easier for contractors to know what to expect. We are also ensuring consistency and integrity of the new procurement process by completing a compliance review of all public tenders before sharing bid prices, a move that improves accuracy in recording bid prices and protects supplier pricing.

There are of course more refinements and improvements underway, including a new e-procurement system to replace the current tender management system so that businesses can submit bids online. We are doing this because, as I have often said, procurement is a journey, not a destination.

Highways and Public Works has started drafting the regulations for the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This new law is one of the most modern and progressive such laws in the country. It will improve the way the government provides information to the public. It will also do a better job of protecting citizen privacy and ensuring government agencies do a better job protecting the private information they are entrusted with. It ensures that the government is more transparent and accountable in the way it provides and protects information. These regulations will outline in vivid detail how the act works. That draft is expected to be finished next spring. It is important to note that the new law is not in effect until those regulations are written and approved. Until those regulations are adopted, the Yukon continues to operate under the creaky old law. We understand its inadequacies, which is why we are working so hard on these new regulations.

Another piece of progressive legislation we have begun is a complete rewrite of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. This is a vital piece of legislation for the territory. No matter where I go, Mr. Speaker, people talk about speeding and bad driving habits. The existing act is 44 years old, the year the Chevrolet Impala was the continent's most popular car. The act hasn't been substantially updated since. Back then, gas was 65 cents a gallon, and much of it was still leaded. Things have changed a little bit since then. The decrepit, fusty law was never good, and today it is long past its best-before date.

Our existing law is so muddled and poorly constructed that it has been called "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an

enigma" by a prominent Yukon judge. Police officers throughout the territory have told me personally how inadequate and frustrating the law is and freely admit that it hinders their ability to police traffic. So we are fixing that law.

We have had broad consultation on our approach. The number of responses almost eclipsed what we heard about cannabis, which was the most successful engagement we have seen. The new law will make it easier to enforce laws prohibiting distracted driving, driving under the influence, speeding, passing school buses, and other offences. Fines will reflect today's society and should provide some encouragement for people to think twice before breaking the law. The new law will address matters relating to off-road vehicles, electric vehicles, self-driving vehicles, motorized bikes, scooters, photo-radar, and other issues never imagined in 1977. The goal is a stronger foundation for the rules governing how we drive through our territory, our cities, towns, and villages. The goal will be improved safety and better drivers and fewer deaths and injuries on our roads.

Over the past couple of years, I have met several times with the president of the Yukon Employees' Union, the Yukon Teachers' Association president, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Yukon Contractors Association, community councils, business leaders, First Nation chiefs and councils, and many, many, many others. It is important to have these relationships to make decisions in the territory.

Last year, we settled two very important labour agreements. In January, a deal with the Yukon Teachers' Association was ratified, and that three-year deal resolved many contentious long-term issues, including conversion of temporary teachers to permanent status, probationary periods, and layoff language. In July, the Yukon Employees' Union ratified its agreement. This new agreement balances the needs of our employees with Government of Yukon's commitment to providing excellent public services for people of the Yukon. They were tough decisions for all, but the results were progressive and fair for all.

I would like to compliment the bargaining teams of both unions and the Yukon government for the collaborative and respectful approach to reaching agreements that will continue to provide decent wages and benefits to government employees.

Which is to say, Mr. Speaker, there has been an awful lot going on and there is a lot more to come. We are modernizing. We are building fibre and online services to better serve our communities, diversify the economy, and foster a spirit of innovation. We are improving and expanding our roads, airports, and bridges. We are settling labour agreements in a fair, responsible manner. We are tackling climate change, which will be one of the greatest battles we have in society in the coming years. We are settling land use planning agreements, as promised, that are among the largest in terms of geographic area and the most progressive in the country. We are fixing the way we procure goods and services. We are reconciling with First Nations — for example, we are working on the legal requirements to have a representative civil service. We are working with Yukon communities. We are working

with Yukon industry. We are working with Yukoners of all stripes to improve the entire territory because, Mr. Speaker, all communities matter.

I count myself lucky because I have a great riding, one of 19 in the territory. It is an honour to serve my constituents in this role. Frankly, I love what I do.

With that, I will relinquish the floor.

Mr. Adel: I am very proud to stand here today as the MLA for Copperbelt North. I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with constituents, to hear their points of view, and to try to understand their priorities as they see them. Thank you to all of my constituents who have reached out over the years for entrusting me with your questions, concerns, and ideas. Your feedback is valuable and, as was very well said in the throne speech, has contributed to helping our territory grow and succeed. It is also a pleasure and a privilege to serve as your MLA. I would just like to say that my door is always open.

In each constituency, there are things that happen that we really don't foresee. We recently lost a very important member of our community — Sergeant James "Jim" Giczi. Jim was a constituent of mine and served the RCMP for 28 years. He was head of the forensic identification section in the RCMP M Division in Whitehorse. I would like to thank and acknowledge Jim's valuable contribution to our community and extend my sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues at the Whitehorse detachment.

Throughout the year, I have had an opportunity to participate in and volunteer at many wonderful community events, including Ride for Dad, the MS walk, the Skookum pro-am golf tournament, the Hougen's 75th anniversary event, the United Way Breakfast, Movember — a fundraiser for prostate cancer — and Mental Health for Men.

It is always great to see our community come together, and I would like to extend my thanks to all the wonderful volunteers in our community who worked very hard to make these events happen. Not only does it promote a sense of community, but many of those events helped raise significant funds for very worthy causes.

One of the parts of this government that I have enjoyed working on — and I'm really proud of the work that our government is doing — is with respect to energy and renewable projects. There are some really exciting projects underway, and I would like to talk a bit about those. The Southern Lakes enhancement storage project that we have been at for 10 years — we are now in the final stages of consultation on a project that requires no infrastructure but can displace up to 3,150 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and 500,000 litres of fossil fuels each year. This type of thinking and using this project is another way to allow us to produce energy through hydro and for longer in the winter period — which means less reliance on fossil fuels — and is certainly a step in the right direction.

I recently attended an announcement in Whitehorse regarding a battery storage system. This is a project being led by Yukon Energy Corporation. I understand that construction is scheduled to start on this grid-scale battery energy storage system in 2020. This system will store renewable hydro energy

during off-peak periods to be used during peak demand periods, reducing the amount of thermal energy required to meet demand and in turn reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to managing peak demand, the battery energy storage system project will allow for the addition of new renewable energy sources, such as the Haeckel Hill wind project, to the Yukon grid.

We have come to the availability of working with these projects and working with First Nations thanks to our forum and moving forward with meeting with the First Nations on a government-to-government basis, building trust in projects and including them in decisions so we can move forward with our renewable energy.

I understand that the Yukon Energy Corporation is consulting with First Nations and organizations interested in becoming independent power producers, both public utilities and other key stakeholders, to identify and support projects that will address our need for renewable and sustainable energy. The battery energy storage system is comprised of an eight-megawatt battery with the energy storage of 40 megawatt hours. This project is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 20,123 tonnes over the 20-year lifetime of the project by displacing thermal energy requirements during peak demand events.

We could not do this alone. With help from our local MP and the federal government providing funds, this project is moving forward.

Another program that we are using to transition into the new green economy that our government has led on the renewable file is the innovative renewable energy initiative. This initiative was launched in January 2018 with an annual budget of \$1.5 million per year for four years. To date, YDC has supported projects across the territory. Over \$3.6 million in project support has been spent or committed since the fund became active in January 2018. I understand that the 2019-20 fund allocation is fully subscribed, and that's excellent news. It is great to see so many governments and organizations across the territory taking advantage of funding to help support renewable energy.

Also, in our team approach to government, in my role as vice-chair of the CDF — the community development fund — we approved partial funding for the biomass district heating system in Teslin, which is an innovative form of renewable energy, providing jobs and providing a sustainable renewable energy model that we can maybe use into the future in the Yukon. This was also funded through the innovative renewable energy initiative, which provides funding in conjunction with related federal programs. Projects such as this help to reduce diesel as the primary source of energy generation in rural and remote and northern communities.

As we know, climate change is a serious issue on a global scale. My team of colleagues here understand the urgency around our changing climate, and they have for many years. My colleagues have worked on these files for upwards of two or three decades. We have taken many significant steps as a government to work to address this serious issue.

I just finished mentioning a few of the renewable energy projects. There are many others. There are many others ways that we are looking at to try to reduce our carbon footprint. We are changing the way in which we are constructing buildings. We are evaluating the use of electric cars in our government fleet. We are looking at electrification for some of our northern roadways.

Climate change and its impacts are increasingly and incredibly wide-reaching. Part of the work that our government is doing is to ensure that policies and practices are being changed to embrace this.

Our youth have proven themselves to be leaders and strong advocates for change around the issue of climate change. They are driving ideas and innovation in this sector. I read about one young woman from the Middle East who is talking about producing energy with hot sand. Who knew? But that's where the ideas come from.

It's important that we listen. This climate urgency is driving our government's practices and policies in response to our climate and makes substantial changes for the future generations.

Also, my role in the Public Accounts Committee has been interesting in moving forward to help the government and the people of Yukon understand how the Auditor General's reports need to be looked at in this government. We bring witnesses forward. We're making sure that departments are following in the recommendations that come from these reports to make better use of our resources.

Also, as chairman of the boards and committees, we've been working hard to place qualified Yukoners in positions which we think will help these important boards form the policies and so on moving forward as a government.

The purpose of this throne speech is to create a road map for all Yukoners showing the way that we're moving forward as a government — how the departments work together as a team, integrating legislation, policies, regulations, and ideas to benefit all Yukoners.

Yukoners can hear that we as a government are listening and moving forward on projects that are important to them. We have worked on aging in place, the *Liquor Act* review, and the ongoing revamp of the *Motor Vehicles Act* — just to name a few. The team is integrating our legislation and policies in ways that continue to make the Yukon a very special place to live. It's my honour and privilege to work with our Liberal government to represent the constituents of Copperbelt North.

Thanks also to all my colleagues in the House today for the work that you do on behalf of Yukoners.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to rise and respond to the Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne referred to this as a transformational time — transformational indeed. I'm a kid from Old Crow. I swam in the waters of the Porcupine River, I was fed by the caribou that migrate through our community, and I was raised by my mother and grandmother. The world has changed since those days in many ways. Both my grandmother

and my mother could not have imagined the changes over this time.

Over the past 50 years, Yukon's annual average temperature has increased by two degrees Celsius — twice the global rate. Our winters have warmed by four degrees and rain and snowfall has increased by six percent. In Canada, cities, provinces, territories, and the federal government are taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build greater economies provided by clean energy. Yukon will be part of this national and global shift.

The Climate Change Secretariat is leading the Yukon government's actions to address climate change. Housed under the Department of Environment, it is a collaborative effort across government and with our partners to support Yukoners in reducing energy consumption, saving money, and adapting to a changing landscape.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, we have begun developing the draft climate change, energy, and green economy strategy in partnership with Yukon First Nations, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities. Public meetings were held in 14 communities. A survey was distributed, and over 80 stakeholder groups have been contacted directly. During this public engagement period, Yukoners clearly expressed that they are already experiencing the impacts of climate change.

We can see that our world is rapidly evolving, with impacts to our ecosystems, subsistence hunting, harvesting, leisure activities, and many other aspects of our daily lives. Through its goals and actions, the strategy will aim to support clean, secure, and sustainable energy. It will lay out ways to ensure that Yukoners and Yukon is resilient to climate change impacts. It will look to foster new economic opportunities. Most importantly, the strategy will be one for all of Yukon. It is being developed from the feedback we've heard from Yukoners, expert knowledge, and the insight shared from our partners.

While engaging the public on the new strategy, we heard about the importance of self-sufficiency. Participants defined self-sufficiency as looking within to meet our own needs and using local knowledge to address local challenges. Many said that this important aspect of Yukon's culture and history is being lost because of our changing climate.

Across the north, we have a long history of coping with and adapting to changing and sometimes harsh conditions — First Nation and indigenous ways of living and knowing and their intimate connections with the land, rivers, and mountains. Generation after generation, First Nations have built and passed along knowledge, skills, and values shaped in part by the patterns of the landscape.

Many of the changes we are experiencing are now unprecedented in terms of scope and speed. Elders lived through winter temperatures that our children may never experience. Wildlife and plant species are claiming habitat in places they haven't before. Water systems are changing course or drying up. In Old Crow, where the Vuntut Gwitchin people are truly on the front line of climate change, a state of emergency was declared, an action that has been echoed in Whitehorse, across the country, and around the globe.

Yukon First Nations are a direct partner in developing a Yukon strategy to address climate change. Traditional knowledge informing this work is very much linked hand in hand. It is more important now than ever to come together and share our collective understanding and experiences to take action for a strong, sustainable future. Decisions made today to address climate change, meet our energy needs, and build a resilient green economy will benefit future generations while engaging the public.

We have youth-specific events in Whitehorse and in the communities. We want to make sure that youth voices are heard and included in the development of this new strategy. Youth said they want to see more jobs and more opportunities in their communities. They have said they want to see a healthy ecosystem with clean land, water, and air. We see the importance of having specific engagement from our next generation, and that is why we are creating a youth panel on climate change to increase the valuable participation of youth in the steps we take to address our changing landscape.

The strategy will outline our collective visions, goals, values, and objectives for the next 10 years. It is a Yukon-wide strategy that lays out action across the territory to help to respond to climate change. 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 a green economy.

Reaching our greenhouse gas emission targets will require extensive modernization of our transportation and heating systems, which together contribute to 82 percent of Yukon's emissions. We will also have to make significant investments in more renewable energy generation, creating local jobs and economic opportunities. By reaching our emissions target, we will inspire others, demonstrating that a remote, northern jurisdiction can achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The draft strategy we proposed is an adaptive approach that will recognize the importance of reducing the risks we all face while also working to improve human health, food security, and other factors like access to housing and sustainable employment. This will make all Yukoners in Yukon communities more resilient.

We also propose more work to understand and reduce the impacts of climate change on Yukon's natural environment, including wildlife, plants, fish, and ecosystems. This work will complement broader efforts to conserve wildlife, protect biodiversity, and manage forest sustainability.

This winter, the public and stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and comment on the actions that the Government of Yukon proposes to take. During this public engagement, public meetings will be held in a number of Yukon communities. There will also be an online option to make it easier for Yukoners to provide their input. We look forward to hearing from Yukoners on the ideas identified thus far, and we will continue our work with indigenous and municipal partners to identify partner-led actions for the final version of the strategy, which we hope will be released in 2020.

Through the foresight of the Inuvialuit and Yukon First Nation final agreements and the hard work of dedicated

Yukoners, approximately 12 percent of Yukon's territory is currently protected. This includes national and territorial parks, habitat protection areas, and land set aside for protection by First Nation and Inuvialuit partners. We work closely with Yukon First Nation governments and the Inuvialuit to ensure parks and protected areas have management plans to guide conservation and use. Currently, management plans to guide conservation and use need to look specifically at four territorial parks and nine habitat protection areas. With the completion of more regional land use plans, our network of protected areas will grow.

In May 2018, we formally signed the management plan for the Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area with Selkirk First Nation and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. The management plan recommended continued cultural use of the area, fish and wildlife conservation, and habitat protection, and it prohibits commercial activity and off-road use — specific guidelines defined in those agreements.

In May 2019, we finalized the habitat protection area plan for Ch'ihilii Chik, or the Whitefish wetlands. Ch'ihilii Chik was identified for protection by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the North Yukon Land Use Plan. These protected areas are more than just names on the map. These are ancient and spiritual places. They tell the story of our past and are critical to the sustainability of the health and biodiversity of our future. These territorial parks, habitat protection areas, and special management areas do more than just preserve culture and conserve ecosystems; they are our testament to our commitment and dedication to managing this land together.

Most recently, the Government of Yukon, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council found consensus on a final Peel watershed land use plan. Together on August 22, we celebrated and marked this historic moment in Mayo. This plan was 15 years in the making — far too long if you ask me. It could have been agreed through meaningful consultation and conversations, but ended up in a series of court battles. Our government was committed to resolving this respectfully, and I'm very proud to see that this agreement is finally signed.

Over the course of the fall, work will commence with our partners on the implementation plan. Our implementation priorities include: designating and creating a management plan for special management areas and wilderness areas; assisting in the establishment of national historic sites for two areas along the Peel River that are of high cultural importance to the Tetlit Gwich'in; designating off-road vehicle management areas throughout the regulations; recommending the permanent protection of mineral claims; staking and other resource disposition for special management areas; and reviewing existing prohibitions on an interim basis in the wilderness area.

This government wants future Yukoners to know that sound regulations and flexible systems were developed in our time so that the balance of a strong economy and strong environment can continue. When we honour natural and cultural heritage, bring our shared agreements to life, and foster reconciliation through environmental protection, we are ensuring a sustainable future for our children to enjoy.

In addition to ensuring healthy landscapes, we have started research and analyses on establishing species at risk legislation for Yukon. Once we have initiated and completed comprehensive consultation and engagement, we aim to table proposed legislation within this mandate. The specific timing and completion of a Yukon species at risk act will depend on how this new legislation would interact with existing legislation. Currently, species assessed and listed under this federal *Species at Risk Act* have legal protection and undergo mandatory recovery planning. Our biologists contribute to the federal risk assessments and recovery plans as part of the Government of Yukon's commitment under the national accord for the protection of species at risk. We work collaboratively with several partners to track the status of Yukon species on conservation concerns and manage and monitor wildlife that is at risk. One example of this collaborative work in action is the action we took to protect boreal caribou critical habitat in Yukon. Boreal caribou are listed as threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. We now have a signed section 11 agreement with Canada, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun that meets the needs of boreal caribou as outlined in the national recovery plan and protects 65 percent of the boreal caribou critical habitat in the Peel watershed region.

Another critical caribou habitat is Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This area is critical to the annual migration and calving of the barren-ground Porcupine caribou herd. In support of conserving this habitat, we have been working closely with our partners under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement*. Together with the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, we commissioned an independent study. The study concluded that development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would have a high risk of adversely affecting the herd. In March 2019, we responded to the United States' direct draft environmental impact statement for leasing lands for oil and gas exploration in the refuge. We outlined our concerns about potential impacts to a number of key species and habitats. Our comments also requested further research be done in order for the assessments to be comprehensive. We are completing a thorough analysis on the final environmental impact statement to ensure that we fully understand the strengths and weaknesses and areas that are lacking significant information. This will inform the next steps we take with our Canadian partners. We will continue to ensure a coordinated pan-northern response to protect ANWR and the Porcupine caribou herd's calving grounds.

The Department of Environment strives to make sure our management of wildlife species and our interactions with them are responsible, sustainable, and informed by scientific experience and traditional knowledge. We do this collaboratively with Yukon First Nation governments, Inuvialuit, non-governmental boards and committees, renewable resources councils, neighbouring international and regional governments, hunters, trappers, outfitters, and individual Yukoners who are out on the land.

Together with traditional knowledge and local information, data is collected to help identify targets and

priorities for research efforts. In turn, this work informs decisions on harvest management, land use planning, and environmental assessment processes. We are working at the Yukon Forum and through land claims boards and committees to ensure that harvested species continue to thrive. We collect information from harvesters, scientific surveys, and issues raised by our partners to guide the work that modern harvest management requires. Harvest management discussions across Yukon can be challenging, but by generating and sharing knowledge, we can make informed and inclusive decisions.

To help support healthy communities and ecosystems, we are focusing on addressing single-use consumption. We will be implementing a ban on single-use bags within the next year. This is the next step in our continued work to evolve our waste management and recycling efforts in Yukon. We will also make sure to discuss options with our partners, the public, industry, and retailers before introducing new products.

I want to take this time to encourage all Yukoners to make small changes that can make big differences in our daily lives — for example, bring reusable bags along on your errands. Together we can create a future with less single-use consumption.

Through my portfolios as Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I see Yukoners at their most vulnerable. I meet Yukoners when they are fighting for the custody of the children they love. I meet Yukoners when they are sick and in need of medical support. I meet Yukoners who are frustrated by the wait-times for surgery, Yukoners who need housing, Yukoners who need shelter, and Yukoners who need a hot meal and a place to go. My mandate is to be there for Yukoners who need help to maintain and build a system of supports to help people today, tomorrow, and in decades to come.

Any strength or wisdom that I have comes from my community and the teachings of my elders. What my community and others have been saying for years is that our children need to be with their families, that our children need to grow up with connections to their home communities, and that the practice of apprehending children — moving them from their aunties, uncles, and grandparents — has to stop. I am proud to say that the landscape of family and children's services is not what it was three years ago when we took office. It has improved.

Since November of last year, the extended family caregivers of children are provided with the same level of financial support and services that are available to foster caregivers. We have created family extended teams to work closely with families and caregivers as well as children and youth to support reunification. We have also introduced a social worker position specific to supporting these extended family care agreements. This approach keeps children, youth, and families from harm while supporting children and youth in their own homes. As a government, we have shifted from the decades-long policy of child apprehension to prevention.

This is not work that our government did alone. It was work that we were able to accomplish because of our strong working relationship with Yukon First Nations. In January

2018, senior officials from the Government of Yukon, the Government of Canada, and our Yukon First Nation partners came together to establish a trilateral table on child welfare. This working group determined how to share information, promote collaborative decision-making on shared priorities, and coordinate implementation and allocation of financial resources. It was through this collaborative approach that Family and Children's Services and Yukon First Nations were able to enter into a memorandum of agreement to enhance our collaborative child welfare process and operationalize the provisions of the *Child and Family Services Act* that required First Nation involvement.

These collaborative agreements guide the delivery and administration of how we work together with First Nation partners to deliver child welfare services to First Nation communities and citizens. These agreements empower First Nation direction and involvement in child welfare service delivery. To date, I am proud to say that we have completed a memorandum of agreement with two Yukon First Nations. Our goal is to complete them with all 14 Yukon First Nations and to increase their involvement in child welfare. Family and Children's Services continues to look for ways that it can improve services for First Nation children and families as we develop a Yukon-specific screening tool tailored to Yukon to identify families in need of child welfare services. This is in addition to the work we are doing in collaboration with Yukon First Nations to reassess all 50 Yukon children and youth under continuing custody orders and, wherever possible, reunify them with their families, extended families, communities, and culture. This approach to child welfare has never before been undertaken in Canada. It has meant that we went from 181 youth in care in 2015 to 80 in 2019.

As of May of this year, our government stopped the practice of using birth alerts, or hospital alerts, which saw newborn children taken away from their parents within days of birth. This practice disproportionately affected indigenous and marginalized women. We are following the protocols set in place that are less disruptive to families and that safeguard our children.

Our government is not stopping there. In the coming weeks, we will be opening the Wann Road transitional support program. This program will provide a supportive and semi-independent living home for youth as they transition toward independent living. It will provide youth with skill-building and empowerment as they move forward on their own life journeys. Phase 1 of this project provides supportive housing for up to four youth from 15 to 17 years of age.

Phase 2 is a supportive housing option for up to six youth in the form of four semi-independent units and two self-contained units for youth 16 to 19 who have demonstrated the ability and maturity to manage increased independence and still want to access ongoing support services and life-skill development.

Phase 3 will be designed in collaboration with other service providers to provide independent housing to individuals 19 to 24 years of age. This program will also provide life-skills

training and outreach services for all youth ages 15 to 24 under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the approach this government has taken to child welfare is transformational and one that I am incredibly proud of — incredibly proud to say was inspired by the traditional practices of our communities and the wisdom of the elders of our communities

In the past decade, Yukon's population has grown by 20 percent. That means almost 6,946 more Yukoners in need of a family doctor, a flu shot, or a visit to the Whitehorse General Hospital perhaps. Our demographics are also changing. According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, as of June 2018, more than 5,200 Yukoners were 65 years of age or older, representing nearly 13 percent of the population. The population of the 65-and-older age group is expected to grow to 11,700 by 2040. This would represent 21 percent of Yukon's total population.

If we are going to meet the health care needs of Yukoners this year, next year, and in 20 years' time, we are going to need to change the way we do things. That is why we initiated the comprehensive review of health and social systems in Yukon — one that is focused on identifying the main factors driving health costs, the quality of outcomes being delivered in Yukon, and fully explore how to make our health care system sustainable in the long run.

In simpler language, the comprehensive review of health and social programs and services will focus on ensuring that patients, clients, and service providers in Yukon can access the services they need without bankrupting future generations. This is the responsible thing for our government to do, and our Liberal government is proud to be carrying out this challenging work for the benefit of Yukoners. The work of this review is well underway. The independent expert panel was appointed to lead the review and recently launched phase 2 of the review. It will be continuing to hold a series of public meetings across the Yukon to hear from the public on what we need to build an effective, sustainable health system for decades to come.

I look forward to receiving the panel's final report in March 2020. In the meantime, we are doing the important work it takes to address issues important to Yukoners, like reducing cataract surgery wait-times. From January to the end of June of this year, 387 cataract surgeries have been completed and wait-times have gone down from 37 months to 16 months. Our goal is to reduce wait-times to four months by December of this year.

We now have an orthopaedic surgeon in the territory. This has resulted in an 85-percent reduction in the number of Yukoners waiting for an orthopaedic consultation. Over 50 urgent orthopaedic surgeries were completed right here in Whitehorse, reducing the need for out-of-territory travel medevacs. In total, we have managed to reduce the wait-times for Yukoners to receive knee replacements from 24 months to 18 months.

Since the beginning of our mandate, our Liberal government has committed to ensuring that our population can age well, to ensure that we have a plan in place for the comfort

and care of our seniors — all while also creating solutions and promoting aging in place with a full spectrum of care.

We opened Whistle Bend Place on time and on budget and have to date successfully transitioned 116 seniors into this new, state-of-the-art long-term care facility. This winter, we will open community hospice services at Whistle Bend. Wind River House includes 12 hospice beds and six long-term care beds with palliative care services to individuals with progressive, life-limiting illnesses. Whistle Bend continuing care facility is just one of the many ways we are creating options for our aging population.

Yukon home care and Continuing Care programs, combined with the opening of Whistle Bend and the reablement and respite program at Thomson Centre, is addressing Yukoners' continuing care needs. We continue to enhance home and community programs and services, providing Yukoners with more access to the supports they need when and where they need it. There is a growing need for housing with supports for our seniors. We are doing the work to ensure Yukoners have the option to age in place. Through our social housing program, we are operating 285 senior units for older Yukoners who live independently.

In my home community of Old Crow, we are working in partnership with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government to build a new health centre and wellness centre, one that will incorporate a healing room which will offer families a place to come together during the end of life of their loved ones.

We have spoken with over 1,200 Yukoners about aging in place and what that means to them. From that, we are now developing an aging-in-place action plan based on the four pillars of program and services: infrastructure, housing, transportation, and living full and meaningful lives.

This action plan will include short-, medium-, and long-term goals and actions that we can undertake as a government, along with goals and actions that we will work on alongside our municipalities and First Nation governments, community groups, and individuals.

As the demographics of Yukon change, so do the needs of Yukoners, and we must adapt to meet those needs. We have expanded the scope of services provided through our mental wellness substance use hubs in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, and Watson Lake. Counselling is now available to adults, children, youth, and families. Individuals can now access the counselling services they need in their home community to address mental wellness, substance use, counselling for depression, anxiety or stress as well as relationship counselling, trauma counselling, group community supports, and outreach services.

Since providing these enhanced counselling support services through the mental wellness hubs in the spring of 2018, we have seen an uptake or increase of services being provided to children, youth, and families and the number of families and children accessing the programs. I think it's a really great initiative and great efforts in Yukon.

The mental wellness hubs are not the only way we are improving rural access to health care. Since early June, we have had a full-time nurse practitioner in the community of Mayo.

This means that residents of Mayo can access prescriptions, order and review diagnostic tests, and receive referrals to other services and specialists through the nurse practitioner. We are now in discussions to explore options around expanding this model of care to other Yukon communities.

The funding and regulation of midwifery is a commitment of our Liberal government and an important part of our enduring priorities. The Department of Community Services and Department of Health and Social Services are working diligently toward realizing that commitment. We aim to have the regulations drafted by the end of 2019 and will continue to work to ensure that the implementation of the regulations and the model of care are aligned.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I have the responsibility to care for the most vulnerable sector of our society as well. On January 30, the Government of Yukon took over ownership and operations of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter from the Salvation Army. This was moved and our Liberal government felt it was necessary in order to ensure that programs and services that government provides are adequately meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Our Liberal government believes that, by investing in people and providing the supports they need, we will create happier, healthier lives for all Yukoners. This evidence-based approach has proven its effectiveness to addressing poverty and ending homelessness and will help bring overall systems savings by reducing demand on acute care services. I'm proud of the actions we are taking across the Yukon to address issues related to poverty and homelessness. The Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is the only low-barrier service available in Yukon outside of RCMP custody.

We are committed to continuing to provide harm-reduction-based services to Yukoners. Together with our community partners, we are working on a range of initiatives to continue improving the programs and services and overall user experience of shelter guests, area businesses, and local residents. There have been challenges for sure, but there have also been huge gains that need to become part of the conversation. For example, we have reductions in the number of justice system interactions and reduced non-essential visits to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The month of June alone saw a reduction of RCMP release-when-sober admissions, which went from 198 in 2018 to 121. We have seen fewer visits to Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room, fewer ambulance rides to the emergency room, and fewer in-patient hospital stays for alcohol-related matters.

The department is working with Yukon Hospital Corporation and other partners to estimate the total systemwide savings from these reductions. We are committed to continuing to do the work it will take to make the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter a place we can all be proud of.

Work is ongoing. I am proud to say that, through a partnership with my colleagues the ministers of Community Services and Justice, we will have a full-time medical service position stationed at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter starting in October. With the Department of Justice, we are embarking

on a community safety plan for downtown Whitehorse similar to the one with Kwanlin Dün and the Selkirk First Nation.

Another integral part of our bold approach to addressing poverty and homelessness in the Yukon, as identified in the Safe at Home plan and housing action plan, is the Housing First project. The construction of the building at 5th Avenue and Wood Street is now complete, and I am proud to say that Yukon's first-ever Housing First facility will be operational this fall. Substantial research shows that Housing First is a far more effective and preventive approach to ending homelessness than treatment first. We heard loud and clear that access to affordable housing was a huge concern to people throughout the Yukon. Since coming into government, we have worked hard to meet the demand for affordable housing through partnerships with private sector NGOs and other governmental organizations.

Over the past two years, our investment in housing programs and commitments to housing development have supported over 400 homes, including 61 units with services, 216 new repairs or renovated affordable rental homes, 14 home ownership options for Yukoners, and over 200 homes through the housing initiative fund. This year, we are moving ahead with the grant programs such as the housing initiative fund, the municipal matching rental agreement, and the First Nation housing partnership. These grant programs allow us to leverage affordable housing options in Yukon through important partnerships.

I am proud of the investment we have made in a new community housing project in downtown Whitehorse that will maximize densification and add to our much-needed housing stock. The project will be built on 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street. It will be a mixed-income allocation model with a mixed-use design. Mixed-income housing takes a community housing approach that provides for fiscal sustainability, enables social diversity, and supports better social outcomes. "Mixed-use" means the active 48 units will be allocated to different client groups from within our community. This will include seniors, families, and individuals. Mixed-use can be flexible and respond to the dynamic housing needs of a community while focusing on creating healthy and vibrant communities. The model we are looking at within our community of Whitehorse, can be used in other designs in other communities. We are investing in the design and construction of a similar unit in Old Crow. This project is expected to be a 10-unit building constructed in 2021 and will boost Yukon's economy by generating construction jobs and contribute to addressing the need for additional housing in Old Crow.

This summer, I was fortunate enough to spend time back in my home community of Old Crow. I went out on the land with my nephew Travis, a young man who faces the reality of climate change while out on the land on a daily basis. I spent some really excellent time with my uncle Stephen, who was an inspiration to my commitment to ensuring Yukoners age well in place. I listened to the wisdom of my community shared at our general assembly or at a friend's house over a cup of tea.

I watched progress on the new Old Crow community centre and reflected on how, by next summer, our community

will be moving our GAs to a new facility. I often wonder what my grandmother and my mother would think of all this change — change that could hardly have been imagined 50 years ago. I am proud to say that, during such a transformational time, our Liberal government is taking a bold, proactive approach to ensuring that my children and their children and children seven generations from now inherit a vibrant, sustainable future that we built for them.

I look forward to continuing the important work that we started, and I am honoured to represent Yukoners in this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief; I am sure the Premier has a few words — well, perhaps given what we've seen so far, it may be many words.

I just wanted to say that I am rising today to express my disappointment because I had hoped that — and I will speak to the subject matter here, which is the Speech from the Throne — but I had hoped that by now, three years in, that what I had heard — because I am constantly told by the members opposite that they were elected on the premise of "be heard" — but that appears to apply only if you are not an elected member of this Legislature from the opposition side.

Despite what we had hoped and anticipated — that would be an openness to changing the approach within this Legislative Assembly — what we have come to experience and to know now is that what we can expect and what we've just seen demonstrated is that government members — ministers, in particular — will tell us what is good and happening and will talk about conversations but will not engage in conversations in this Legislative Assembly, will not work to create the environment where we can actually have that engagement. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that when I look at — and it has been a long time — a very long time since I did a degree in political science — but it was my understanding from those days and over the course of the last almost nine years that a Speech from the Throne is intended to outline the government's legislative program, its agendas and its focus for the forthcoming session.

So what we heard in this Speech from the Throne and what I've heard as I've listened over the last two days is what basically could be the portal for Yukon's communication branches, which we've heard repeatedly all of the past activities of this government over the last three years and a small focus on those matters that are coming forward.

It gives me pause. In the 18 pages that we got as a Speech from the Throne, there were 14 that are re-announcements — 14 activities, 11 that could be deemed as suggesting they will be done in the near or medium term. I think we have three pieces of new legislation and amendments to five. You know, the irony is that one of those pieces of legislation that is being amended today came as a result of something that I would doubt that, in this current format of this new government, we would see happening: a private member's bill. So we're amending legislation that came about as a result of a private member's bill from the opposition side that was initially rejected by the then-government as a private member's bill and then was adopted and through debate became part of the law of

this territory. Now we're going to amend it to update it. That's a good thing, Mr. Speaker. But until — and no less — every single speaker has raised issues that are vitally important to citizens in my riding, but we are deliberately choosing to engage in this Legislative Assembly in a format that does not allow us to say, "You know what? There are different views on that. There are different perspectives."

So that's why I said at the outset that I express my concern and my disappointment, because I don't want to spend an hour — and I could — rebutting every single minister who has spoken and I don't think that's a productive or progressive way to move forward. But failing that, after nine years, I'm beginning to wonder if this government is trying to perpetuate what we saw happening in the worst of the days under the Yukon Party, which is to dismiss the voice of over half of the citizens of this territory when you ignore the members of the opposition — because we have a majority government with 39 percent of the vote.

I say we owe it to Yukon citizens to find a better way to conduct business. I don't like having the same speaking points re-read to me. I can read those anywhere. I'm intelligent enough to do that. What I was elected to do, Mr. Speaker, was to represent the citizens of my riding, and speaking into a vacuum is what it is today. That is disappointing.

I will be, on behalf of the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, continuing to raise — as uncomfortable as it may make some members of this Legislative Assembly — serious issues. That's my obligation, not just to the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, because I have people who I meet throughout the territory, as does my colleague for Takhini-Kopper King.

I think it's reasonable to expect that we will have disagreements, but we should have the conversation. Just because a minister says something in this Legislative Assembly does not make it true. I'm sorry, it just doesn't. The experience of citizens in this territory is not reflected solely through the speaking points of your communication branch.

The throne speech — we have a number of pieces of legislation, three of which are new — great. That's what the throne speech is for: to restate over and over again — and I anticipate we'll get the same thing in the spring: a rehash of what we did over the winter holidays. We heard a lot about what we did over the summer holidays this time. I suggest that we should be asking ourselves as members of the Assembly: How do we make the current committees that we have work more effectively? How do we establish and get a mature system for —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: — and if the Premier doesn't like what I'm saying, he may not want to listen to me, but the truth is — that's fine — and I will engage with the Premier in a dialogue right now if he wants to, because I think it's important. If we want to — absolutely — if we want to engage in a more productive way, representing our citizens throughout this territory, then we would be looking at — as I keep saying — establishing standing committees on matters that are important. Standing committees — we have suggested one select committee, but I

am talking about standing committees, as mature governments do have throughout this country.

If the government members are uncomfortable in this big forum talking about these issues more directly and having experts called before standing committees to have that kind of conversation which is respectful of all members of the Legislative Assembly — simply saying that our government — actually, this government represents me as well, so I should have a say in it.

Mr. Speaker, I am expressing my disappointment. I am finding that the Premier gets a little concerned and members opposite get concerned when the opposition expresses views that appear to be antagonistic. There is a pedagogical approach that simply says that if you just keep telling people — talk, talk, talk at them — eventually they are going to agree with you. We are not in a school. When I was a student, I was taught to believe in critical thinking and to actually question what was said. I haven't given that up, and my constituents do not expect me to do so either.

As much as we look forward to debating those few pieces of new legislation — a couple of them are exciting. The amendments are timely and perhaps overdue in some cases — the *Corrections Act* in particular. We are looking forward to actually engaging in that discussion. That is really what the subject matter of a throne speech should be.

We will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to actually getting on to the business of this Legislative Assembly as opposed to more communication points.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the Legislative Assembly to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I am wondering if I get credits for that lecture that I just had the opportunity to listen to.

I continue to be humbled by the honour of being elected by the residents of Porter Creek South and to serve them as their Member of the Legislative Assembly.

It is also a privilege to have been given the opportunity to hold a number of portfolios which are interconnected in a way that allows me to work with the business community across all sectors in Yukon, whether it be a start-up just getting their feet under them or raising capital, or a global, established business seeking out their next opportunity.

I believe that reflecting on the work of the departments of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources and Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation and sharing updates on the work that they have done, being able to provide the members in opposition with an update that reflects the fact that we have listened, specifically in the work that I have had the opportunity to do with the Leader of the Third Party on energy — I think that is important. I think it is important that, although the Member for Whitehorse Centre touches on the fact that we are reflecting on what happened during the holidays, what I can say is that the individuals whom I have had an opportunity to work with — the public servants and the Cabinet staff — it certainly wasn't a holiday. They have accomplished a lot and I will reflect on the immense work that they have done this summer.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my family for their ongoing support. My wife, Delilah, and my two boys, Taylor and Calum, put a tremendous number of hours this summer renovating a house and, at times, living out of a bag and then helped move to our new home in Porter Creek South. I had the opportunity over the last number of years — probably going back almost 20 years — to be part of the Porter Creek school community, being able to volunteer in coaching, and then there was my time in a municipal government and having the opportunity to work on behalf of citizens around the topic of Porter Creek South and then of course its connection to Porter Creek D.

During the 2016 election, I committed that I would be selling my home at the time and moving, and we would do that after our youngest son had completed his schooling at Elijah Smith school and was moving on to Porter Creek South. That's what we did, as committed. In June of this year, we began to prepare to move, and we are very happy to now be in the riding of Porter Creek South. Of course, I'm very appreciative of my family's willingness and support to do this. It wasn't an easy summer for them because they worked extremely hard — all of them — throughout the summer so that we could do that.

There are a number of items that came up repeatedly at the doors in Porter Creek South during the 2016 election. Improved safety along 12th Avenue was one of the items I promised that I would push hard to address. The efforts of many meetings with Mayor Curtis, city councillors, and city officials have paid off. This spring, three sets of pedestrian crossing beacons and two sets of driver-speed feedback signs have been installed and are operating in key locations along 12th Avenue. This was a long-standing issue for residents and much overdue. By working together with our partners at the city, this promise to my constituents has been realized.

Residents are also seeing upgrades to the park on Pine Street, with the installation of a new large play structure currently underway. The Porter Creek Community Association led this project, with financial support coming from the community development fund and in-kind support from several partners, including the City of Whitehorse, Play Systems North, and Pacific Northwest. There are many young families in the riding who will enjoy this new and greatly improved play structure, and a huge thank you goes out to all the past and present Porter Creek community association members. I would like to touch on Zara Soukoroff, who has done a phenomenal job as the current president of the organization, and Taylor Mason — I know there have been lots of hands on deck — but both of them have done a tremendous amount of work in the community to make this project a reality. They deserve huge kudos. This park of course is a centrepiece of the riding and a wonderful place to gather and to meet up with friends and neighbours.

Since the Spring Session, I have had the opportunity to spend a great deal of time in communities across the territory. As you have heard, this is important to everyone on our team. We are committed to taking the time to learn about the priorities of all Yukoners and receiving feedback on the progress as we move ahead. By being in the communities, we are able to

understand first-hand what the issues are and build relationships with the people who live and work there.

I took part in the Yukon Mining Days on May 13 in Watson Lake and May 15 in Ross River. During this time, I had the opportunity to meet with Watson Lake mayor and council, Watson Lake Chamber of Commerce members, and Ross River Dena Council. I toured the Wolverine and Faro mine sites. I visited the school in Faro and spoke with residents and business owners in three communities. It was great to see local contractors finally working on-site at the Faro mine site — a result of the negotiations our government, along with the Ross River Dena Council, had in the handover of the responsibility to the federal government.

While in Watson Lake, I was happy to deliver news to Mayor O'Brien that, through the Department of Economic Development, funding was being provided to the Town of Watson Lake to support the implementation of prioritized community and economic development initiatives focused on governance, land development, procurement, tourism, and encouragement of local economic activity.

I also had the opportunity to visit Mayo and speak to a number of MLA Hutton's constituents, Dawson City for the gold show and to meet with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Kluane for the Kluane First Nation General Assembly, and Haines Junction for the St. Elias Corridor Economic Conference, where over 100 delegates gathered to plan regional economic development initiatives.

At the doors in 2016, Yukoners expressed the frustration toward the mishandling of the Peel file. The Liberal government committed to accepting the final recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, and this summer, we gathered with our partners from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin, and Gwich'in Tribal Council on the shores of the Stewart River in Mayo to sign off on the completion of the final *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*.

We are proud to move ahead with our partners to implement this plan as it was originally intended. Our government understands the need to have a responsible and balanced approach to our environment and the economy. Land planning plays a large role in this.

We are proud to be moving ahead with the next planning process in the Dawson region. The mining sector is important to the economy here in Yukon. We were ranked ninth in the world in investment attractiveness in the Fraser Institute's 2018 annual mining survey and we here in the territory understand our potential. In partnership with First Nations, through a mining memorandum of understanding, we have established an independent panel to engage with Yukoners, stakeholders, and industry experts to develop a mineral development strategy for the territory. This strategy will be used to guide the future of the mining sector, and I look forward to receiving the recommendations from the panel.

This past month, Victoria Gold poured its first gold at its Eagle mine site. The impact that this project has had on our economy to date cannot be understated. We have seen an all-

time record year in the construction sector, and the bulk of this can be attributed to the \$490-million build.

What is most admirable about John McConnell and his team is the true commitment to Yukon and the people who live and work here. \$150 million of that \$490 million in contracts went to Yukon companies. We also have BMC Minerals' Kudze Kayah project and Newmont Goldcorp's Coffee project moving through regulatory process. BMC Minerals recently released a pre-feasibility study which further demonstrates its economic viability.

Minto Mine has been purchased by Pembridge Resources, with a goal to restart production this year and extend mine life beyond 2021, and Alexco Resources' Birmingham project is moving to put final permits in place and also move into production.

We understand that the mining cycle can leave us vulnerable to swings in the economy, and that is why it is critical to continue to encourage economic growth and to diversify our economy. The team at the Department of Economic Development has been extremely busy laying out a plan to do just that. I'm truly thankful for their dedication in implementing many pieces of this vision.

The NorthLight Innovation space and the people of YuKonstruct were key to creating a space and place for Yukon entrepreneurs to learn and grow. The energy when you walk in the front doors is incredible. We are happy to be supporting YuKonstruct in the development of Launchspace Startup Bootcamp, a 12-week program that is leading 10 incredible Yukon entrepreneurs through a systematic process of developing their product idea and determining the viability of their business.

One challenge that we know Yukon entrepreneurs face is access to capital. That's why we supported the National Angel Capital Organization to engage with the Yukon start-up community to develop a report on developing early stage capital in Yukon. The project provided information sessions on angel investment, and the report outlines the findings of the engagements, including recommendations to improve access to capital for Yukon entrepreneurs.

Our government was also excited to announce \$2 million to support the newly formed Yukon First Nation Investment Corporation to support their \$5 million investment in Panache Ventures. As part of this investment, Panache Ventures will develop an entrepreneurial and investor capacity-building program in the Yukon to support early stage start-ups through coaching, training, education, networking, and events such as pitch competitions. The investment will help develop investment infrastructure in Yukon for technology start-ups and open up the technology sector ecosystem to Yukon First Nation investors.

We're also in the process of reviewing and updating the regional economic development fund, the strategic industries fund, and the enterprise trade fund to provide more flexibility on the types of projects that we can support.

Just a note: with the Panache fund now, we're seeing the first coast-to-coast-to-coast venture fund with total capitalization of \$58 million with a presence now in the Yukon

so that Yukon companies can have that direct access to capital and so they can stay and grow and hiring more Yukoners to build their companies and seek the future that they want to seek without having to move to other jurisdictions in the country.

In addition, as mentioned in the throne speech, our government is working to develop an innovation plan to encourage continued growth of Yukon's innovation and knowledge sector. This will formally lay out the path ahead.

It is an exciting time for economy and business in the Yukon. Our economy is thriving. GDP is forecast to increase over several years. Incomes and retail sales are continuing to grow. Employment is up and we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. With that comes challenges.

We have heard from many businesses regarding the difficulty they are facing in hiring. Through the immigration branch of Economic Development, we have undertaken three initiatives with the goal of alleviating some of this pressure. The first was the signing of the memorandum of understanding with Yukon College to promote local employment opportunities for international students. The second was the signing of the letter of intent from the Republic of the Philippines to establish a framework to undertake negotiations on immigration programming and pursue cooperation on human resource development. This focus will address a number of areas including arrangements to match Filipino workers with employment opportunities in Yukon's labour market under the Yukon nominee program, enhancing the system for the recruitment, protection, and placement of Filipino workers to be employed in Yukon, and a public information campaign for the Yukon nominee program.

The most recent announcement only a few weeks ago was the Yukon community immigration pilot program. The program, developed uniquely for Yukon after consultations with the business community, will create 50 new spots under the Yukon nominee program which will allow nominees to obtain a work permit for a specific community rather than a specific employer and allow them to work for several employers in the same community.

I am excited to see the results of these programs as they are implemented, and I know a number of businesses will benefit.

I would like to switch gears now and speak to the important work our government is undertaking to mitigate and address the effects of climate change. We have been developing a climate change, energy, and green economy strategy in partnership with Yukon First Nations, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities. The plan will set out goals and objectives for the next 10 years. Ensuring that our power needs are being met with renewable sources of energy is important to our government. That is why, through a partnership between the Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Development Corporation, and the Energy Solutions Centre, we are developing a coordinated renewable energy plan. We are continuing to support a number of projects at various stages and are partnering with First Nation communities and private sector organizations in the process.

Examples will include — and have included — solar projects in Beaver Creek and in Old Crow, wind projects in

Pelly Crossing, Burwash Landing and Whitehorse, biomass district heating in Teslin, and hydro in Dawson City. We are also helping communities bring their long-term renewable energy vision to fruition by working with them to gain access to federal funds such as the Arctic energy fund and the clean energy for rural and remote communities fund.

We recently announced the replacement of the Mayo-McQuesten transmission line with a newer higher capacity line to support future growth in the region. 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.

At the same time, we announced the addition of a new eight-megawatt battery energy storage system in the City of Whitehorse. Once completed, the new system will store the excess electricity generated by renewable sources during off-peak periods in order to meet demand during peak electrical loads. This new energy storage system will create a more reliable power supply and allow the Yukon Energy Corporation to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

While it is extremely important to ensure that renewable energy is powering our needs, it is also important to implement measures to reduce our energy consumption. As discussed during Question Period, demand-side management is one component of this. The Yukon Energy Corporation is leading a three-year program that allows Yukon households to manage Yukon's peak electricity demand, reducing the need for fossil fuel generation and in turn reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Energy-efficiency retrofits will also be key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the territory. Through federal funding in the amount of \$120 million, we have allocated \$30 million annually for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings throughout the territory. We will work with First Nation governments, municipalities, businesses, local industries, and homeowners to retrofit buildings and residences to improve energy efficiency.

As the transition from vehicles fuelled by fossil fuels to electric becomes more common, our government is recognizing the need to build infrastructure that will support this move. While several charging stations are in the works, more will be needed. This is why we will work to increase the availability of stations within the territory and en route to neighbouring jurisdictions. This work of course was touched on in the throne speech, but I will report to the Assembly that I did have one-on-one meetings with the energy minister from the Northwest Territories early in the summer, as well as the energy minister from British Columbia. Of course, there has been an election in the Northwest Territories, so there will be someone new in that role. I had the opportunity to discuss that with our Premier and the leader from British Columbia just a little while back — so commitment, but not just thinking of the Yukon and not just thinking about the Alaska Highway but thinking of the entire northwestern jurisdiction and how we collaborate with all the territories, provinces, and states that are adjacent to have a plan in place and a policy commitment from all players. That's the

work that we are committed to doing and our staff is working on committing to doing.

Agriculture is an important and growing sector in the Yukon. By increasing our ability to be self-sufficient in food production, we will grow our economy and reduce our carbon footprint at the same time. We are currently in the process of developing the agriculture 2030 policy, which will outline the means to do just that. It will also guide the way we support development and innovation in the food sector. The Department of Economic Development and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have teamed up to work on ways that we can grow the food sector.

One such initiative has involved working with the agricultural stakeholders to look at ways to take advantage of export and import substitution opportunities. As a result, we are working with Canada and Yukon College to develop the Yukon College food innovation centre, where the college will lead a three-year pilot project to build capacity and enhance skills in food safety and processing. This will allow companies to create scalable new product lines that will add value to locally grown fruit and vegetables, extend the availability of foods in Yukon, and support imports and exports. We have done the groundwork on this, we have done due diligence, and we have submitted our proposal to the federal government. We think it is a great proposal, and we hope to see support at the federal level for this. If we are successful, I will ensure that I bring that information back to the Assembly and report on another exciting innovation project.

For the Yukon, facing a record year for forest fires, forestry management plans and timber harvest plans are becoming increasingly critical to develop and implement. New timber harvest plans have been developed in Dawson and are underway in Haines Junction and Teslin. The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes forest resources management plan is currently out for public consultation ahead of approval.

As we look to increase the use of biomass in the territory, identifying the resource for the feedstock is important. This is a sector where we as a government need to work with First Nation governments and industry stakeholders to develop a strategic approach to timber harvest and forest fire mitigation and the opportunities for implementation of biomass.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that my colleagues and I have accomplished since we were elected in 2016. The officials — who I am lucky to work alongside — have put their all into seeing through the commitments that we have made to Yukoners. We have persevered through challenges together, and the relationships that we have built with our First Nation partners and municipal governments have been critical to building a path forward for our territory. We may not always agree, but we have all put our best foot forward with the interests of the people we represent in mind. It is necessary to listen to each other's perspectives.

Our priorities have been clear since the beginning. Our government will create jobs, balancing efforts to strengthen and diversify the economy with environmental stewardship. We work collaboratively with Yukon First Nations for their benefit and for the benefit of all Yukoners, and we will build thriving

Yukon communities, recognizing local needs, local interests, and local solutions. We will help Yukoners lead healthy, productive, and happy lives through accessible integrated programs and services tailored to their needs. Our team has been forging ahead with these priorities in mind, and I am proud to be part of their efforts.

In closing, I just want to truly thank the individuals who work in the Department of Economic Development, in Energy, Mines and Resources, in the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation — whether it is the work that they were doing over the weekend to ensure that Yukoners were warm and safe or the work that I have had an opportunity to highlight. It was stated before I had an opportunity to speak that this was a report from the summer break. As you can see, for the individuals who work in these departments, there was no break. People worked extremely hard to ensure that a number of these very innovative policy decisions and projects were brought to fruition. Many of these were projects that started with a concept and idea from very bright and intelligent public servants that then led to closure and the opportunity to be able to bring those to the Assembly today — really an opportunity for the public servants who work within the Yukon government to identify challenges and problems and then create solutions. I think that is extremely commendable, and so I do think it is important to reflect on that and to thank them for their work.

With that, I will conclude and thank the Assembly for giving me the opportunity to reflect on some thoughts in response to the throne speech.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am very honoured to rise today to speak to the motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, and I would like to begin by thanking all of my colleagues for this opportunity and also, like my other colleagues, by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än' Council.

Thank you to our Commissioner who, on Thursday, delivered her first Speech from the Throne. As she noted, our government is highlighting people's achievements and excellence through the newly created Order of Yukon. The order is the highest honour in Yukon. It will recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to our territory. Nominations are now open for the first medals to be presented at the annual Commissioner's Levee this coming January 1. We don't know who is going to be on that list. They can pick up to 10 people this time around. We do know the first Yukon order will be given to the Commissioner herself, which is an extreme honour, for sure. I urge everybody — if you haven't already done so — to go to the Commissioner's website and take a look at the nominee program. We can all think of a list — a myriad of individuals who have done so much for this beautiful territory and are deserving of this award. I urge you, please, as MLAs responsible for your jurisdictions, to put forth some nominations.

I want to thank my caucus colleagues and our support staff as well as we approach the third year of our mandate. Each of

you contribute extremely for our team, and I am honoured to work with all of you every single day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dawson City is my home, and I represent the Klondike region with great pride. I am very honoured to represent the Klondike and I will continue to do it to the fullest of my abilities. In the throne speech, there was mention of the work being done at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in teaching and working farm, and I want to add my appreciation for the people who provide fresh food in my community. I will have more to say about my hometown a bit later as I reply to the Speech from the Throne.

The speech last week did highlight the success of the Yukon Forum, and it did so for good reason. Under this government, we have successfully convened 11 Yukon Forums with our First Nation partners to advance shared priorities and to work toward resolving long-standing issues.

An example of progress on the shared priorities is an agreement signed between all 11 self-governing First Nations and the Yukon government that lays the foundation to address heritage matters throughout our territory, including archaeological and palaeontological discoveries, cultural artifacts, and the stewardship of heritage and historic sites.

Another shared priority was to resolve the long-standing disagreement over the interpretation of resource revenue sharing language in chapter 23. An agreement was reached in May of 2018 resulting in an increased flow of resource revenues to self-governing First Nations.

The partnership we continue to build from the Yukon Forum has positioned our governments to bring a united approach to conversations with our federal counterparts, including at the April 2019 intergovernmental forum. Our government joined Canada and self-governing Yukon First Nations to sign an updated intergovernmental protocol to strengthen and to enhance our intergovernmental relationships.

The joint senior executive committee of Government of Yukon deputy ministers and First Nation executive directors continues to meet to ensure closer collaboration between our governments at both the political and official levels. Such a commitment has not been convened before in the Yukon and is in fact a unique relationship in Canada.

The forum has revived a relationship between the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments that was on life support when we were elected in late 2016. We worked together on Yukon Days, on infrastructure spending, on the improvement of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, just to name a few examples.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a commitment among Canada's premiers coming out of the Council of the Federation meetings in July, I will be co-leading a symposium on mental health with the Premier of Saskatchewan. The symposium will explore opportunities for innovation, promotion of collaboration among governments, and sharing knowledge and best practices from all jurisdictions.

Another topic very much on my mind at the annual premiers meeting was climate change. Our government is working hard to tackle the greatest challenge of our time. Our government recognizes that there is a climate emergency.

Yukoners have known this for many years. Young people around the world are increasingly concerned about their future and are speaking out about the need for change.

Young people here in Yukon deserve to have their voices heard. Our government is creating a youth panel on climate change to provide advice and perspective to me and to my Cabinet. We know the climate is in a crisis, and the north is warming faster than the rest of the country, as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin so eloquently elaborated on.

This government recognizes that the need to act on climate change is urgent. This has been central to our work to date and will continue to be a driving factor as we move forward. We also believe that you can protect the environment and build a strong economy at the same time. We know that you can have both.

The last week of August demonstrated that very clearly. In a single week, we signed the Peel land use plan and also a water licence for Victoria Gold. Mr. Speaker, neither of these events in the last week of August would have happened without the leadership of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation. Victoria Gold did the work required with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun in order to see the project go ahead, and for that, both the community and the First Nation and the company all deserve a great deal of that credit.

In regard to the Peel signing — it was interesting that the opposition took a pass on that historic day. What they missed was the joy on the faces of the children and the elders. They missed a celebration that went into the wee hours. They missed a showcase of talent with fiddles and guitars and other musicians and dancers sharing in dance and music and a wonderful feast. The whole community was there and also people from all around the north. The president of Victoria Gold, John McConnell, was there. It was a milestone moment in reconciliation, and I'm so glad to have been part of that. I'm glad my team was there.

In terms of the Eagle Gold project — it was an absolute honour to be tasked with pouring the first gold bar for this project as well. I want to give thanks to David Rouleau, the vice-president of operations and general manager, for hosting a great day. We had an opportunity to tour the complete facility, to watch the primary to tertiary crushers — into the heap leach pad, then into liquid gold, and being poured into a gold bar. I have had the opportunity a handful of times — from the ground-turning ceremony right through to the pouring of the first gold bar — to visit the project.

It is so great to see so many locals — so many First Nations and Yukoners — working on that project. Many people bet against this junior company and they bet against this project. What an honour it was to see this project through to fruition.

I will say this: Our processes are not perfect, but our public servants have worked extremely hard on this project. At every turn, with a whole-of-government approach, we learned and grew together getting this project to fruition and into production for the betterment of not only Mayo and the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, but of all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon economy is doing well. Our unemployment rate is low. One of the reasons is the investment

we are making alongside the Government of Canada in infrastructure projects across the territory. From a runway in Dawson to upgrades to a municipal building in Watson Lake, we are investing in Yukon's future. For example, Community Services invested a record-breaking \$55 million on infrastructure projects in 2018-19. We are actively advancing infrastructure priorities identified by municipalities and First Nation governments. This government truly believes that all communities matter and that our conversations with rural Yukoners are an important part of putting that belief into action. We are meeting Yukoners where they are, and it's integral that we encourage and engage people to learn about their stories, struggles, and situations so that we can best meet their needs to make progress together. An individual approach is key and local solutions mean exactly that — local to each community.

As a rural MLA representing Klondike, I know that Whitehorse can feel far away and sometimes foreign. It is a city in a territory of rural communities and it simply functions differently from Dawson and Yukon's smaller communities. Immersing ourselves, even briefly, in Yukon's communities is always endlessly rewarding. It has enabled our government to build valuable relationships with rural municipalities, First Nations, and other stakeholders throughout the Yukon. We greatly value those partnerships that we have in the territory. We are proud to be strengthening the relationships that we built. This work provides a strong foundation for efforts that better the lives of all Yukoners.

Visiting Yukon's communities with the Minister of Community Services also allowed me to have a better appreciation of the minister's dedication to the duties within his role as Minister of Community Services. He takes his great responsibility seriously and he takes it with integrity. His approach is genuine and it is caring. The minister has extended respect, hard work, and focused attention to each of Yukon's communities and is well-supported by the Department of Community Services. It was an absolute pleasure to work with community advisors who demonstrated immense passion, dedication, and professionalism in their contributions to these recent community tours. What a great opportunity it is to be able to sit down after bilateral or trilateral meetings with community members and community advisors — sit down and have a good opportunity to just talk as Yukoners at that table.

We have three individual community advisors who work for specific communities. It is one thing to see their preparedness to get the minister ready for meetings, but it's another thing to see the passion and commitment afterwards when the work day is done. We get to sit down with mayors and councillors, chiefs and councillors, and community members and just engage on where we are as a territory and where we need to be. It just makes me really proud to be the Premier of such an amazing government.

There is also the minister's executive assistant, Monica Nordling — she also needs to be recognized for her efforts to make this tour possible. I want to thank everyone for putting up with me on the long drives into the communities. What a great honour. This is what I said to a lot of the chiefs and mayors before we started the meetings — a lot of times we

get updates in paper form on the needs of the communities. What a great opportunity to go out and share that information with the people who run these communities and who are dedicated leaders in these communities — see how well it matches up and see if the priorities from the communities make it into the briefing notes in Whitehorse.

We had some great conversations with mayors and councils, and we see that the work is getting done. We received some great comments from the smallest community to the largest community and we are going to continue to make those efforts. Those conversations in our communities are so enabling. They are enabling our government to work very close with Yukoners on the ground floor. You can't get that in a larger jurisdiction — you just can't. That's the benefit of a small jurisdiction and the benefit of ministers and MLAs who want to go the extra mile into the communities.

As outlined in the Commissioner's Speech from the Throne, our ministers have made over 125 visits to Yukon's communities each year since coming into office, and that again is an average of one every three days. Indeed, Yukoners are being heard.

Of course, one of these communities is my home community of Dawson City. I have been able to spend more and more time, now that we are getting into our third year, at the community. I think that in my second year, what I got from a lot of my friends and folks in the community was, "We see you at events and now we need to see you at home." I couldn't be prouder of that and it's nice to know that people want to sit down and talk to you as a person, not just necessarily as an MLA. I have been having a great time, especially into the summer, being able to host a lot of meetings as the MLA in my home, and there is no better feeling than to be able to have people from the community come into your kitchen, share a cup of coffee, and talk about what is needed for our community into the future.

I could go on to the long list of amazing Klondikers who have sat down in my kitchen over the past couple of years. That is one of the biggest honours of this job: being the person who these amazing leaders want to demand that you pay attention to. It is a complete honour to be in that position.

As the MLA for Klondike, I am absolutely thrilled to see the progress that the Liberal government has made on many fronts, especially long-overdue infrastructure improvements. Perhaps the most notable accomplishment is the paving of the runway at the Dawson City Airport. This was a priority identified not only by the community, but also by aviation and by the tourism industries years ago, yet the runway remained untouched — our government got it done.

In addition to paving the runway, the Department of Highways and Public Works also had a new maintenance facility constructed at the Dawson City Airport, allowing airport staff to work year-round in the heated facility. This new building will also provide equipment with protection from all the elements. I have to give a shout-out to Jeff Stephenson, who works up there. He is also the volunteer fire chief of the Klondike Valley Fire Association. Jeff was one of those Yukoners who came to me and said, "You can't put the horse

before the cart here. You're going to have an upgrade of equipment; we can't have this equipment outside anymore." It was an extremely important conversation that I took to the Department of Highways and Public Works, and they immediately implemented a plan to be able to not only have that runway paved in the short time frame, starting from scratch, but also add to that an extremely important piece of critical infrastructure that is not only going to help prepare, but also modernize that facility as well. I couldn't be happier with the Department of Highways and Public Works' action on this particular project.

These changes at the Dawson City Airport will absolutely improve safety and they will improve efficiency, which is critical at Yukon's second busiest airport.

The Klondike has further improvements to look forward to as well. The Minister of Highways and Public Works recently announced that the north Klondike Highway will receive major upgrades to improve safety and increase capacity. As one of Yukon's busiest highways, the north Klondike is greatly impacted by heavy traffic as well as permafrost as it thaws. The highway is a necessary link for industry, for tourists, and for the residents of multiple Yukon communities.

Starting in 2020, work will take place between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway cut-off. This project will total \$157 million. The Government of Canada is contributing \$118 million to this project over nine years. That is going to be under the national trade corridors' fund. Our government is contributing \$39 million, and we anticipate this project to be completed in 2028.

The Minister of Highways and Public Works' commitment to the safety of rural Yukoners, industry, and visitors alike does not go unnoticed. I am grateful for his commitment to improving and upgrading Yukon's infrastructure.

During the remainder of our mandate, the government will introduce legislation that overhauls the *Motor Vehicles Act*, modernizes our animal protection regime, and reforms the *Workers' Compensation Act*. These bills will build on our government's record on progressive legislation. Modernizing statutes such as the *Legal Profession Act* and the *Coroners Act*, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or legislation in new areas such as the *Missing Persons Act* ensures that Yukon laws respond to current realities.

Our first piece of legislation was to recognize National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday. Since coming into office in late 2016, our government has made several changes to legislation, policies, and practices to serve a diverse, inclusive society that promotes LGBTQ2S+ rights, equalities, and freedoms from discrimination. We are also modernizing the inner workings of government. We are building a new Family and Children's Services case management system, for example. This was flagged by the Auditor General way back in 2014. The existing system is paper-based and almost 20 years old. As we work to improve our system for children in care, it has come up over and over again as an area for improvement and we are addressing it.

For too many years, departments in governments have operated on different financial administrative systems and that

is changing as well. A new budgeting system is one of the key initiatives to create efficiencies and improve effectiveness of government programs. A single, integrated budget system that is used government-wide will create efficiencies by enabling financial staff across government to spend less time on data entry and validation and more time on strategic functions such as analysis and outreach, ultimately improving the quality of budgeting, planning, and forecasting — a long time coming, Mr. Speaker.

These types of projects have been requested for years by stakeholders and public servants, and the answer has always been no. We see the value in these types of projects, and we have funded them. Our government believes in reporting to Yukoners on progress. In the coming weeks, we will issue our third performance plan so that Yukoners can see the work that is being accomplished, what the plans are for the future, and where your government needs to focus further efforts.

A project with the University of Waterloo to refine the Canadian Index of Wellbeing to make its indicators meaningful to Yukon circumstances is advancing, and new data will be included in the next performance plan.

It is an absolute privilege for me to speak in this Assembly on the eve of the territory's 40th anniversary of responsible government. Ensuring that government is responsive and reflective of our modern society is a priority that has been well-documented in this Legislature. As we mark the 40th anniversary, there is a commission on electoral reform in the works that will be talking to Yukoners about the very nature of its underpinning. There are also separate plans to fix Yukon's territorial election dates through legislative changes. These are two important commitments that we made in 2016, and we remain fully committed to them.

Yukon has much to celebrate. We are in a good place. We are more effective when we work together as one government, and we have provided the evidence to prove that. We have done that repeatedly since the last election. We are modernizing legislation and have carried out a progressive agenda. We are balancing the economy and the environment. As Premier, I am proud of our accomplishments to date. I know that we have much more to do, but make no mistake — we have accomplished a great deal since December 2016.

The throne speech outlined a number of priorities that we will focus in on for the remainder of the mandate. Some are issues that have emerged since we took office; others are platform commitments that we must complete. New mandate letters for our ministers will be released in the very near future. The Speech from the Throne lays out an ambitious and progressive agenda. I will disagree with the member opposite who thinks that this throne speech should be just for the one budget. I think it is a great opportunity to outline what we have done, where we are today, and also where we are moving forward to. It gives an opportunity for the opposition to see the types of bills and initiatives that we are working on to, again, increase debate on these particular issues, and I look forward to rigorous debate from the opposition as we move forward on all of these progressive agenda items.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for my opportunity today. I urge all members to support this motion.

Mr. Hassard: I am pleased to rise for the third time in three years to respond to the Premier's Speech from the Throne. It is interesting — the Premier set a record for the number of Speeches from the Throne in one mandate, so I guess I get to set the record for responses for the Official Opposition.

I will express my disappointment that we have to go through this whole song and dance of a third throne speech, because it is quite clear that it is just a Liberal delay tactic. It is clear that they don't want to spend time debating their budgets, so they come up with these ways of eating up the House's time. This is just the latest in a long history of delay tactics by this government, but I will address that a little later in my response.

I would just like to remind everyone that, in the Spring Sitting, the Yukon Party Official Opposition actually asked for a longer Sitting so that we could have more time to debate the budgets such as Health and Social Services and Education. Unfortunately, the government refused. They said that we have to leave time in the fall to debate an extremely robust legislative agenda. So are we debating that robust legislative agenda? No. We are told that we can have another throne speech. Here we are on day three of listening to the government pat themselves on the back.

As I noted earlier this year, leading an effective opposition to the government and holding them to account for their decisions and actions is an honour and a privilege that we in opposition take very seriously. In the course of our duties, we will ask questions of the government about matters that are important to our constituents and to all Yukoners. We have offered and we will continue to offer constructive criticisms of the government's actions and decisions. We do that even though this Liberal government more often than not chooses to ignore or launch partisan attacks when we provide that constructive feedback, but we will continue to discharge this important duty. This is an important task in a democratic society, and my colleagues and I will continue to uphold our duty.

To this end, and as I alluded to, our first task of this Sitting is to respond to the Speech from the Throne put forward last Thursday. Traditionally, the Speech from the Throne offers a new government the opportunity to chart out a course for their new mandate. It allows them to set priorities and provide the public with a glimpse into their legislative agenda and their vision for governing in the coming years.

Having heard and read throne speech 3.0, I can say that this certainly hasn't been the case.

Firstly, I would like to point the House's attention to page 17 of the throne speech. It says — and I quote: "Yukoners have a right to know what their government is doing." I wholeheartedly agree. Following from that, Yukoners have a right to know what their government isn't doing as well. I think that this will be a theme as I continue here today. So just as quickly, I would like to point you toward page 18. It says — and I quote again: "Your government also believes in reporting to Yukoners on progress. In the coming weeks, it will issue its

third performance plan so Yukoners can see what work is being accomplished, what the plans are for the future, and where your government needs to further focus its efforts.” Mr. Speaker, in order to help the Liberal government out, I can do that reporting for them right here today.

To do that, let’s rewind. Let’s go back to throne speech number one. It was a little bit odd. This Liberal government, after delaying coming back to work for two months, recalled the House for only one day. Why would you come back to work for only one day, you might ask? Many did, especially considering that we only sit for 60 days a year. The people asked, “Do the Liberals not want to do the work?” “Are they avoiding the House,” they wondered, “and why only come back for one day?”

In that Speech from the Throne, the Liberals were quite clear why they only came back for one day. They specifically outlined that the primary purpose of coming back was simply to get a new Speaker. No work would actually be done and the House would be adjourned almost immediately, but we have a new Speaker to preside over nothing. I think this shows the lack of direction and the lack of accomplishment by this government.

So let’s fast forward now to the second Speech from the Throne, and I’ll quote from it: “Midwifery can and should be a safe, supported childbirth option in Yukon. Your new government has already started to work on regulating and incorporating midwives in the Yukon health care system. Working with midwives, doctors and other medical professionals, the government anticipates licensing the practice of midwifery later next year.” Mr. Speaker, that’s from April 2017. That’s some 900 days ago. This government committed to having this done in 2018, so now we’re very near the end of 2019. Is it regulated? No. They’re talking about it again, but it’s still not done. So I guess we can throw that one onto the pile of broken Liberal promises.

In that same Speech from the Throne, there was a commitment — they stated — and I quote: “Every child deserves a home where they are supported, nurtured and safe.” That’s a statement that I’m sure every single person in this Legislature can agree with very easily. However, when you look at what was actually happening under this government at the time, reports came out just months later that tell a story of children in government care being locked out of their homes or evicted from homes in contravention of the *Child and Family Services Act*. Initially, this Liberal government attempted to cover this up, and it was only when the media started looking into it that they actually took any action. But even then, this Liberal government, instead of taking responsibility or action, pointed fingers and shifted the blame. Even today, after being forced to give a half-hearted apology, they still have not provided Yukoners with full answers as to what happened or what they were doing to follow up and implement changes from the numerous independent investigations. So once again, a failing grade.

The second throne speech also goes on to reference building a new French school. Since that time, however, the project has been significantly delayed and has gone massively

overbudget. On October 10, 2017, the Minister of Education told the Legislative Assembly that the new French language high school would be completed by the end of 2019. Well, Mr. Speaker, we’re very near to the end of 2019, and I think when you came to work today, you probably noticed that school was not anywhere near complete. So that looks like another failing grade.

Let’s talk about budgets for a minute. In 2018, the budget was \$27.5 million on that school; however, thanks to the work of the Yukon Party Official Opposition, it was revealed that the budget had now skyrocketed to \$35.4 million. That’s an almost \$8-million increase. Not only has this government delayed the project, but it has also put it overbudget. For a government that claimed it would be more thoughtful about contracting and wouldn’t be going overbudget anymore as a result, this is mismanagement by both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Highways and Public Works. So again: fail.

Moving on — also from the second throne speech — the government committed to — and I quote again: “Your new government wants every Yukoner to have a primary health care provider...” A very laudable goal. Let’s look at a September 13, 2019, *Whitehorse Star* article on this topic. The story talks about the difficulty Yukoners are having getting a primary health care provider. It reads — and I quote: “After spending 40 minutes on the centre’s hold line — from which she says her call was dropped more than nine times — Georgina was finally able to reach an operator.

“Then, she was given a choice: either wait until December for an appointment with her doctor, or wait nine days for a session with a doctor she’s never seen before.”

The story goes on to quote someone working at one medical clinic who says, “I don’t think there’s enough doctors in the territory, and the practices are very big...” It then goes on to talk to someone from the Klondyke Medical Clinic who says that they are currently struggling to meet demand for medical care. To quote them exactly, they said, “We’re at max capacity, certainly...”

They went on to tell the *Whitehorse Star* that “There’s a huge demand; I think it’s actually somewhat shocking.” They were surprised at how many born-and-raised Yukoners don’t have a regular doctor. I think that’s just another instance of the Liberal minister not being on top of their files. So on this commitment from the last throne speech, once again, we will say it’s a failing grade.

The second throne speech also highlighted the government’s commitment to the integrity of the justice system, which is another laudable goal. This priority is further highlighted in the mandate letter that the Premier gave to the Minister of Justice. In that letter, the Premier instructs the Minister of Justice — and I again quote: “You are to respect the letter and the spirit of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, including the Code of Ethics for Cabinet Ministers, the Executive Council Code of Conduct and the Ministerial Gift Policy. If questions arise about how your personal interests may affect or appear to affect your public responsibilities, you are to seek guidance from the Yukon Conflict of Interest Commission at the earliest opportunity and

abide by the evidence given.” However, despite these directions given directly to the minister from the Premier, when the issue was asked about in this House about whether or not the Minister of Justice was in conflict of interest given that she had tabled and voted on an act that regulates her own profession, she lashed out and refused to answer. She even refused to answer whether or not she had sought guidance from the Conflict of Interest Commission. On living up to her mandate’s letter, I will have to give the Minister of Justice another failing grade. On living up to their commitment to be open and transparent with Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, I will say it’s another failing grade.

The second Speech from the Throne goes on to say that whether you live in Mayo, Carmacks or Haines Junction, they will treat your infrastructure the same. Unfortunately, once again, the actions don’t really line up with the nice-sounding words. We have seen the Liberals politically interfere to stop plans to put in a new RCMP detachment in my riding in Faro; instead, they relocated it to a Liberal-held riding. This isn’t the only time we have seen this happen.

The second throne speech goes on to say that the government will build roads. That could well be the biggest whopper told by this Liberal government to this point. We have seen them announce with great fanfare almost \$500 million for the Resource Gateway project. That was two years ago, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order, please. One moment, please.

Minister of Community Services, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I think I just heard the Leader of the Official Opposition say that we told a “whopper”, which for me is the same as the word “lie”. I think that is charging us with uttering deliberate falsehoods.

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

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I believe that it wasn’t the intent of the member to contravene Standing Order 19(h). You have also been clear in the past in your rulings that there is the qualifier that it is a deliberate falsehood. I think the Leader of the Official Opposition was simply noting that a claim was made by the Liberal government which turned out to then not be true. So perhaps it might be characterized as a “broken promise”, if you prefer.

Speaker’s ruling

Speaker: I will review Hansard on this topic, but in my quick gut reaction to that word, I would likely ask both the Leader of the Official Opposition and all members to avoid that word in the future.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly take your ruling to heart.

Speaker: Sorry — just briefly: contextually, of course, if you want to talk about Burger King, that’s a different topic. But obviously I’m not saying that the word “whopper” itself would be necessarily excluded from all future debate in the Assembly. That’s not my intention. It’s only the job of the

Speaker to interpret the exchange between members contextually as it occurs.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, since we don’t have a Burger King in the Yukon, I guess we probably won’t have to worry about that one.

As I was saying, it’s over two years later since this nearly \$500-million project was announced, and we have not seen a single shovel in the ground. But I think, to be honest, those in the mining industry really aren’t that surprised, given that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources kind of has a bit of a reputation to — could we say — “couldn’t get ’er done”, I guess is a good way of putting it.

Moving on to the Shakwak — the Minister of Highways and Public Works — I think quite famously maybe — said that he wouldn’t ask the federal government to chip in any money for this section of highway because it doesn’t benefit Yukoners. That’s quite a statement. The Highways and Public Works minister is fine with the Alaska Highway reverting to a gravel road because he doesn’t think supporting the communities of Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing or Beaver Creek is worth asking the federal government to help support. This is the same minister who told Yukoners that they just have to get used to lower standards.

Moving on — the Liberals committed in the second throne speech to invest wisely in more affordable and accessible housing across Yukon. Well, since that time, we’ve seen the waitlist for social and seniors housing skyrocket under the watchful eye of this Liberal housing minister — so once again, I guess we’ll have to go with a failing grade.

Moving on to energy retrofits — the Liberals committed to making significant investments in energy retrofits, and it’s building in the second throne speech. You’ll also remember, Mr. Speaker, that they committed to spend \$30 million a year on retrofits during the 2016 election campaign. I’ll quote the Minister of Community Services directly from 2016 — quote: “We are talking about investing significantly, right — \$30 million a year.”

So that’s not “up to \$30 million” — not “\$30 million, sometime in the distant future”, but \$30 million a year under this Liberal government for retrofits — but once again, we haven’t seen that happen. So again: failing grade.

We’ve seen the Liberals commit in the last throne speech to establishing — quote: “... effective targets to both reduce greenhouse gases and grow...” the green “... economy.” But 900 days later, they’re still talking about it — no commitments.

Broadband connectivity — same thing — 900 days ago, the Liberals committed to “... enhancing connectivity and bandwidth for all Yukon communities and beyond.” The “... government is now undertaking a thorough review of the two potential routes for a redundant fibre optic line to strengthen Yukon’s Internet connection to the Outside.” So this is another one that the Deputy Premier was in charge of, and looks like it’s another one that he will be able to throw on the “couldn’t get ’er done” pile. So the responsibility for this appears to have been taken out of his hands and handed over to the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Speaking of Highways and Public Works, we'll quote again from the last throne speech on April 20, 2017. I'll quote: "Your new government will tender its major summer construction contracts by the end of March next year. That makes good business sense."

So we'll fast forward to March 22, 2019, and here's what the Minister of Highways and Public Works told the *Yukon News* — quote: "Speaking with reporters after question period on this point," the minister's name, "... said that it 'doesn't make sense to the contracting communities to get swamped by all these contracts by a certain date that gets drawn on a calendar...'"

During the election, the Liberals promised to tender all seasonally dependent contracts no later than March every year. They broke that promise in year one. Then, after delaying getting back to work for 170 days, the Liberals committed to tender all of these contracts by the end of March 2018 because, in their words — and I quote — it just makes good business sense. Now, after breaking that election promise again in 2018, in 2019, the minister now says — and I quote — it doesn't make sense. For failing to deliver on another commitment and for constantly changing the goalposts, I am going to have to give the Liberals another failing grade.

Throne speech 2.0 did seem to recognize that certainty was important for the mining industry. In fact, at the time, I gave kudos to the government for referencing that. In that throne speech, they even referenced a collaborative framework that the government committed to that would address industry concerns over timelines and reassessments.

Throne speech 3.0, however, doesn't give any updates on the status of these projects. I guess we will throw that one on the "couldn't get 'er done" pile as well.

Moving along in throne speech 2.0, the Liberals stated: "Your new government has a clear sense of purpose and is tackling that work." Well, if you have talked to anyone who works in the public service, you will know that the Liberals haven't even come close to living up to this one. You don't have to go very long into a conversation with a public servant to hear comments like "The Liberals don't know what they want. They change their mind all the time and they have no direction. There is no sense of direction. They make policy on the fly or they are reacting to news stories."

We saw that reflected in a leaked document from the Executive Council Office that showed that confidence in senior leadership of the Liberal government has dropped drastically since 2016. According to the leaked results of the public service engagement survey from the Executive Council Office, of which the Premier is the most senior leader, confidence in senior leadership has plummeted from 80 percent in 2016 to 49 percent in 2018. After just two years in office, confidence in the Premier's own leadership had dropped to lower than 50 percent within his own department.

As I stated, we regularly hear that the Liberals can't make decisions or they are too reactive, that their priorities change on a daily basis, or that they just simply throw officials under the bus. Additionally, the results of these employee engagement surveys are usually released publicly. However, in this go-

around in 2018 — and likely due to the embarrassing results — the Liberals buried them and Yukoners were not aware until they were leaked to the opposition and to media. So, Mr. Speaker, another commitment from the last throne speech where the Liberals get a failing grade.

Throne speech 2.0 said that Yukoners have a right to be heard and your new government will listen. But yet when it came to the 22 Wann Road group home, the Liberals refused to even consult with local residents. When the community association spoke up, the Liberals sent staff members along with the MLA for Porter Creek Centre to the community association meeting to organize a coup and take over control of the association.

Let's look at the airports act. This was where the Liberals were caught misleading the Legislature and Yukoners on who they actually consulted with. They ended up in a public fight with both the city and the airline industry, and they eventually had to pull their own press release off the website because it misrepresented who they had consulted with.

On their so-called consultations, the Liberals have now taken up a habit of issuing online surveys. However, these surveys are often biased and force the respondent to answer in a way that the government wants, and that is not true consultation. I guess it looks like another failing grade.

Mr. Speaker, there are many items from the second throne speech that I could go on about, but I will move on.

Throne speech 3.0 — there are some notable omissions that I would like to mention. For example, electoral reform is not mentioned. It seems odd. We are not sure why.

In the list of accomplishments, we also noticed that they forgot to mention their Liberal majority to vote down the recommendations of the Yukon Electoral District Boundaries Commission to give more representation to rural Yukon. They forgot to mention that the reason they took this unprecedented action of voting against their own bill was simply because it would ruin the Liberal Party's chances to get re-elected. They forgot to mention that they made even their rural members vote against giving a stronger voice to Yukon communities in our Legislature. This of course was a purely political move to interfere in the advice of an independent panel. Unfortunately, the Liberals chose to do that.

As I mentioned, the Liberals don't have a good track record on delivering on their throne speeches. In this case, we are wondering just how sincere are they about any of this.

Another thing I noted about throne speech 3.0 is that the first several pages of the speech appear to just be the Liberals trying to take credit for things that private citizens and businesses here in the Yukon have done. While we all respect the hard work of those individuals and we're glad to see them succeed, it appears that the Liberals are so self-conscious about their own inability to deliver on their promises that they are trying to distract us with the hard work and successes of others.

Climate change — we are happy to see that the Liberals gave mention to climate change. It is an important issue and we all need to do our part, but unfortunately, we have not seen much tangible action from this government that will actually reduce our emissions. Instead, we got another tax.

We're glad to see references to the retrofits, but as I mentioned earlier, you know, the Liberal government had committed to \$30 million a year and that hasn't happened. Now, as we get closer to the fourth year of the Liberal government, they tell us that sometime next year, they might create a loan program. They are not going to do investments like they said — instead, a loan program. Once again, I guess we will have to see the details on that, Mr. Speaker, but we know that the Liberals can hardly be trusted to deliver on this commitment, since they have shown no interest over the last several years on delivering on this key election promise.

Conversion therapy — banning of conversion therapy is the morally right thing to do. We support this. Unfortunately, why didn't the government simply act on this in the spring when it was first brought to their attention? But better late than never.

The government's review of economic funding programs — this sounds very similar to a platform commitment that the Liberal government had in 2016 and, once again, didn't deliver on.

This throne speech 3.0 also references investments in the Mayo aerodrome. In a ministerial statement in the spring, we were told that this government was spending \$5 million this year at the Mayo aerodrome, but it doesn't appear to be anything even remotely close to that getting spent this year.

The throne speech references the Ross River foot bridge as a success. Mr. Speaker, I am certainly happy to see the bridge back up; however, citizens on the other side of the bridge still aren't able to get their phones hooked up because the government won't reinstall the conduit to run the phone line through. This is after months of repeated requests not only from those people, but even from me, directly to the minister and his office. We still haven't seen it.

Also, on the topic of Ross River, we hear that the government is working with the Ross River Dena Council on plans for the school. What about the entire community? This is a government that campaigned on being heard and that every community matters. So why isn't the government meeting with the entire community about the school? We have questions. How many meetings have been held? Because the only one that we have heard of is a quick, poorly advertised, last-minute meeting over lunch with some of the staff at the school.

It becomes clearer every day that this Liberal government loves to do the photo ops, but they don't know how to deliver on their commitments. A good example of that is how the throne speech mentions solid waste. Last May at AYC, the Minister of Community Services had a big photo op on how he had finalized a new solid waste plan, but we have heard very little since May.

The throne speech also included a commitment to finish the work on updates to the agriculture policy. We're glad that the Liberal government hasn't abandoned this project, but we have to point out that the Deputy Premier repeatedly told this House that it would be done already, and he has missed all of his timelines. So I guess we'll throw it on the "couldn't get 'er done" pile.

As for the rest of the throne speech, it reads mostly like long form of a news release, listing of the legislative agenda for the fall. It is hardly visionary or hardly sets out an ambitious agenda for the government, so we're left wondering: Why do we need to go through three days of throne speeches and responses as every government member stood up and patted themselves on the back — sometimes with both hands?

We would have preferred if we could have gotten some extra time to sit down and go line by line through budgets of departments, such as Health and Social Services and Education, but maybe today, we got the answer. Maybe when we saw the Premier, the Minister of Finance, table the supplementary budget and we see him taking a \$20-million deficit in that supplementary budget — maybe that is why we spent three days standing here talking rather than debating budgets.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Gallina: As I close deliberations on this important motion, I give thanks that all members did have the opportunity to share their replies in response to the Speech from the Throne.

It's clear from the Commissioner's speech, and in many of the replies delivered, that Yukoners are able to clearly see themselves how the territory is moving forward: in the economy, in achieving healthy and happy lives, in how we act on climate change, and through reconciliation. MLAs took time to recognize constituents for their work in making this territory a better place for everyone.

This government sees the importance in the Speech from the Throne. We have accomplished much of what we have set out to do, and the throne speech is an excellent opportunity to check back in with Yukoners on what has been accomplished and what we'll be focusing on in the remainder of our mandate.

In replies to the speech, we heard about the importance of action in addressing climate change, about the youth panel on climate change that will be developed, about energy retrofit loan programs to prioritize retrofits, about the benefits of early kindergarten, about electrifying the Alaska Highway to encourage Yukoners to choose electric vehicles, about implementing a ban on single-use bags — because that is what Yukoners want — and about the government's innovation plan to foster and support technology and innovation here in the Yukon.

We also heard about the new tourism advisory body — the body recommended by the task force — amendments to the small business investment tax credit to be less restrictive to allow for more businesses to qualify, a ban on conversion therapy by modernizing legislation — because that's what Yukoners told us they wanted — a co-lab that will focus on innovative ways to solve some of the practical problems related to our economy and the environment, changing labour laws to give domestic violence victims additional leave, and even renaming the Yukon's main administration building in honour of Jim Smith on the occasion of the 40th year of responsible government.

Mr. Speaker, I will close on a quote by the Commissioner in her speech, who simply stated — and I quote: “Yukon has much to celebrate.” But, Mr. Speaker, there is still a tremendous amount of very important work that my colleagues and I are energized to take on and deliver, in partnership with Yukoners.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?
Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are nine yea, seven nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 22 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 3: *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 3, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Frost.

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

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

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to present this new act that modernizes the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. The *Smoke-Free Places Act* was introduced by the late Todd Hardy, then-Leader of the NDP, in 2007. The private member’s bill became law on May 15, 2008. At that time, it was hailed as the most progressive anti-smoking bill in Canada. Fast-forward to 2019: times have changed and our legislation is in need of significant

updating. Vaping was not even contemplated in 2007 when the initial legislation was being developed, and so the *Smoke-Free Places Act* focuses only on tobacco and tobacco products. The main purpose of the new act, which we have named the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, is to protect Yukoners, especially young people, from the harmful effects of tobacco use and the risks associated with vaping.

In the fall of 2018, during the legislative Sitting, a motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre was passed to engage an amendment to the *Smoke-Free Places Act* to address the sale, use and promotion of vapour products in Yukon. We took action on this all-party motion and engaged with Yukoners both online and in person to understand their perspectives on vaping and vapour products. From May 1 to May 31, 2019, Yukoners were able to contemplate an online survey regarding amendments to the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. There were 477 responses to the survey. There were also three public meetings held in Whitehorse on May 31, 2019. Letters were sent to all Yukon First Nations, municipalities, advisory councils, and chambers of commerce, among others, inviting them to provide their input on the proposed amendment.

The results of the engagement were clear. The majority of Yukoners supported our proposed approach to addressing the sale, use and promotion of tobacco and vaping products. We released the “what we heard” report recently, and I would like to share some highlights from the responses that we received during the spring 2019 engagement on amendments to the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. Over 85 percent of respondents agreed that the Government of Yukon should prioritize keeping vapour products out of the hands of young people. Who should be considered a young person for the purpose of tobacco and vapour products in Yukon? Again, the survey respondents were very clear: almost 75 percent said that the minimum age for access to tobacco and vapour products should be 19 years or older.

These surveys are very strong statements that support the purpose and content of our new act to protect the health of Yukoners, particularly young people. We listened to Yukoners and took their responses to heart in amending the legislation. I brought forward a new act, the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, to build on the strengths of the *Smoke-Free Places Act* while ensuring that our modernized legislation addresses critical health issues, particularly the promotion, sale and use of vapour products.

While I will share highlights of the new act with you shortly, I would first like to acknowledge that, during the 10 months that we have been developing this new act, there have been many developments in the public’s awareness and health professionals’ understanding of youth vaping use and the associated health impacts. This is a rapidly changing area with new information almost daily. We are working closely with colleagues across Canada, and particularly with Yukon’s chief medical officer of health, to assess the evolving situation and to determine how best to proceed to protect Yukoners’ health.

The new act will continue many of the important elements of the *Smoke-Free Places Act* while addressing vaping and vaping products in the same way as tobacco and tobacco

products. This includes prohibiting vaping in all locations where smoking is now prohibited and requiring that all advertising, promotion, and sale of vaping products be done in the same manner as tobacco and tobacco products.

The new act will introduce some changes to Yukoners. The most notable change is the increase from 18 years of age to 19 years of age as a minimum age for the purchase of tobacco accessories, tobacco products, and vaping products. This will make the Yukon minimum age of purchase consistent for tobacco, vaping products, cannabis, and alcohol. The new act will also bring into Yukon legislation some restrictions that previously existed only in federal law, including a prohibition on the sale of flavoured tobacco products and the ability to prohibit flavoured vaping products.

I look forward to sharing more details of the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* with my colleagues as it is considered for approval.

I firmly believe that the act before us today will allow us to support the health and well-being of Yukoners, especially young people, by providing greater protection for the known harmful effects of tobacco use and increasing apparent health risks associated with vaping.

Ms. McLeod: I am pleased to speak to Bill No. 3, entitled the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, here at second reading. We were provided a fulsome briefing this morning and I would like to thank the officials who took the time to walk through the bill with us.

The minister this afternoon has called this bill a modernization of the *Smoke-Free Places Act* or in one case referred to discussing this amendment with Yukoners. But, you know, we must note that this is an entirely new bill and it will in fact replace the *Smoke-Free Places Act*.

Obviously, we have seen a number of changes over the last number of years with respect to regulating tobacco products and the creation of the *Smoke-Free Places Act* in the first place. But more recently, with the gaining popularity of vaping products — especially among young people — the creation of a new and more inclusive act is important to ensure that these products are captured under legislation.

I am hopeful to hear a little bit more from the minister around how consultation on this legislation was carried out. The minister did provide a few brief points on that, but we do have a few questions. So, while the Yukon Party supports this legislation in principle, I do have questions for the minister, as I noted, which I will raise in Committee of the Whole.

Once again, I want to thank the officials for their briefing on this legislation and all of those who had a hand in creating and drafting this bill.

Ms. White: Today I am speaking to Bill No. 3, the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*. I just want to go back and bit and remember my friend Todd. I remember when Todd Hardy was working on this legislation. I'm sure that within this Chamber, we all remember a time when you could smoke in bars and restaurants, in public spaces, on airplanes — you could smoke anywhere. Tobacco smoke

was viewed as liberation back in the 1950s, and it was encouraged as being, you know, an independent action. I remember being 19 in the City of Whitehorse, and at that point in time, you would go into a bar and you couldn't wear those clothes again — no matter what clothes you had on when you went dancing the night before, you couldn't wear them the next day because they smelled like an ashtray.

So it is hard to imagine a time before we had smoke-free places — it is hard to imagine a time. I was in Ottawa and they were starting to contemplate banning smoking in public places, and I remember overhearing people say, "That is just never going to happen. That just can't happen here. How are we going to get people to stop smoking in bars and restaurants and all those places?" It's unusual now to be in a place where you have many people smoking publicly. However, when I lived in France, I was maybe the only person I knew who didn't smoke cigarettes, so there you go.

When Todd was bringing this forward — when he was doing the work — it came forward as a private member's bill. It's interesting, because if we look into it, the then-Minister of Health and Social Services — it wasn't accepted and it was the Premier who overrode that. It was the Premier of the day who worked with Todd to make this happen. It went pretty quickly if you think about how it was brought forward in 2007 initially and came into force in 2008. I do appreciate that it was leading at the time — it was. It's crazy to think that, in Yukon, we became one of the early adapters of smoke-free places. There has been lots of conversation — when you think about workers' compensation — as we went through this legislation earlier today — you know, if there is a home care nurse in a private home and the home care nurse asks that smoking or vaping doesn't happen, it has to follow suit. That person is working and they need to be protected from the ills of both smoking and vaping.

Unlike my colleagues from the Yukon Party, I think sometimes you have to make decisions and the consultation — there are some things — I believe that you don't have to consult on human rights. I also believe that you don't need to consult on health. I think this decision is following what science is saying.

There are interesting points in it. I would really love to know that we could ban all flavoured vaping products. I know teenagers who never smoked cigarettes and who went straight to vaping and they smoked the highest level of nicotine products available. They are underage. They are able to purchase them. They smoke them. I would imagine, if a rhinoceros was able to vape, it would probably put the rhinoceros down — what these teenagers are smoking. I know that quitting a vaping product is very hard, because I watch these teenagers as they now struggle when they try to quit. It is no different from smoking.

I know that, initially, it was created to help people go from smoking cigarettes and leaving that traditional tobacco behind. You were supposed to be able to curb your smoking habits and then you were going to be done. I feel like it hasn't quite worked that way, so that is unfortunate.

I did appreciate the briefing this morning and the questions — I have a lot of questions because I want to know how this applies around the Yukon Housing Corporation. I want to know how a tenant who lives in a multi-storey building with balconies, who is a non-smoker — I want to know what their rights are to be able to use their home freely without the effects of tobacco smoke from a balcony below them. I want to know whose responsibility it is to enforce it. I want to know how everyone who lives above that balcony — because it's more than five metres — when we go through the legislation, it talks about being five metres away from a window, and it's less than that. I want to know how we can make sure that tenants in buildings are able to have their windows open in the summertime without cigarette smoke. Specifically, I want to know how a Yukon Housing Corporation tenant is able to do this, because that is something that I believe we can control here.

I look forward to the conversation. I look forward to the back and forth. We do have specific questions as we go through it line by line. But I'm excited to see this update. I know that for the pharmacists association, vaping is a big issue. Vaping is a very big issue nationally. They wanted to know where the federal parties stood on the vaping issue, because health care providers view vaping — although they understand why it was created — as now possibly a worse evil than tobacco smoke.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having more conversations and going line by line.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise today to address the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*. I have to say that it is unfortunate that we are forced to table this legislation in the House today to deal with this dirty societal habit that is capturing so many of our youth. It is unfortunate because it represents a new habit that is spreading through our youth like wildfire. It is unfortunate because we let it spread under this mistaken belief that it was of little consequence to those who use it and that it was less dangerous than smoking. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because we were wrong and now we have to play catch-up.

This legislation and the issue underlying it has forced me to reflect on my family. I think it forces us all to do that. My sons are now young men and fortunately did not fall prey to the siren call of this expensive high-tech habit. As a father, I am grateful for that and proud of them, frankly, because of this and the innumerable other strengths they demonstrate daily. I am also an uncle, and my young nephews are now entering the stage of their lives where peer pressure, societal norms, personal fashion, and individuality are engaged in a cage-match. We will see what they as young individuals decide to do, but as an uncle, I hope they avoid the addictive traps that litter the paths they travel. I know my brothers and sisters are vigilant and wonderful role models for them. I know too that they are worried for their children. Most parents today are. They are worried they will fall prey to an expensive, debilitating, and potentially fatal habit — habits such as drugs, tobacco or vaping. They have good reason for this.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s and 1990s, western society made great strides in marginalizing tobacco through bans in advertising, vivid depictions of health problems on packaging, and restrictions on depictions of smoking in mass media. At that time, I worked in a very small office with one door, one window, and five smokers. I never smoked, but for years I was trapped in a blue haze and was forced to breathe the class-A carcinogens eight hours a day. Coming home at the end of the day, I had to wash my clothes and have a shower every night. Eventually, it became a smoke-free workplace. That was in the early 1990s — incredible. Smoking was already banned in aircrafts, but it wasn't in bars or restaurants or daycares. Today, those early victories have been rolled back a little bit. Smoking is once more commonly glamourized in mass media and vaping is currently allowed where smoking isn't. It is a relatively new technology, as I noted, and has gained cachet as a benign alternative to smoking. That erroneous belief that this stuff is not as addictive or that it poses little risk to health was allowed to take root.

A couple of years ago, I was driving a young person home. They pulled out a vape in my car. "Don't worry, it's harmless. It's just water vapour," they said, taking a hit and exhaling in my car. I believe that person is still addicted to the stuff, years later. \

We know youth 15 to 19 years old and adults between 20 and 24 years old are the most likely to try vaping. Those over 25 are less interested in the stuff. Twenty-three percent of students in grades 7 to 12 have tried vaping; 10 percent of those children reported using the device within the last 30 days. So the popularity of e-cigarette use among minors is of significant concern. Whether they contain nicotine or not, e-cigarettes may pose health risks when consumed in large doses or over long periods of time. The health risks of inhaling the common additives used in the flavouring of e-cigarettes deep into the lungs are unknown, but much like traditional second-hand smoke exposure, bystanders can also be exposed to e-cigarette vapour.

A 2016 study by the World Health Organization reported findings that second-hand exposure to e-cigarette vapour may lead to adverse health effects. The report also concluded that second-hand aerosols from e-cigarettes are now an air contamination source for hazardous particulate matter, which is why the World Health Organization recommends prohibiting by law the use of e-cigarettes indoors and other locations where smoking is not permitted.

More alarming still, a popular chemical compound used in the flavouring of vape juices has been linked to popcorn lung, which is the scarring and obstruction of the lung's smallest airways. Furthermore, in 2018, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a report called *Adolescent Exposure to Toxic Volatile Organic Chemicals from E-Cigarettes* — that's a terrible title for a document, but it gets to the point. It found substantially increased levels of five carcinogenic compounds in the urine of teenagers who vape.

We know that most vaping liquids have a higher concentration of nicotine than individual cigarettes. We also know how addictive nicotine is, which is to say, Mr. Speaker,

that this stuff is not benign — it is nasty, and it is forcing us to update our legislation related to smoke-free spaces. This will help us signal that it is not something to take lightly, that it is not benign, and that it is not something society endorses without restriction.

Currently, the Yukon's *Smoke-Free Places Act* identifies where smoking is and is not permitted. This protects public health and provides clear expectations for both smokers and non-smokers. Today, smoking in daycares, health care centres, cinemas, and bingo halls is not allowed. If someone lights up a cigarette at a bingo hall, they're breaking the law, but currently no such law exists for e-cigarettes in the Yukon — and that has to change.

This House debated the need for new legislation in 2018. We passed that motion unanimously, as I recall, and we have now advanced the debate into action. We drafted the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* to restrict the use of these products in the territory. The legislation will provide some certainty for Yukon citizens regarding where people can and cannot use these products. That in itself will signal that the stuff comes with a downside. It is dangerous to individuals using it and to those around them, and that benefits everyone.

I look forward to further debate.

Mr. Gallina: I'm pleased to be speaking to Bill No. 3, the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, here at second reading. I agree with the minister in the proposals of this act, especially that the proposals will modernize the *Smoke-Free Places Act*.

I take seriously the responsibility to protect Yukoners, especially young people, against the dangerous effects of tobacco and the use of vaping. In particular, I am aware of the rise in use of vaping products and also the potential risks. In a Government of Canada survey done in 2017 that included vaping, it showed that 15 percent of Canadians have tried e-cigarettes. Youth 15 to 19 years old and young adults 20 to 24 years old have the highest rates of trying e-cigarettes. This compares to adults 25 and older.

Among Canadians who used a vaping product, 65 percent are current smokers, and 20 percent are former smokers. Fifteen percent reported having never smoked cigarettes. Thirty-two percent of current or former cigarette smokers who have ever used an e-cigarette reported using it as a quit-smoking aid.

In the same survey, perceived risks were outlined and identified. Almost half — 48 percent — of Canadians perceived using an e-cigarette once in awhile to be a modest or even a great risk. Using an e-cigarette on a regular basis was thought to pose moderate or even great risk of harm — that was by 65 percent of Canadians. Almost one in four Canadians were unaware of how much a person risked harming themselves by using an e-cigarette once in awhile — that was 23 percent — or even on a regular basis — 24 percent.

The risks of vaping are clear. Vaping can increase your exposure to chemicals that can harm your health and can cause lung damage. Vaping can also expose you to nicotine which is

addictive. There are also concerns about the appeal of vaping products among youth and the use of vaping products in promoting tobacco use itself.

There is a concern that people who vape might get popcorn lung, as the Minister of Highways and Public Works touched on, from being exposed to diacetyl. Diacetyl is a flavouring chemical used to give butter-like and other flavours to food products as well as vaping products. This disease is named "popcorn lung" because workers in popcorn plants develop it after inhaling heated flavours such as diacetyl. Popcorn lung or popcorn-workers lung is a chronic disease that damages the small airways in the lung.

The perceived risks I've outlined and the statistics I've shared gave me concern for the health of Yukoners and, in particular, our youth and young adults. This is why, last fall, I brought forward for debate in this House Motion No. 339 that urged this government to introduce amendments to the *Smoke-Free Places Act* to include vaping.

I want to acknowledge the deliberations and considerations that members made toward the motion during debate last fall. It was great to see concerns from all parties being brought forward and that this House was working in a collaborative manner. The MLA for Copperbelt South brought forward an amendment to my motion to include consultations with appropriate experts, stakeholders, and Yukoners. I was happy to see the amended motion pass this House.

It gave clear direction to government departments that took action on the motion and engaged with Yukoners both online and in person to understand the perspectives of Yukoners on vaping and vaping products.

As the minister stated, from May 1 to May 31, 2019, 447 Yukoners completed the online survey regarding amendments to the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. There were also public meetings held in Whitehorse on May 31, 2019. Letters were sent to all Yukon First Nations, municipalities, advisory councils, and chambers of commerce — among others — inviting them to provide their input to the proposed amendments. The results identified that the majority of Yukoners supported the government's proposed approach regarding the sale, use, and promotion of tobacco and vaping products.

Mr. Speaker, in the "what we heard" document released to Yukoners, it's important to note that on youth and vaping, 86 percent of respondents agree that the Government of Yukon should prioritize keeping vapour products out of the hands of young people and that on sales to adults, 50 percent of respondents agreed that the government should support access to vapour product reductions for adults seeking an alternative to tobacco.

On setting the legal age for vapour products, 49 percent of respondents stated that the minimum age to access vapour products should be 19 years old, 25 percent said that the minimum age should be 18, and 24 percent said the minimum age should be 21.

On consumption, 84 percent of respondents said that Yukon should have the same restrictions for the use of vapour products in indoor public spaces as are in place for tobacco.

On display of vapour products in stores, 74 percent of respondents agreed that vapour products should be displayed in stores in such a way that they may not be seen by youth or by children.

On advertising and promotion of vapour products, 80 percent of respondents agreed that Yukon should have restrictions in place on how vapour products may be advertised and promoted, similar to the restrictions in place for tobacco.

Finally, on the sale of flavoured vapour products, 36 percent of respondents said that only specific flavours should be banned; 35 percent said that all flavours should be banned; and 20 percent of respondents believed that the Yukon government should not be restricting any flavoured vapour products.

Mr. Speaker, in taking into account the potential risks associated with vaping and capturing the voices of Yukoners, the new act will continue many of the important elements of the *Smoke-Free Places Act*, while addressing vaping and vaping products in the same way as tobacco and tobacco products. This includes prohibiting vaping in all locations where smoking is now prohibited and requiring that all advertising, promotion and sale of vaping products to be done in the same manner as tobacco and tobacco products.

The new act will introduce some changes to Yukoners. The most notable change is the increase from 18 years to 19 years as the minimum age to purchase tobacco accessories, tobacco products, and vaping products. This will make the Yukon minimum age of purchasing consistent for tobacco, vaping products, cannabis, and alcohol. The new act will also bring into Yukon legislation some restrictions that previously existed only in federal law: a prohibition on the sale of flavoured tobacco products and the ability to prohibit flavoured vaping products.

In closing, I am encouraged with the elements that are included in Bill No. 3, the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, here in second reading. I think this legislation will serve Yukoners well and will provide an additional mechanism of protection, especially to our youth and young adults.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just wanted to say a few words to this. The first thing that I would like to say is that I appreciate the comments from the members of the opposition and their support in principle and the questions that they will bring forward at the Committee of the Whole stage. I am looking forward to that stage as well, just to hear the back-and-forth and those questions. I just wanted to say a few remarks on this bill, given my role with the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*. I won't take long; I am noticing the time. There is not much time left today in any case.

The main rationale for vaping, as I understand it, has been that it could help smokers to quit and that it is less harmful than cigarettes. Even if vaping is less harmful than traditional smoking, vaping is still bad for our health, and e-cigarettes can be just as addictive as traditional ones. Worse still is that a new generation is getting hooked on nicotine.

One of our concerns has been, as we have watched how vaping has changed — it is my understanding from the briefing notes that we were supplied when the bill came forward that, over the past year, with youth using vaping products, there has been a 64-percent increase. It's just stunning to see that type of increase. One of our concerns is that it is appealing to youth with things like flavours, with its lack of smell, and with its ability to be used easily and in subtle ways, and that advertising has been targeting young people. As has been noted by several colleagues in the Legislature, what we have heard from Yukoners is also echoed here in this Chamber in terms of concerns.

So yes, I think with good intention, we saw this hope for vaping as being a way to help with cessation, but overall it has been incredibly negative. The sad reality is that vaping, especially among teens, is leading to a brand-new generation of users and it is more of a pathway toward addiction rather than away from it.

As we've already noted, raising the age to 19 will make it — this will make it a consistent age for cannabis, for alcohol, and tobacco and vaping, and it will also be consistent with our approach to cannabis and alcohol to make sure we are focusing on health and safety, especially of our youth. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, one of our two priorities around cannabis was to focus on health and wellness — in particular, health and wellness of our youth — but also to displace the black market.

It takes what has been, up to today, a school policy — if the bill is passed into law, it will enshrine it in law. It will prohibit flavoured products and it will ban vaping where smoking is banned.

Young people — as we all know, Mr. Speaker — will still sometimes find access to vaping and tobacco products just as they do to cannabis and alcohol as well. What this means for us is that we're — as much as we will try to put these laws in place, we still anticipate that we will have to have as well an education campaign to work with youth. I recall — in discussing previous legislation from members opposite — that there were some great suggestions about making sure that, when we have education campaigns, that it's for youth, by youth — in other words, that it is more accessible and meaningful and relatable to them.

We will also need to take an active role in enforcement. I think I heard one of the questions across the way about enforcement and what that would look like.

Because we've seen such an increase in use of vaping, I think it's important to note that smoking is still one of the leading causes of death in Canada. I think the last statistics I saw said that it was responsible for 39,000 deaths — now I'm sure they are a couple of years out of date, but that's about 100 people per day or 17 percent of all deaths. I think back —

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

Debate on second reading of Bill No. 3 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 7, 2019:

34-3-9

Yukon Arts Centre 2018/19 Annual Report (Dendys)

34-3-10

2019-20 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update (Silver)

The following documents were filed October 7, 2019:

34-3-3

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2018-2019 Annual Report (Dendys)

34-3-4

Electoral Reform, letter re (dated April 5, 2019) from Stacey Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Cathers)

34-3-5

Electoral Reform Commission, letter re (dated May 3, 2019) from Stacey Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Cathers)

34-3-6

Electoral Reform Commission Applicants, letter re (dated June 16, 2019) from Stacey Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Cathers)

34-3-7

Electoral Reform Commission Applicants, letter re (dated July 11, 2019) from Stacey Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Cathers)

34-3-8

Electoral Reform Commission Applicants, letter re (dated July 15, 2019) from Stacey Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Cathers)

34-3-9

Procedures — Project Advisory Committee — Whistle Bend Elementary School (July 2019) (Mostyn)

34-3-10

Status of Yukon Energy Corporation's proposed new 20 MW thermal facility, letter re (dated October 1, 2019) from Lesley Cabott, Chair, Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, to Hon. Ranj Pillai, Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation (Pillai)