



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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34<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Thursday, October 17, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Fall Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

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

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, October 17, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would ask my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to help me in welcoming the folks who are here today to acknowledge Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and the Safe at Home initiative. We have with us today Annette Peters, Teresa Blackjack, Kristina Craig, Ulrike Levins — I hope I said that right; I apologize if I didn't — Jason Charlie, Sharon Steward, Kerry Nolan, Darlene Skookum, and Fritz Andre. Welcome today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We have several people here today from the Yukon Liquor Corporation and also from the Cannabis Yukon's retail store. We have with us Will Tewnian, Amelie Quirke-Tomlins, Loree Stewart, Kirsten Sylvestre, and Scott Westerlaken. From the Cannabis Yukon store, who are staff members for another six hours or so, we have Dan Schneider and the store manager, Kathi Brent-Brakefield. Also, if we could please welcome social justice teacher from Vanier Secondary School, Jud Dueling — and I don't know if they are a colleague or a student; I am not sure — but if we could welcome them all, please.

*Applause*

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

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Yukon's Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and Safe at Home initiative. Poverty and Homelessness Action Week promotes action to end poverty and homelessness in Yukon. Events planned this week focus on building community and breaking down stereotypes. This year's theme, "Walk the Empathy Walk", is one that I encourage all Yukoners to participate in. Poverty and homelessness have been increasingly high-profile issues for our community, especially with the ongoing evolution of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. This has brought out a lot of racism and a lot of ugliness from within our community. It has

also brought out a lot of beauty and curiosity and the community's willingness to move forward together.

It is through these difficult conversations, the willingness to understand someone else's experience, and the breaking down of stereotypes that we can walk the empathy walk and begin to end poverty and homelessness. When we listen to those who have lived and are living the experience of poverty and homelessness, we can begin to see and understand where members of our community have been. We can begin to appreciate the experiences that they have lived through — often traumatic and painful events shape those stories. When we take the time to listen to someone else's story without judgment, we give that person a chance to begin to heal.

I would like to thank the graduates of Voices Influencing Change for sharing their lived and living experience with poverty and homelessness and for the important work that they do in our community.

Today, many of those members are with the Porter Creek social justice club, discussing the importance of stories and sharing how it feels to be heard. On Tuesday, at their kick-off event for Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, Kerry Nolan, from Voices Influencing Change, shared a quote that I will share with you here today: "We all have a story and a voice to tell that story. As a community, it is our responsibility to listen without assumptions or judgment as these stories will help make positive change within ourselves, our families and our community as a whole."

An important way that we can take action to end poverty and homelessness is through the Safe at Home initiative. Safe at Home offers a guide to coordinated courses of action rooted in community values, personal experiences, expert advice, and the best available research. The plan highlights what needs to happen to prevent and end homelessness. This means offering appropriate supports so that we can move forward in a community reality where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home.

There are five strategic priorities identified by the community partners. These are: increasing the support of safe, stable, and affordable housing options; coordinating access to housing programs and services within a system of care; strengthening community supports and engagement; preventing homelessness; and improving data collection and evaluating the success of systems.

We hope that Yukoners will review the plan and actively get involved in community opportunities, especially during this week when we support the many activities offered during Poverty and Homelessness Action Week.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the community champions who have come together to develop, guide and implement our community response to homelessness. It is inspiring to see you all here today working together toward a common goal of ending and preventing homelessness.

As defined in the Safe at Home plan itself, ending homelessness does not mean that there will be an absence of crises in people's lives. In order for this plan to be successful, advocates, champions, and unsuspecting leaders need to emerge from all elements of our community. I would like to

recognize the excellent work done by our community partners: the City of Whitehorse; the Kwanlin Dün First Nation; the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council; the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, as well as the new implementation manager, Kate Mechan; the manager for Blood Ties Four Directions; the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon; and, of course, our guests who are here today.

Thank you for your dedication to ensure that Yukon is a better place for everyone.

Mahsi'cho.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Poverty and Homelessness Action Week in Yukon, which kicked off on Tuesday morning. Today happens to be the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This year, the theme celebrated is “Walk the Empathy Walk”.

Empathy, by definition, is the ability to understand and to share the feelings of another. It's important to be able to empathize with those who may be experiencing the effects of poverty and homelessness. Being empathetic encourages people to take action and to become part of the solution to poverty and homelessness within our community.

Many families and individuals face aspects of poverty across the Yukon. Sometimes it's impossible to make a paycheque stretch as far as it must go to ensure that groceries are bought, that utility bills and rent or mortgage are covered, and that all other needs are met.

Throughout the next week, a variety of events will take place to mark Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and associated international action days. Skookum Jim Friendship Centre offers luncheons. One took place yesterday and another will happen next Wednesday as events wrap up on World Food Day.

On Tuesday, Whitehorse Connects brings Yukoners, professionals, and organizations together for a day of community outreach and provision of services, such as personal care, immunizations, access to Internet and computing services, food, and entertainment. We would like to thank those who donate their time and invaluable services to this event.

Mary-Jane Warshawski and her husband, Craig Hougen, owners of Coast Mountain Sports, are hosting a Business After Hours event this evening from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. In support of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness in the Yukon, they have designed and sold clothing as part of their Home project. Tonight, Mary-Jane will be presenting a cheque to the YAPC with the proceeds from this fundraising campaign. They will also be unveiling a new Home collection of merchandise to help raise money and awareness for the Safe at Home plan.

I would like to mention that people attending Business After Hours tonight are encouraged to bring a gently used winter jacket to help them reach their goal of 150 winter jackets as part of their Share the Warmth campaign, which will then be provided to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for distribution.

Thank you to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Skookum Jim, United Way Yukon, Coast Mountain Sports, the Hougen Group of Companies, and numerous non-profit organizations, local businesses, and individual volunteers who work to ensure that Yukoners in need are provided with the supports and assistance that they require and deserve.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP in acknowledgement of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and in honour of today, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Empathy is a powerful tool, Mr. Speaker. It's the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. This year's theme, “Walk the Empathy Walk”, is about seeing poverty through the lens of empathy and how that can eliminate myths about the experiences of poverty. Between October 15 and 22, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition aims to bridge the divide of understanding poverty. This week, there are many opportunities to listen to the stories of lived and living experience. Stories are a strong tool to share the evolution of one's life, and when that story is shared and then heard with empathy, it can influence change and understanding.

This year, the storytellers — some who are in this Assembly — will visit each Whitehorse high school social justice club to share the stories of lived or living experience of poverty. The thing is, these same students from the social justice clubs are backbone volunteers three times a year at the Whitehorse Connects events. These students work in the kitchen preparing delicious and nutritious food, they help organize the clothing donations, clean up dishes, and help wherever help is needed. These young people are learning the importance of volunteering and being present without judgment or assumptions.

There are many activities to participate in this week, but I recommend volunteering or attending Whitehorse Connects. Next Tuesday, October 22, the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre will be abuzz with activity. Doors open to the public at 10:00 a.m., but there are volunteer opportunities from 8:00 a.m. onward. Warm and gently used clothes can be dropped off anytime after 8:30 in the morning, and the event finishes at 2:00 p.m.

If anyone wants to volunteer — and I suggest that they do — they can connect with Shonagh at Inclusion Yukon, and she can be reached at 667-4606.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we listen to the stories with empathy. It's important that we listen and learn from them as politicians, as neighbours, as friends, and most importantly, as humans, because the stories shared with us become part of our understanding, and that understanding can influence change.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further tributes?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Ms. White:** Today I have for tabling a letter from Greenwood Place sent to party leaders as well as the Minister of Health and Social Services, and a letter, dated July 3, from the Minister of Health and Social Services to my colleague from Whitehorse Centre.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to research, develop, and implement a Yukon early childhood strategy (childcare, development, and education) in consultation with early childhood education and health care professionals, parents, and First Nation governments in order to improve developmental and educational outcomes.

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

THAT this House recognizes:

(1) the significant economic contribution that the Minto mine makes to the Selkirk First Nation and to the residents of Pelly Crossing; and

(2) the economic contribution that the mining sector makes to Yukon's economy; and

THAT this House congratulates Pembridge Resources on its acquisition and reopening of the Minto mine.

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

Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Cannabis Yukon retail store closure

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of operation of the Cannabis Yukon retail store, which provides a good opportunity to update Yukoners on the territory's legal cannabis retail market.

First, I wish to thank Cannabis Yukon staff for their hard work over the past year in successfully launching the legal retail cannabis market in the Yukon. By providing legal, controlled access to cannabis, the team at Cannabis Yukon has helped displace the illicit market while providing detailed product and health information to help Yukoners make informed decisions and engage in responsible consumption.

We are currently in the process of tendering the sale of the Cannabis Yukon retail store and/or store assets. Should there be a successful bid to buy the store, the new owner would be required to go through the cannabis licensing process like all private retail applicants.

From the start, our plan was always for the government-run retail store to be a temporary measure. Our plan was to introduce legal cannabis to the Yukon in a balanced, informative, and legitimate setting, while preparing for private retail. The Cannabis Licensing Board has now approved five cannabis licences — three in Whitehorse, one in Dawson City, and one in Carmacks. Three licensees have opened for business — two in Whitehorse and one in Dawson City. The board is currently in the process of reviewing additional applications for licences in Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

Cannabisyukon.org will continue to offer online sales to all Yukoners — and, in particular, rural Yukoners. Our online store will also continue to provide detailed product and health information. This means that one year after the legalization of cannabis, Yukoners have access to legal cannabis no matter what community they live in and, in many cases, they now have a choice of cannabis retailers.

As a government, our priorities remain displacing the illicit market and protecting the health of Yukoners, especially youth, and continuing work with the burgeoning private sector to achieve these goals.

Since legalization, \$4.6 million worth of cannabis has been sold in the Yukon, helping to displace the territory's illicit market. Thanks to careful planning, the Yukon Liquor Corporation was able to launch the store without many of the problems of supply and access experienced by other jurisdictions in Canada. The Yukon Liquor Corporation is currently ordering cannabis from nine licensed producers through contractual arrangements. We look forward to the day when Yukon producers come online.

There are new federal cannabis regulations coming into force for the legal production and sale of cannabis edibles, extracts, and topicals today. We anticipate that these new products will gradually appear in the market in the coming months. Staff will continue to work with licensees to the greatest extent possible to bring in the products that their customers want, ensuring that private retailers can succeed and helping us to displace the illicit market.

Our Liberal government is pleased to see the establishment and growth of the Yukon's private cannabis retail sector, and we are happy to fulfill our commitment to close the temporary government retail store. I should note that there are no job losses resulting from the closure of the store. Staff will either return to their substantive positions with the Government of Yukon or will have found other employment.

I would also like to recognize the hard work of the arm's-length Cannabis Licensing Board. They have been diligent in their reviews of applications, and I thank them for their time and dedication. Once again, thank you to the staff at Cannabis Yukon for their part in making the legalization of cannabis in the Yukon such a success. They have done an outstanding job in supporting customers and in ensuring that legal cannabis has been introduced in a safe and controlled way. I anticipate that the private sector will build on this standard.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise today in response to the ministerial statement. I also want to thank the staff for their hard work over the last year. But I will ask the minister a very simple question that the Premier refused to answer during budget debate: When you include all the start-up costs, all the renovations costs, and all the overhead, how much money has the government lost in its venture into cannabis retail?

We have asked the Premier this question and he has refused to answer. We submitted an ATIPP request seeking this information, and it was completely redacted. I hope the minister is prepared today to answer this question: How much money has the government lost?

I'm not looking for their total sales or their total revenues. As any business owner knows, you have to look at everything, including your expenses.

So again, just to clarify for the minister — because I know that I have asked him this question before in the House and he has purposely muddied the waters by pointing out total sales. What I'm asking is: At the end of the day, when you calculate how much taxpayers' money was spent in setting up this new government-run cannabis retail store, how much did we lose?

Looking through the annual report, we can make some guesses, but I'm actually looking for an amount here. Page 11 of the report says that the total start-up costs were \$3 million. Page 10 of the report says that the total sales were valued at \$1.9 million. That makes it sound like taxpayers lost \$1.1 million selling cannabis. Is that accurate? Is it more? Is it less?

Mr. Speaker, I'm not trying to be difficult. It's just that we have asked the government on numerous occasions to provide this number and they have not, so we are left to try to figure it out from what publicly available information we have. When the minister gets up, I sure hope he's prepared to answer this very, very simple question.

**Ms. Hanson:** Establishing a legal cannabis market within a relatively short time frame is tough, and all things considered, Yukon New Democrats think this government has done a good job; however, there are still many areas and opportunities for improvement.

A driving force around the legalization of cannabis would be to eliminate the illicit market, as well as normalize and decriminalize a substance enjoyed by many Canadians. However, it is estimated that half of Canadians who buy cannabis are still purchasing their grass from the illicit market. Last spring, I asked the minister a number of questions regarding the displacement of the illicit market and whether the government had any hard numbers on those efforts. At that time, the minister could only speak anecdotally about those efforts.

In his speech today, the minister mentioned that \$4.6 million worth of cannabis was sold, which helps to displace the illicit market. But without actual numbers to back it up, it is difficult to know to what extent — the extent of the new and expanded versus the illicit to legal market switch. So how much has gone from the old to the new market?

We would be interested in if this government is perhaps working with the RCMP to develop any harder numbers regarding the displacement of the illicit market. According to a Statistics Canada analysis of crowdsourced data, illicit cannabis is cheaper than legal cannabis country-wide. Recently, cannabis producers in Québec have been developing ultra low-cost cannabis that could potentially compete with and eliminate the presence of the illicit market. Has the Government of Yukon considered bringing in cheaper cannabis to further offset the illicit market?

As many Yukoners know, our bud is not green. By "green", I'm referring to the excessive packaging that cannabis is sold and shipped in. We have raised concerns in the past regarding this overuse of packaging and how it is disconnected with the principles of eliminating single-use packaging espoused by this government and its federal counterpart. Has this government made any inroads regarding the overuse of packaging of cannabis sold legally in Yukon?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying that cannabis, like alcohol, is not a benign substance. We expect this government to establish and maintain effective oversight of the evolving legal cannabis market.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I will note that, on the last day of the previous Sitting, I tabled documents that showed how much the estimate was on the displacement of the black market. Of course, measuring the black market is always a challenging topic. I don't want to make claims that we know it precisely, but we do have good estimates that I tabled last spring. Now I know, as of one year, that we have sold the equivalent of 338 kilograms against what we estimate to be 1,000 kilograms of usage over the territory. We also know from Statistics Canada that there is a measurement of how much Canadians are using cannabis, which is unchanged from one year earlier prior to legalization. In other words, we don't believe that there has been a significant change to the usage of cannabis, so we can compare how much penetration there has been.

I am very happy to update those numbers and resubmit them here for the Legislature. Again, I direct the attention of members opposite to the last day of the Sitting when I tabled those documents.

In response to the questions about areas for improvement — I think that there are always areas for improvement. I think that this is a great suggestion. I will continue to work with the folks. They have done a great job, but we will continue to try to improve our services. We have worked to bring in lower-cost cannabis from across the country. As I mentioned, we have nine supply agreements. It's quite amazing that we got those agreements in place early. That allowed us to not run out of cannabis. It's not to say that we got everything we wanted, but we are working to displace the black market.

What I will say to the member opposite — I apologize if I missed a question previously. I heard just this past week when there was a question put to the Premier. I don't recall a question. I have read back through all of Hansard to try to find those questions, but let me just say right up front: Our goal all along

was to break even. I am happy to pull together the numbers on the total cost. That is where I think we are landing, roughly. I don't have all the numbers at my disposal, but I am happy to get them for the members opposite. By breaking even, I am talking about the start-up costs for the store versus the sales and versus the cost of the product itself. More or less, we sought to break even.

I saw in the news that, as of March 31, Ontario had lost \$42 million. No, we have done a great job. Again, thanks so much to the team at Cannabis Yukon. By the way, tonight is the last night, so after work, if you are a customer, please go by there. They are going to have cake and it's going to close at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to all those members of this Legislature and the territory who have supported legal sales. Please, I encourage all Yukoners to continue to buy from legal sources.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Southern Lakes enhancement project

**Mr. Hassard:** Last night, Yukon Energy Corporation conducted a presentation at the Marsh Lake Community Centre with residents who would be impacted by their proposal to raise the levels of southern lakes. This is a proposal that the previous government had conducted consultation on, but they had heard loud and clear from Southern Lakes residents that they didn't want this to go forward. The Liberal government, however, has launched a new round of consultations to move forward with this project despite strong opposition in the previous consultations.

One of the frustrations that came out at the meeting last night was that residents felt that they had already said no, and they were wondering how many times they have to say no. It's time to stop consulting until you get the answer you want, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation or the Minister of Community Services tell us if the government will listen to the residents of Southern Lakes who are saying no to this project?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would like to thank the member opposite for this question. I think it is a very appropriate question and a valid question.

I would ask Members of the Legislative Assembly to think back to Yukon Energy Corporation coming here as witnesses. I commend the Premier on his commitment to ensure that Yukon Energy Corporation each spring has come in and answered questions for both opposition parties on all subjects. Mr. Speaker, you would remember that during those conversations, the Southern Lakes was a very hot topic. Part of the discussion was: What is the plan with Southern Lakes and why does this conversation continue to happen?

Under the previous government, there were millions of dollars spent on research and on the Southern Lakes project. When those costs were brought to rate at the Yukon Utilities Board, the Yukon Utilities Board told Yukon Energy Corporation that in order to take those costs to rate, they needed to do another round of consultation. I look forward to questions

number 2 and 3 and also to the merits of this project and why the Yukon Utilities Board is asking for this.

**Mr. Hassard:** Residents last night were concerned about the effects the increased lake levels will have on their property values and the erosion of their properties. I think that every single one of us in this House would be very upset if the government was going forward with a project that would damage our property or ruin the value of our homes, especially if there had already been a lot of consultation where it was clear that people opposed the project.

The concerns brought up last night are valid and they need to be listened to. Will the Minister responsible for Yukon Energy Corporation or the Minister of Community Services tell us if the government will go forward with the Southern Lakes enhancement project or not?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, part of the challenge with going to rates and then having the Yukon Utilities Board direct the Yukon Energy Corporation to have another round of consultation is because the Yukon Utilities Board believes that the Southern Lakes enhanced storage project is a cost-effective way of reducing Yukon's need to use LNG and diesel to generate electricity during the winter when demand for energy is the highest.

There are previous energy ministers sitting across the way. I know that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin could have probably taken an opportunity to speak to past ministers who would have explained this very complex project. But the fact is that we are in a very interesting situation. We have multiple watersheds across the territory that are at very low levels. We continue to burn thermal and we're at a point where all Members in this Legislative Assembly just a few days ago committed to making sure that we took the proper steps to ensure that we understand what our world is going through.

When you take that into consideration, we understand that there are absolutely mixed feelings about this project. I look forward to the next question.

**Mr. Hassard:** It is time for the government to actually get down to governing, so let's cut to the chase here.

Last week, the minister delivered a ministerial statement where he bragged that his government was shutting down the proposed thermal plant, which would have addressed our energy needs. He can pretend that he had nothing to do with the decision all he wants, but he is the Minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation.

We also have the minister from Southern Lakes.

So it is time for them to tell us where the government stands on this project. Will they proceed with it, or will they listen to residents of Marsh Lake who showed up to a consultation last night — again — to tell the government to scrap this idea?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I believe that there were Yukoners there last night who said, "You should scrap this project." I think there have been Yukoners who have come and spoken to me and who said, "You should scrap this project." I think there have been many Yukoners who have come to me and said, "You cannot scrap this project." We have heard the Yukon Utilities Board say, "You need to go back and have another

conversation, because the previous government spent millions and millions of dollars on this and you need to get it right.”

I am glad that the member opposite has clearly stated his position and has said it in the media. The Leader of the Official Opposition has said that their cornerstone for energy in the Yukon was to spend \$65 million on a piece of infrastructure to burn diesel. What I saw on the first day I walked in and saw 64 slides on their \$800,000 plan was that biomass wasn't taken into consideration and there wasn't a plan for partnerships with communities like Atlin or the Taku River Tlingit.

So we are going to take a look at all of the options. We are listening to Yukoners. They have spoken loudly, and we are going to move forward. I am not going to make any decisions today, because I am waiting to hear what has come up from a very professionally led consultation.

### Question re: Contract procurement

**Mr. Kent:** I have some procurement questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. This summer, our office received a number of complaints from contractors about the Liberal government abandoning their previous practice of making some of the bid prices known immediately after certain jobs close. We now see delays of days and sometimes weeks in getting those numbers published.

The concerns raised by those who contacted our office were focused on contractors not knowing if they will have enough bonding or capacity, as they don't know if they have won multiple jobs or no jobs. There are also supply contracts for simple things like the purchase of headlights that are taking longer than a week to publish those prices.

Why was this change to the process made, and what rationale was used to make it?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The Government of Yukon posts construction tender prices as quickly as possible once a tender has closed. The government has issued 37 requests for bid tenders for construction projects between April 1 and October 1, 2019. Of those, more than 60 percent were posted in one to two days. Approximately 20 percent were posted in three to four days. Only two projects took more than five days to post — fewer than five percent. Five projects were cancelled, accounting for 14 percent of the total projects. In these cases, prices were not posted.

These stats were given to the Yukon Contractors Association, which I met with over this issue this summer.

**Mr. Kent:** As I mentioned in my previous question, for many of those projects, those bids were opened immediately after closing, and there was a public opening. The minister didn't answer: What rationale was used to depart from that change?

One of the other questions that we had on procurement was about the reallocation of resources within Highways and Public Works. The most recent example was the paving project on the Alaska Highway along Marsh Lake from Nolan Drive to the Marsh Lake transfer station turnoff. This project was tendered so late in the construction season that the contractor was finishing it and lines were being painted in snowy conditions. Part of the contract was also moving two sets of Jersey barriers

that had been placed by a contractor earlier in the year so that asphalt could go down. For these reasons, we believe that the minister chose this project after something else fell through.

Can the minister tell us where the money came from for this paving job?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As the member opposite knows, we have had lots of discussions about this, and we have done an awful lot of work changing the way in which we forecast and tender projects. We are tendering a lot of projects earlier in the season so that businesses can take full advantage of Yukon's short, intense building season.

That effort has been successful. In 2019, we have put out more than \$66 million worth of seasonally dependent construction tenders by the end of March, with an added \$18 million in projects tendered by the end of May. Altogether we have put out tenders for small, medium, and large seasonally dependent construction contracts totally approximately \$84 million. As a matter of fact, in my conversations with contractors this summer, that effort was appreciated. Actually, I was told that the reason why the Dawson City runway paving got done so well this year was because we actually managed to get that contract out earlier. They had never seen anything like it.

**Mr. Kent:** We have also heard that a lack of road-building jobs and late tendering of them have led to problems for contractors keeping staff. Many staff moved to places like Alberta or British Columbia as they couldn't wait around to see if their Yukon boss would get work.

This left some scrambling to hire once contracts finally came out and were awarded. Of course, we know that the Liberals made a campaign commitment to tender all seasonally dependent contracts by March of each year. They have now broken that promise three years in a row.

In the Liberal throne speech of April 2017, they said — and I quote: “Your new government will tender its major summer construction contracts by the end of March next year. That makes good business sense.” Then this spring, only two years after that throne speech, the minister said in the local media — and I'll quote again: “... 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.”

Why did the minister abandon the campaign and throne speech promise to tender seasonally dependent contracts by March of each year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** There is an awful lot to unpack in a very short period of time in that multi-faceted question. Mr. Speaker, I don't think the member opposite — perhaps he wasn't listening to my last response when I went over the right time — seasonally dependent contracts and how we have managed to do a really admirable job getting those contracts out in time and have heard some appreciation from industry.

The member opposite was talking about road-building contracts. I have spoken with the road construction industry and we heard their concerns. They are elated, Mr. Speaker, at the fact that we have \$157 million — the largest single capital project in Yukon's history is going forward on the north Klondike Highway next year. They are really happy to hear that



Gateway is underway and that next year we are going to be building the Carmacks bypass. They are really happy to hear that the Robert Campbell Highway is getting upgraded between Ross River and Faro. There is so much roadwork coming that they are just elated. We have done a lot of bridge work and a lot of work on our highways. We are going to continue that work to make them safer and better so that Yukoners travelling between our communities have a safer trip.

**Question re: Seniors housing**

**Ms. White:** This spring, a motion on the safety and security of Yukon seniors in Yukon Housing buildings in Whitehorse was debated and passed unanimously. The motion agreed to consultation with the residents and a security-risk assessment in conjunction with the RCMP. We were feeling hopeful that there would be positive actions and solutions put in place. The Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation indicated that 24-hour, seven-day-a-week security would be provided in two buildings — and I quote: "... until we can come up with a plan or least deter some of the folks who seem to be occupying these facilities." We know, from speaking to residents in different downtown buildings, that the 24-hour security lasted only a few weeks, but that the same safety concerns continue to be an issue today.

Mr. Speaker, since there is no 24-hour security, what concrete steps have been taken to ensure the ongoing safety and security of people living in Yukon Housing Corporation seniors apartments?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Referring back to June, when the Member for Whitehorse Centre sent a letter specifically to some facilities that had some safety concerns — I believe at that time we responded in a formal letter that was tabled today, raising the concerns of safety within the Yukon Housing Corporation's downtown seniors residences. We have a number of units across the territory, and what we have done with the aging in place and the key deliverables that we're working toward — which arrived straight from the seniors themselves — is looking at programs and services that are better aligned to meet the needs of seniors.

We recognize and appreciate that there are concerns in specific residences, and we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that overall wellness and safety of all our tenants is a priority and something that we take very seriously. In response to the concerns raised by some of the tenants at Yukon Housing Corporation, we have planned and are implementing a number of key safety and security-related initiatives. The seniors engagement specialists have been engaged to have regular contact, and I will answer the second question, hopefully with more information.

**Ms. White:** Residents of Greenwood Manor recently sent a report, dated September 24, to the minister and opposition parties, outlining the ongoing health and safety concerns of the residents and what they consider a lack of action. Concerns included strangers wandering the hallways, apartments being buzzed at all hours, insufficient security surveillance, and poor safety design of laundry rooms.

Today I tabled the letter from July 3, which the minister mentioned, and it says in that letter that Yukon Housing Corporation was working to install security cameras in all of the multi-unit buildings, but first needed to undertake a privacy impact assessment.

Will the minister please tell this House: Has the privacy impact assessment been completed, and are security systems being installed in all Yukon Housing Corporation's seniors apartment buildings?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** As the seniors engagement specialists have been engaged with regular tenants of the seniors units, we have been meeting on a bi-weekly basis to meet with the seniors and of course to listen to them and to look at solutions within the various respective buildings that we have — understanding how and what we do when we install security cameras and the privacy issues that are associated with installing these video cameras. We are working toward — the vision is to have security cameras, but of course we have to ensure that we don't breach privacy rules and laws. We are working with our partners to ensure that we address the plan.

We are finalizing the privacy impact assessment as we speak. Once that's completed, we will ensure that we have the necessary tools in place to better monitor and track.

**Ms. White:** We've been raising the health and safety concerns of seniors for over a year. We've asked about fire drills and emergency plans. We've asked questions about the lack of security and the ongoing risks that seniors face in their own homes. We'll give the minister credit for the fact that there are now muster stations and, as I note, some buildings have had fire awareness information shared with them and even a fire drill.

Seniors have engaged with staff but are not feeling heard. The minister agreed last spring and again in July to explore options for resident building superintendents to assist with resolving issues before they become potentially dangerous situations.

Mr. Speaker, will the Yukon Housing Corporation be putting in place on-site building superintendents or managers in Yukon seniors complexes?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** As the issues arise in respective facilities, if there's an imminent need to bring in security services and supports, we do that effectively. What we are doing is — we're not proposing to have 24-hour security for all of our facilities. That would not be, I would say, a very good use of our efforts. We need to work with the seniors and we are doing that through the seniors action strategies and we are looking at our multi-unit buildings in conjunction with our accessibility advisory committees. We are looking at safety, security, and accessibility in all of our facilities.

For immediate issues related to tenant security, we have put in place measures and we are listening and hearing what the tenants are saying. We appreciate really where they are. Of course if there is someone walking in uninvited, then that becomes a concern. It's very difficult when we have a facility where there is a buzz-in system and multiple units. It's hard to control that, so we are working with the tenants to look at some alternative options and what we do and how we essentially

engage with the seniors to put in place the necessary measures. They of course are being advised on alternative options.

**Question re: Roadside brush-clearing**

**Ms. Hanson:** Yesterday, I raised questions about the government's approach to roadside clearing. Specifically, I asked the minister whether he had consulted with the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Tourism and Culture about the potential impacts of the new approach to clearing.

The minister responded by saying that Highways and Public Works has the right to implement changes in the right-of-way. While that is correct, it is important that this government consider the potential residential, business, and ecological impacts of a strategy that is being rolled out Yukon-wide. \$3 million will be spent on roadside clearing, with a 255-percent increase in the amount of vegetation removed.

There is a high likelihood that concerns about environmental and business impacts will continue over the next six years if not addressed here and now.

Did the Minister of Highways and Public Works seek input from the ministers of Tourism and Culture and Environment when developing this new roadside-clearing strategy?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm really happy to address this issue again for day two on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and I thank the member opposite for her questions this afternoon.

The Government of Yukon takes the safety of the travelling public very seriously, and we have implemented this new modernization program that will improve the quality and frequency of highway and roadside maintenance. Through the greater brush-clearing, line-painting, clear zone safety, and roadside barriers and delineation that we implement over the next several years, the new roadway maintenance improvement program will enhance highway safety throughout the Yukon.

As I said yesterday, this year under the new program, three kilometres of new barriers have been installed, more than 1,000 kilometres of highway will be brushed, and approximately 1,600 kilometres of lanes will be painted. Mr. Speaker, the member is correct: The Minister of Environment, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Minister of Community Services, the Minister of Economic Development, the Premier, and I — we talk all the time. We talk about many issues. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Economic Development and I have met with CPAWS and the Yukon Conservation Society to talk about how we build, maintain, and improve our roads to make sure that we do not fragment the ecology, how we limit the spread of invasive species — I await the next question, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Hanson:** I think we all know that wider is not better.

We are merely seeking confirmation about the roles the Minister of Environment and Minister of Tourism and Culture have played. The Department of Environment raised a number of concerns in the past about potential wildlife impacts that improper or poorly planned roadside clearing can have. Specifically, they stated that splintered tree stumps and debris left behind could easily puncture the feet and legs of caribou, moose, and elk. Along certain sections of the south Klondike

Highway and Tagish Road, these dangerous conditions are clearly visible post-clearing.

When the work of one department impacts the responsibilities of another, it is up to the minister to ensure that certain standards are being met. What steps has the Minister of Environment taken to ensure that the concerns raised by her department are taken into consideration for the duration of the new road-clearing program?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The Member for Whitehorse Centre and I have been getting the exact same information. I have been speaking to residents of Tagish and have heard their concerns about the splintering of trees. I have brought it up with the Department of Highways and Public Works, and they assure me that the job, when complete, will take care of those issues.

As I have said, we have worked very closely, and we are working very diligently, to change the way that Highways and Public Works considers these projects. We are now considering invasive species and plant life, like the clover we see on the sides of roads, and trying to work on ways to limit the spread of these plants. We are also working to make sure our animals and wildlife are protected, which is one of the reasons why we're undergoing this roadside improvement program.

In opposition to what the member opposite said, wider is actually better. We do actually see further down the road. Anybody who has driven our highways knows this is the case. When I was in the member's neighbourhood the other day, in Crag Lake, visiting that area, I did hear those residents' concerns.

**Ms. Hanson:** The Yukon NDP is supportive of roadside clearing efforts, but there are, and will continue to be, questions about a one-size-fits-all approach when it impacts businesses, wildlife, and homes. Yesterday, we raised the concerns of a number of tourism operators in the Southern Lakes area, but who will it be next time? The government has announced funding for needed upgrades to the north Klondike Highway. There are many successful tourism operators along that stretch of road. There are tourism and other businesses along Fox Lake and Henderson Corner, as well as the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in teaching farm, that come to mind as places that could be impacted by a 20-metre expansion of roadway clearing.

One of the recommendations of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* was to break down silos and to implement a one-government approach to tourism. Has the Minister of Tourism and Culture discussed the potential for accommodating the specific circumstances of tourism operators who may be impacted by a one-size-fits-all approach to clearing?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have heard the concerns of the residents of Crag Lake and Tagish, and I have heard from the tourism operators. I met with them and had a public meeting that went on for several hours. I heard their concerns. I spoke with them in Mayo at the Peel watershed regional land use signing ceremony. I met with them there and had a long conversation with a tourism operator up there as well. It was a very good conversation.

Mr. Speaker, when I visited the member opposite's neighbourhood and spoke with her neighbours and saw what

they needed, I did hear what they had to say. I empathize and sympathize with their concerns — I really do. When I heard their concerns, I went back to the department and talked to the roadside engineers. I asked them to have a look at it and they actually did alter the plans. It is not a one-size-fits-all situation. We are listening to Yukoners. I certainly heard their concerns in technical terms. I listened, I heard the concerns, and I actually adapted the plan to maintain the safety that we are looking for, but to also recognize the sincere concerns of the residents living in Crag Lake, Tagish, and other areas.

**Question re: Affordable housing**

**Mr. Cathers:** The average price of a house is now over \$530,000, and this is unaffordable for many Yukoners. We have also seen the wait-list for social and seniors housing skyrocket under the Liberal watch. Yesterday, we asked the government about decisions that they have made that are having a negative impact on access to housing. In response, the Premier got up and said — and I quote: “The member opposite can try to paint a picture of us cutting money toward housing, but I would counter that by saying that the evidence is clearly the opposite.”

Mr. Speaker, if anyone painted this picture, it was the Premier himself. The Liberal budget made significant cuts to housing programs. That is the evidence. This includes the down payment assistance program. In this year’s budget, the Liberals cut the program by 80 percent.

Why did the Premier make major cuts to this program while finding money to give himself a raise?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It is correct that housing prices have gone up. I heard on the radio as well that in our economy, which is doing very well, this is one of the side effects. It is definitely something we need to address.

Here is what I will say — and I look forward to the Minister of Yukon Housing Corporation standing to respond to supplementary questions: This year, we put forward a budget of \$20 million, but we just added in the supplementary budget nearly another \$10 million. There is just about \$30 million on lot development across the territory, which is an important aspect of the housing market. That number is more than the four years that the Yukon Party had in their last term. So in one year, we are putting more money into lot development.

We agree that there is a need to invest. We are investing significantly. I am really thankful for the work that the department is doing, and I look forward to hearing the response from the Minister of Yukon Housing Corporation to talk about other programs that we are working on to help make sure that we focus on housing here in the territory.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that wasn’t an answer to the question. I do have to remind the minister that the largest single source of pressure on the housing market is the Liberal government’s hiring spree, with 450 new full-time positions, which, by comparison, is like adding a town the size of Carmacks or Mayo to the government payroll.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Premier claimed that the evidence shows that his government isn’t cutting money toward housing. He also said, “We are increasing our abilities to get

housing to Yukoners who need it.” But if we look at the budget again, we see what else the Liberals have cut for housing money. The first mortgage loan program — the Liberals cut that program by \$1.5 million. This program is for Yukon residents who need to borrow up to the average real estate price to purchase an existing home.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how cutting this important program increases the ability to get housing to Yukoners who need it and why this program was not a priority, but giving himself a raise was?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I think it’s a little rich coming from the Member for Lake Laberge, speaking about housing projects and where we are. Cancelling housing projects is why we are where we are today.

We are working to meet the demand of affordable housing through our partnership initiatives through the private sector, governments, our First Nation partnerships, and non-governmental organizations. Over the last two years, our investments in housing programs and commitments to housing development supported over 400 homes in the Yukon. We are now looking at rural Yukon as a key priority area and a focus. That is where we are putting our energy, Mr. Speaker.

We are working with Yukoners to look at affordability. We are looking as well at the social requirements within our community. We are looking at seniors housing within our communities and we are looking at accessibility. Those are things that, I must say, the previous government didn’t put a lot of effort into historically, and we are doing that now with our partners.

I am very proud of the work of the Yukon Housing Corporation.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that wasn’t an answer. I do have to remind the minister that they are entering their fourth year in government. It’s time to take responsibility for their own actions. The largest single source of pressure on the housing market is the Liberal government’s hiring spree.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier made some bold claims. He said that his government isn’t cutting money toward housing, but the evidence in their own budget shows they have made significant cuts to a number of housing programs. Let’s look at the owner-build program. This one, the Liberals cut by 40 percent. What’s the Premier’s response? “Meh.”

Mr. Speaker, again, this government has shown its ability to find money for renovations to add to the Cabinet office, personal electronics — and giving the Premier a raise, of course. But meanwhile, we’ve seen cuts to housing programs that Yukoners were depending on.

Will the Premier agree to reverse these cuts that he made in the budget to these housing programs?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We heard the same narrative yesterday from the Yukon Party. Reallocation is not cuts, Mr. Speaker. We heard them saying that we’re cutting Cornerstone because that project is on hold until next year. That is not a cut; that is still in the financial framework. Those dollars are still there and they’re still being used for Cornerstone. Sixty-one units of housing with service, of those 400. The minister for housing spoke about 216 new, repaired, or renovated affordable homes,

14 home ownership options for Yukoners, and over 200 homes across the Yukon housing continuum for the housing initiative fund.

If we answer the questions and the member opposite doesn't like the answer, it doesn't mean we're not answering it. We have the Minister of Community Services as well talking about the amount that we've done in two years — surpassing what the previous government did in four years. I sat in opposition watching \$20 million in social housing sit here and not be allocated and then finally being put out to be allocated and then ripped back again because it didn't fit for the Yukon Party's narrative.

We will not take advice from the members opposite when it comes to housing.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

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

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

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

**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 third time and do pass.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I am pleased to rise a final time to speak to Bill No. 3, entitled *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*.

This new act is a significant step forward in protecting the health and well-being of Yukoners, particularly young people. Reducing current use of tobacco and vaping products and discouraging young non-users from beginning to use them are both important to our government. We believe that raising the minimum age for the purchase of tobacco and vaping products to 19 years will help to restrict youth access to these potentially harmful and addictive items. Having one consistent minimum age for the purchase of tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, and cannabis removes any possible confusion when it comes to young Yukoners' access to these potentially addictive substances. Removing colourful vaping products from open display will also help to reduce the appeal of vaping for young people and make it more difficult for them to have access to vaping liquids and accessories in retail locations.

We know that legislation is an important tool to prevent young people from starting to use tobacco and vaping products. We also know that prevention initiatives are a key part of the strategy.

Our Kickin' Ash program is available for use with young Yukoners whether they are in the school environment or at

another venue, such as a youth group. Health Promotion coordinators facilitate presentations to groups of young people on tobacco use and on vaping. The vaping presentation includes important information on health risks, the marketing and media behind vaping, and decision-making tools that participants can apply in real life.

Health Promotion also has prevention tools and resources that are designed for youth. Teachers, counsellors, youth group leaders, and young people looking to get more information can contact them directly to find out about arranging presentations, getting prevention tools, and assessing funding available to help tobacco and vaping prevention programs and activities that focus on young people.

We are committed to improving the health and well-being of young Yukoners and will continue to design and deliver programming that meets young people where they are at and encourages positive, personal decision-making.

The new act will prohibit vaping in all of the same places as smoking. I was encouraged to see that this proposal was strongly supported by Yukoners through our public engagement in May of this year. Smoking and vaping can have health impacts for both the person using them and for those around them. The legislation will help to protect the health of all Yukoners by reducing exposure to smoke and vapour. While the evidence regarding health impacts of second-hand vapour is being gathered, there is extensive evidence about the negative health impacts of second-hand smoke, and we are acting accordingly.

We are also helping to protect the health of Yukoners through the QuitPath program. Increasing steadily since 2012, there are over 300 people taking part in QuitPath this year. Last year, there were 345 participants, with half located in communities outside of Whitehorse. This successful program encourages and supports adult smokers to reduce or to end their use of tobacco products. While the greatest strength of QuitPath is the individualized support for each participant, there is an excellent website at [quitpath.ca](http://quitpath.ca) with lots of resources for those seeking to quit smoking as well as for those who want to help them in their journey, including family, friends, and health care professionals. Quitting smoking is a challenge, and QuitPath provides in-person and online support services to Yukoners to stop smoking and stay smoke-free.

The *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* will build on the strengths of the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. It goes beyond the current act to address vaping, clarifying the prohibitions on smoking and vaping, and increases the Government of Yukon's ability to work with the federal government in enforcing the legislation.

Once a new act comes into force and inspectors are appointed, the Yukon government will be able to undertake inspections and enforce requirements of this act, including the ban on the sale of flavoured tobacco products. This ban already exists in the federal *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act*. By adding it to our new act, we will be able to bring enforcement closer to home with Yukon-based inspectors.

Vaping is of particular concern, and this has increased over the last few months as every week has brought news of vaping-

related health problems and even deaths. While the exact cause or causes for these illnesses have yet to be determined, we are working closely with colleagues across Canada, particularly with the Yukon's chief medical officer of health, to assess the evolving situation and to determine how best to proceed to protect Yukoners' health.

Our first step in protecting Yukoners' health from the negative impact of vaping is to bring the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* into force this year. At the same time, we will be moving forward with the regulations to expand upon and support additional elements of the legislation, such as the prohibition of certain flavoured vaping products and specifications for no-smoking and no-vaping signs.

Promoting the health and well-being of Yukoners is our top priority, and we heard clearly from the public during the engagement period earlier this year that the majority of Yukoners support our proposed approach to addressing the sale, use and prohibition, and promotion of tobacco and vaping products.

In closing, I would like to say again that the main purpose of the new *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. The need for this protection is particularly urgent, given the steep rise in youth rates of vaping over the past few years and the serious emerging health impacts of vaping.

Thank you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their support in moving forward with this important piece of legislation.

I move that Bill No. 3, entitled *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Ms. McLeod:** I'm pleased to rise at third reading on Bill No. 3, entitled *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act*. I don't really have any comments to make at third reading. I understand that the majority of the respondents to the online survey that the government did were supportive of the control.

The one concern I do have — and I have mentioned this to the minister — in fact, I got her to confirm, and the minister just referenced that regulations that are going to follow this legislation are going to expand the impact of this legislation. Obviously, that has not been consulted on. The minister has confirmed that she does not plan to do any consultation on the regulations that will come from this bill.

That is my concern. We have gotten into the practice of consulting Yukoners on matters that affect them, and the regulations that come from this — and it sounds like they will be a little bit stronger than the bill — those are no different. So I encourage the minister to reconsider her position and decision to not consult on these regulations and to proceed to engage Yukoners.

With that, I say thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. White:** Today, in speaking to the third reading of Bill No. 3, I want to highlight the concerns I have, which I did speak about during Committee of the Whole, which are that I know for sure that, as an MLA, I received lobbying e-mails from two vaping companies, as did my colleague for Whitehorse Centre.

The reason I highlight this is that, to my knowledge, the regulations for the lobbyist registry have yet to be created and there is no way for me to direct these communications. I'm flagging that and highlighting that as a concern.

I asked in Committee of the Whole about a tenant's security or right to having a smoke-free home over another tenant's right to smoke. This was in relation especially to the Yukon Housing Corporation. I was told those were things that were dealt with in the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and they would again be discussed in regulations. I'll flag that, when you live in a home and you're not a smoker, you don't want cigarette smoke or, in this case, vaping vapour in your home either.

The concerns I raised are ones that still exist for me. I still have these concerns. I am, however, excited that vaping will be regulated in the Yukon and it won't feel like the wild, wild west out there and that this will empower people and facilities to ask people to take their vaping outside.

With that, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon NDP supports Bill No. 3.

**Mr. Cathers:** In speaking to the bill, I would just ask the minister one final point for clarification, which has come to my attention. As the minister no doubt knows, if there is any potential ambiguity in legislation, the debate that is recorded in Hansard can have an effect on interpretation of a bill and help guide that interpretation.

Particularly in Division 2 of the bill, which is on page 10 of the copy I have — the provisions in section 11 of the bill — there are provisions, Mr. Speaker, as far as access to — the ability to enter a facility without a warrant, with exceptions being included there related to private residences. That section is also, I believe, referenced earlier in the legislation.

Just in terms of the ability for an inspector to access the facility without a warrant — if the minister could just provide some clarification on the understanding of that provision of the bill, that would be appreciated. Particularly, I mean the question of what is considered a "private residence" under this section of the legislation — whether that does include out-buildings, such as someone's garage, workshop, or greenhouse — if those are considered part of the private residence for the purpose of this act — because, while agreeing that there does of course need to be the ability for inspectors to be able to access public places, it is also, in my view, important to ensure that this legislation is not unduly intruding on the rights of citizens in their home and on their property.

If the minister could provide clarification regarding the definition of a "private residence" and what that includes — including whether it applies specifically to buildings such as someone's greenhouse, someone's shop, or someone's shed or garage — that would be appreciated.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I wanted to just thank the members opposite for the great feedback and of course the questions. We have gone through the briefings and presentations previously.

With respect to “private residence”, it is pretty clear in the act. The objective of the new act our government is taking — it is an important step to regulate access to and use of vaping products in the Yukon. We went through a public engagement process. We talked about the *Smoke-Free Places Act* and of course significant concerns around vaping-related illnesses.

I would like to just acknowledge the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for her feedback on the vaping products and the results of second-hand vapour, knowing that it is inconclusive and these are things we are certainly going to monitor as we implement and regulate this product. I wanted to just say that the prohibition, as we go forward, and the restrictions that apply will obviously be very closely monitored and we will be looking at expanding an education campaign as well to include the information to youth and targeting our young people.

I want to just, of course, thank the staff for doing this great work and for Yukoners giving us the feedback that got us to this point. I thank the members for their feedback as well.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

## Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

## Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

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

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 3 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 3 has passed this House.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Hutton):** Order. The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

## **Bill No. 200: Second Appropriation Act 2019-20 — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*. Is there any further general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have not much more to add to my response to the member opposite from our last day here in Committee of the Whole for the supplementary estimates other than to reiterate that the best cash management explanations come with our Public Accounts on a yearly basis. To put the members’ minds at ease, as of September 17, Standard & Poor’s re-affirmed Yukon’s double-A credit rating thanks to our ample liquidity and a track record of strong financial management. Liquidity is assessed at number 1, which is the highest rating that is given. According to Standard & Poor’s ratings, the territory shows a commitment to adequately matching revenues and expenditures, according to the report.

With that, I will cede the floor to the opposition for more general questions.

**Ms. Hanson:** I just have some brief comments and then a question for the Minister of Finance. I do intend to be brief.

Last year, when we were discussing the supplementary budget, I made some comments in support of the Minister of Finance, who had indicated that he thought it was important to focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of financial resources that are voted on in this Legislative Assembly. Today, I am again reminded of the importance of moving that conversation to a setting that is commonly used in other legislative assemblies, such as a non-partisan standing committee on public accounts or a standing committee on finance.

I think it is one thing for politicians to stand in this House — and we can boast about the record amounts of money in the

annual budget and record transfers from Ottawa. It is easy for politicians to get into rhetoric about whether we did or did not campaign on this or that, or whether or not this is politically something that is important. The fact of the matter is that, last spring, we voted on the main estimates.

The government majority passed the 2019-20 budget — a budget that was dispersed among departments and agencies for expenditures according to the *Financial Administration Act* and established policies governing the many government programs and services. I think, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, we are — all of us — charged with ensuring that the money voted on in this House is spent in accordance to the law and ensuring that it is spent effectively, efficiently, and with outcomes that can be measured. Equally important is to be able to answer the question, if it was not spent: Why not? When we are talking about the fact that the supplementary budget, although substantial, is relatively minor in the scheme of things, we need to be focusing on those areas, as I said, where we are not spending.

I know that the Premier has suggested that there could be a conversation in a committee of the Legislative Assembly called SCREP, which is an arcane phrase for a lot of people — Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges — but I honestly believe that we need to figure out a way, as a Legislative Assembly — because I am not talking about Standing Orders, I am talking about actually having us — all of us — because I think all members, whether we're government or not — we're elected to hold government to account for the stewardship of our financial resources. I don't think it is about politics. I think it is about getting the best value for the money that Yukon citizens and Canadian citizens are investing in this territory. I think that means sometimes taking it out of here and getting into the nitty-gritty of each department and each agency in a non-political, non-partisan way. Quite frankly, I don't think we have figured out a way to do that in this Legislative Assembly to date. It hasn't happened. I can tell you that I can be as guilty of that as anybody else because that is where it goes to. That is not what I think the public needs from us as legislators. I don't have an answer to that, Mr. Speaker, but I do think — I am interested in the Minister of Finance's views as to whether or not he supports the idea of exploring options for ensuring that accountability and that frank conversation, outside the constraints of another Standing Order — out of SCREP. So that is one question.

My second question arises, frankly, because we have today passed legislation with respect to the issue of vaping and all Members of this Legislative Assembly, I would assume, similar to us, as the New Democratic Party — the Third Party — have been in receipt of lobbying correspondence from proponents of the vaping industry asking that legislation not be passed, or that there be — whatever.

So, in November last year, the act was passed. My question for the minister who is also responsible for this legislation is: When will the regulations be in effect? When will we, as legislators — all of us and those who are covered by the act — be apprised of the regulations governing lobbying in this territory?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the member opposite for her questions. I think we are at a time — and it was eloquently put by the Leader of the Third Party as well — we are kind of at a place where we are held to past practices, as opposed to actually taking a look at how we should be doing things as we modernize and as we move forward.

One of those past practices is the assumption that a supplementary budget — in the past, where you had two budgetary processes and you would have all departments up — that gave the luxury of talking in general about all of those departments because they were in the bill. Now that there is a different accounting principle — because we are modernizing our processes and we are trying to be more accountable with the public purse — it does cause an issue. That's for sure.

We could take a look at the practices of the Members' Services Board and how it became what it did over the years as opposed to actually coming together as three parties and talking about the Public Accounts Committee or talking about the Members' Services Board, as it now effectively works, or about SCREP — even though the member opposite clearly has some kind of disdain for that particular — I guess it would be the concept. It wouldn't necessarily be the committee itself, but I guess maybe it would be the past practice or where it has been used or how it has not been used effectively.

Again, I will recommit to the same thing that I said on the floor last time. We had exactly this conversation as we were talking in Committee. I am more than willing to have those conversations with the leaders of the other parties. I know that the former Leader of the NDP has in the past told me about her perspective on what the Public Accounts Committee should look like. I disagree with growing the government to that size, but I don't disagree in principle about being able to take a look at how we do our processes.

I made the statement the other day as well that, if we could get through this legislative session with some pretty massive legislation in place — like the modernization of particular acts — and if we found ourselves in a situation for the first time in Yukon history of actually getting through all of the debate of the bills, then what a great time to have that conversation as well.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I know that is funny to the Member for Lake Laberge, but he doesn't take this very seriously anyway.

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

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier's statement would clearly seem to be insulting language pursuant to Standing Order 19(i). In keeping with a previous Speaker's ruling, I believe that type of ridiculous shot that he just made is out of keeping with the practices of this Assembly. I would ask you to have him retract that comment and apologize for it. He knows very well that I was laughing at the ridiculousness of his statement.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am merely observing the actions of the member opposite. I think this is a dispute among members.

### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Certainly my initial thought is that this is a dispute among members and doesn't rise to a point of order. I will review past rulings and, if necessary, get back to the members.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On the other question the member opposite brought up about if there was any new information about the implementation of the legislation for the *Lobbyists Registration Act* — I don't have anything new to report to the member opposite now. I agree with the member opposite that this is important legislation, especially seeing the type of lobbying we have been seeing now that the vaping act is out, but I don't have anything new to report to the member opposite.

**Ms. Hanson:** I apologize — just one last question. Since the minister is also responsible for the other matters in the throne speech — one that stood out was the announcement of a youth panel on climate change. When will we see the terms of reference and the appointment of that body?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** With this new initiative, we are taking the lead from the Youth Directorate when it comes to the youth panel. I don't have any new dates for the member opposite here today. I know the member opposite had expressed some interest in the media and wants to be part of this process. What I will endeavour to do — and this is going to happen soon, anyway — is sit down with our department and see where they are in that public engagement piece and the forming of that. I am open to suggestions from the member opposite — absolutely — and I'm very thankful that this is considered to be an important initiative from the NDP. Once we have more information on the timelines of the youth panel, we will definitely involve conversations with both parties.

**Ms. Hanson:** Just as follow-up to that, given that all of us in this Legislative Assembly are aware of youth who are keenly interested in this, what kinds of things should they be doing — what should we be advising them in terms of how they might get involved or who they might contact and how they might be considered eligible? Is there a budget associated with this initiative?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** From here, obviously there's nothing in the supplementary budget for this particular initiative, so all costs are being taken internally with the department. I don't have anything new to report to the member opposite with regard to those pieces.

We did, during the throne speech, let folks know what we have accomplished, where we are today, and where we are moving forward in the future. When we have any more information on the youth panel, we'll definitely be getting it to members opposite.

**Ms. McLeod:** I have some questions on health today.

I have some questions around the mental health hubs where, last spring, the minister said that she had staffed seven out of 11 of the mental wellness positions and that the balance was to be funded by the end of March of that year. Because I hear certain things in my community, I would like the minister

to confirm whether or not all of the positions have been filled in each of the hub communities?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe this is the same question that was asked of the minister in Question Period. I have nothing new to report from the question that was asked on that specific issue nor am I the minister responsible for that nor is that a line item in this supplementary budget.

I will say that we are very proud of the work that we do in mental wellness across the territory. We have opened up mental wellness hubs in Carmacks, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, and Dawson City that integrate and streamline services so that Yukoners can receive the supports that they need where they are, when they need it. We are very proud of that initiative.

As far as the full complement of FTEs in that particular department, I'm here prepared to speak to the supplementary budget which doesn't have a line item on additional costs or additional amount of money for Health and Social Services.

I forgot to introduce my Deputy Minister of Finance, Chris Mahar, who is with me today. We have lots of information here for the supplementary budget. I don't have a lot of information here on the mental wellness hires, in particular. I do believe this was asked in Question Period. I do believe there is also an opportunity through casework and letters to the minister to get the answers that the member opposite needs, especially when it comes to the fact that one of those mental wellness hubs is in her community. I know that she is a tireless advocate for mental wellness in Watson Lake.

We have introduced a new service delivery model to provide Yukoners in all communities with a wide range of high-quality, accessible, and consistent counselling services, and we are doing our best endeavours to make sure that all of these mental wellness hubs are at full capacity.

**Ms. McLeod:** I mean, that was not really an answer to my question. If I understand the Premier as to what he said, he is not prepared to answer any questions regarding health in this supplementary budget debate.

I find that pretty disappointing, and maybe the Premier could get some information from the Clerk of this Assembly as to what the proper procedure is. As I understand it, if members have any questions concerning votes that do not require new appropriations, the point in the proceedings at which to raise them would be during general debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole.

I would ask the Premier to get a ruling on that now.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am answering the questions that I have information on. Again, we are on a bill that has two departments that have increased funding. I am prepared to speak at length to those questions. The member opposite would have to give me a little bit of slack. I'm not here to debate specifically very specific questions on departments that aren't represented in the supplementary budget, and I would ask the members opposite: If we are having a general debate on vaping, would that be an appropriate place to start grilling the minister on questions on vaping?

It might, if the intent was to try to get two different pieces of information or try to catch somebody without the proper information — I could understand that, but I am answering the



questions as well as I can, being the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for the Executive Council Office. The member opposite asked me some specific questions about mental wellness, and I answered her question in general as well as I can here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

I will point out as well that the member opposite could very well send an e-mail to the Minister of Health and Social Services and ask those particular questions, if she would like. There are lots of different opportunities to reach out to those ministers, if she actually wants to get the most accurate details.

### Chair's statement

**Chair:** If I could quote from a memo that was sent around by the Clerk — and it has been sent around numerous times in the past by the previous Clerk — if members have any questions concerning votes that do not require new appropriations, the point in proceedings at which to raise them would be during general debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole. That allows questions to be asked. There is no obligation for responses to be given.

**Ms. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pretty sure that Yukoners would be shocked to hear that this government is not prepared to answer to Yukoners.

This spring, we had one afternoon in which to talk about health — one afternoon out of a \$3.5-million budget. Yukoners deserve better. If this government wants to hide behind the fact that we can certainly ask questions, but they don't have to answer them, I would like to get that out there to Yukoners — I surely would.

This morning, the government was advised that we were prepared to talk about health today. If they chose not to be prepared to talk about health today, that's a different matter. The Premier is indicating he is totally prepared to talk about health, but he has actually just said he has no information about health. He only knows about those two things that are in front of him.

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

**Ms. McLeod:** This is my time, Mr. Premier. I believe I have 20 minutes on the floor, and I pretty much can say —

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

### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I respectfully ask that the members opposite address their questions through the Chair, as opposed to directly to the members opposite.

### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** Thank you. Ms. McLeod, please.

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Chair, I apologize for being so fearsome.

I will ask questions, and the Premier can continue to stand up and tell me he has no answer, and then we'll let Yukoners know.

Mr. Premier, for those communities that do not have a mental —

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

### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, I would respectfully ask the members opposite to ask their questions directly through the Chair, as opposed to directly to the ministers on this side.

### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** Thank you. I agree. Ms. McLeod, please.

**Ms. McLeod:** Can the Premier tell us what the staffing levels are at the mental health hubs throughout Yukon? I have asked this question before, and the Premier gave us a worn answer, but I'm looking for some specifics. I know the Premier would say, "Gosh, these questions have been asked already." But you know what? We kind of ask them every year, because we're still waiting for these hubs to be staffed.

Could the Premier kindly confirm that the mental health hubs are staffed to their full levels?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will endeavour to get that information back to the member opposite. But I would say, on the contrary — she is saying that I am not answering the questions. I am answering. She asked me about mental wellness — I answered her question about mental wellness. We have hired mental health workers to provide professional services for Yukoners in need with addictions and mental health support. We have secured additional funding from the federal government to improve access to mental health and to addictions services in the territory, which includes access to quality treatment services for people with substance use disorders. We have introduced presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder for emergency response workers. We are enabling employers and staff to work together on prevention of psychological injuries through new regulations that focus on workplace mental health.

A lot of this work is being done, again, through mental wellness hubs that the member opposite is talking about. I don't have the specific numbers that the member opposite is looking for, but I will endeavour to get those for her.

**Ms. McLeod:** So the Premier does not have the answer.

For all of those communities that do not have a mental health hub, are there mental health workers who visit each of these communities and do they have a set rotation or a schedule?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, as I am here prepared to debate the supplementary budget, I don't have those numbers in front of me either, but I will endeavour to get them back through the minister.

**Ms. McLeod:** When we go back to the Spring of 2018, the Minister of Health and Social Services said that there were two mental wellness support workers, one clinical health counsellor, one mental health nurse, and a staff person who were to provide child and youth counselling in Watson Lake — and I'm talking about Watson Lake right now. Additionally,

there were other counsellors to serve the public around youth- and family-focused therapy. This was provided by Many Rivers.

Can the minister — or, in this case, the Premier — please confirm for the House: How many positions in mental health have been created at this time to cover off those positions that were essentially vacated by Many Rivers?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't have those numbers in front of me, as the Minister of Finance and as the Minister responsible for the Executive Council Office. I do know that past practices from the past Yukon Party government had two mental health nurses who were responsible for all rural Yukon. That was every community outside of Whitehorse. The one who was serving Dawson City had to do a road trip between Old Crow, to Dawson City, to Stewart, to Mayo, and to Faro, then into Ross River, and then into Carmacks — quite the schedule.

I have seen, as a teacher, different services come and go and, you know, those services being taken away from different areas — and it's hard. It's hard for one person to be responsible for so wide an area, so I am so proud of the Department of Health and Social Services for the whole-of-government approach — coming to healthier, happier lives. I'm very proud of the work that we are doing to ensure that Yukoners are leading healthier, happier lives. We are providing supported independent living environments for Yukoners with 10 full-time home and community care positions hired, re-enabled the respite program at the Thomson Centre, the opening of the Whistle Bend centre, and increased accommodations for people receiving Meals on Wheels.

I don't know the specific numbers that the member opposite is asking for her community in Watson Lake, but I do know that a mental wellness hub in that community, with more than one — well I guess it would have been a part-time person in the past — where that one mental health nurse would have had to work in Watson Lake, but also in a whole other myriad of communities. There are more people on the ground and more people providing services than in the past.

**Ms. McLeod:** I would like to remind the Premier that they are going into four years of government, so it gets a little — I am asking about what his government is doing. They have told us, of course, what great things that they are doing, and I just want to get some more information about that for my constituents and for other Yukoners. Obviously, the record will reflect that we are not going to get any answers here today.

My question was: How is the minister addressing the gaps in service since the closing of Many Rivers in Whitehorse and in other communities?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is quite obvious that the member opposite came in with a notion already. I imagine they already have their tweets ready and their social media campaign ready — that we're not providing the answers. What I am saying is that I am expanding on what I do know and what I have here prepared for me. I am also endeavouring to get the answers that I don't have at my fingertips for the member opposite.

So the member opposite can say that I am avoiding the question, whereas, no, I'm offering to get those specific answers for the member opposite. Maybe the member opposite

doesn't want those specific answers. Maybe that is why the member opposite is asking me as opposed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I cannot guess as to why, but for the record, I have committed to getting the answers back to her that I do not have at my fingertips because I am here prepared with my deputy minister to speak about the supplementary budget.

**Ms. McLeod:** I would be more than happy to discuss this with the Minister of Health and Social Services.

The last time we spoke about the Sarah Steele Building, there was a wait-list of about — and I am talking about the long-term recovery program — two months, and I'm wondering what the current wait times are for persons seeking treatment.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, I don't have very specific information here in general debate. I can say that there have been diversions at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. There has been the Mental Wellness and Substance Use hubs in those four communities that have a total complement of up to 30 staff. I will get the specific numbers for the member opposite as they come in.

We have increased the number of mental wellness workers in the communities. As of January this year, I believe the number is — and my number may not be adequate to this time frame, as my last update was on September 25 — as of January of this year, we did have 27 staff in Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services positions within the community services. We are supporting the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in their emergency shelter as well. We have begun the implementation of a sexual assault response team, and we are very happy about that. It is a monstrous step forward in an extremely important area. We are working on a draft for a FASD action plan. We have changed the rules so that dental hygienists can provide care to Yukoners who are unable to see dentists on a regular basis. We have been improving wheelchair access to eight territorial campsites.

We have been doing a lot of work. I can speak in general to our commitment to living healthier and happier lives. We have put lots of taxpayers' money toward these extremely important programs and services because that is what we hear from Yukoners — that they want that. They also want to make sure that we are accountable for our money. Therefore, the independent committee looking into Health and Social Services spending, funding, programs, and services — making sure that we keep those services that Yukoners are providing — but what we have effectively done is that we have provided more, not less, of those.

**Ms. McLeod:** The question that I asked was: What is the current wait-time for treatment for persons seeking recovery treatment at the Sarah Steele Building?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Since the last time that the member opposite asked me that question 30 seconds ago, I don't have an update for her. I will get those numbers. We will endeavour to get those numbers, but we are here in general debate on a supplementary budget. I am prepared to speak to that budget. I'm happy to talk in general about healthier, happier lives and about mental wellness hubs and the initiatives that we have put forward, but, really, if the member opposite wanted those

specific questions answered, Health and Social Services staff are now hearing them in the Legislative Assembly and we will endeavour to get those back to her.

**Ms. McLeod:** I didn't catch that last part about what I had to do if I wanted to get answers to the questions. I would have thought that if the Premier was unable to answer questions on a specific topic, he would at least commit to getting the information. So far, that's not what I'm hearing.

Again, Mr. Chair, we told the Premier and his folks that we would be discussing health today.

So I don't have an answer about Many Rivers, and I don't have an answer about wait times.

The minister has gone on at length about — in Watson Lake and throughout the territory — aftercare for persons dealing with addiction issues, and the minister has said that she is quite keen on providing all of the supports that people need to look after their needs in their home communities.

My question is: What has been put in place this year to support those persons who have received treatment and are seeking some form of aftercare?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Aftercare is an extremely important subject — absolutely. In the past, with only two mental wellness nurses for all of the rural communities, there really wasn't a lot of aftercare. There was barely care to begin with. What we have done is we have expanded those services.

The member opposite has just contradicted me and said that I am refusing to get back to her with the answers. I have said repeatedly — to the questions that I don't have the material for here directly with me — that I will endeavour to get those answers back to the member opposite. I really appreciate the questions from the member opposite.

When it comes to aftercare — I have seen it time and time again over my time in opposition, Mr. Chair, where people would come back into their communities and get right back into the exact same situation that they left, which is not very helpful when you're finally getting down a path of sobriety. We are endeavouring to work on that.

The Minister of Health and Social Services has done so much work in this field. When we go out on community tours, that is what we hear. We hear that there are more programs and services. We are working with First Nation governments, we are working with municipalities, and we are having communities say that they have never had a trilateral conversation with the territorial government, the First Nation governments in those communities, and also the mayors and councils and the municipal governments in those communities. So we are breaking down barriers. We are doing more work for support and we are doing more work for mental wellness supports.

The minister can speak at length about aftercare in the many different ways that the minister can get to her feet on those questions. I don't have those answers available right now, as I am here in general debate, but I will endeavour to get back to the members opposite with answers to their very specific questions.

**Ms. McLeod:** I look forward to getting the answer regarding what work has been done this year to advance that, because it is obviously important to a lot of people in Yukon.

In the spring budget, there was a line item for \$100,000 identified for a homeless shelter in Watson Lake. When we did speak about it, the minister said that it was a matter of great importance to her. I am wondering what happened to the money. Has the money been dispersed and what was the outcome of that? Is there a program or project moving forward?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Can I get the member opposite to clarify? Is this a line item in the supplementary budget or in the main estimates?

**Ms. McLeod:** It was a line item in the mains this spring, which obviously affects this year's budget.

So it is a question about whether it was spent, who spent it, and what the plan is going forward to accommodate the project — if there is a project. I understand that the Premier will get back to me with the answers.

I want to move on to some questions about the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. Can the minister confirm for me that Whistle Bend Place is fully operational at this time? Are all of the beds being utilized?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I can't at this point. I don't have those materials in front of me. It is not my bailiwick, but the minister responsible would definitely have those answers for the member opposite.

It is great that we are getting these questions from the members opposite and we will endeavour to get back to them in a timely fashion.

**Ms. McLeod:** We don't know if it is fully operational. We don't know if all the beds are being utilized. We certainly won't know what the wait-list is for continuing care, so let's assume — I think it's possible that Whistle Bend Place is becoming full. My questions would be: What are the next steps for this government, and how are they going to move additional beds forward?

The Premier was quite vocal in some of his thoughts earlier, so he should be able to answer what the government's plans would be going forward.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am happy to talk about what I have said in the past about a 300-bed facility — absolutely. When we came in, there was no real plan for aging in place. There was a plan, based on a statistical analysis, of the need, Yukon-wide, for a 300-bed facility here in Yukon. We are talking about a generation of people who have gone through the effects of residential school. Now what we are seeing is a plan to have a one-size-fits-all answer. I was very adamant to say that I don't think that's the best thing for our elders. When you look at communities like Watson Lake or Dawson City or Old Crow, we need our elders in our communities as long as possible.

I am extremely proud of the work that the Minister of Health and Social Services has done to make sure that we allow folks to age in place and also build an amazing facility here in Dawson — the 150-bed facility that we have in Dawson. The public servants who run the place are doing an amazing job with state-of-the-art facilities and state-of-the-art

programming. I can't say enough — they won the Premier's Award of Excellence.

The members opposite can make it seem like I said one thing, but really, my criticism was you can't have it one-size-fits-all; you can't have all our elders come to Whitehorse. That's one of those things where, in the future, I think we would look back at that and say, maybe it was a best intention, but my goodness, there has to be a better way to make sure our elders stay in their communities so they can be vibrant members of that society — and that's what we're doing. We're spending lots of time and effort making sure we do everything we can to not only have a facility here for the needs — a 150-bed facility here for those extended care needs, but also expanding our programs, allowing our elders to stay in their communities for a lot longer — absolutely. I think that's an extremely important piece of the collaborative care model that we have embraced here in the Yukon Liberal Party government, and we will continue down that road.

I do apologize that the member opposite did tell us at House Leaders this morning that they wanted to talk about health. I want to talk about the supplementary budget, because that's my job today — to be here to represent a bill on the supplementary budget. So I will respectfully disagree that this would be the time where I'm supposed to be up-to-date on all the current numbers and on things that aren't necessarily in my file. But here's another piece, though: I am endeavouring, for the member opposite — because this is new. In the past, the Yukon Party would have two budgets every year, and so every department would be up in general debate, and so I understand why they would see this as a little bit confusing — this new way of actually adhering to the rules.

At the same time, I remember being in opposition, talking to the previous Minister of Health and Social Services. I would ask my question, and I would get a follow-up of 20 minutes of a public service announcement. My questions were never endeavoured to be answered. Then I would just get a little frustrated and say, fine, if the member opposite is not going to answer the question, I'm going to list them all, and they can get back to me if they want — they never did. We are endeavouring to do so.

As we change, as we modernize — I did this to the Third Party, as well — I'm willing to talk about how we can better use our time here in the Legislative Assembly to talk about the bills that are up for debate right now. I can understand the confusion for the member opposite, but at the same time, I will give the information I have. If there's a specific question they have on the supplementary budget, no problem. If they're ready to debate the line items therein — some of these more technical questions are the reason I have ministers. I am so proud to have the ministers I do have. There are a lot of files with a lot of information.

They have many opportunities — the opposition has many opportunities to talk and to ask questions of the ministers. Now is a great time to ask those questions. I don't have the answers readily available at my fingertips, but we will get back to them.

**Ms. McLeod:** It's kind of funny that the Premier thinks I'm confused by what's going on today. I am not confused on

any level. The Premier is not here to discuss items that are important to Yukoners — that is clear.

What is also clear, Mr. Chair, is that the Premier thinks that the rules of the Legislature don't apply to him — that is clear. I know he likes to talk about the past, but I suspect this Premier will be judged on his actions.

The Premier referenced a 150-bed care facility in Dawson, which I'm sure was a misspeak, because I'm sure he meant Whitehorse. I understood him to say that things are going well there. I did not get any clear indication as to how close to being full Whistle Bend Place is. I certainly respect and encourage the idea that we want to keep our seniors and elders in their home communities for as long as possible, which obviously leads me to another question, given that there was a major financial contribution from the federal government toward home care in the Yukon Territory. I understand it was a multi-year agreement with the federal government. I have not ever received an answer from the minister regarding what the timing or the payout of that money is, and I'm sure this would be the Minister of Finance's bailiwick. He must know where the money is.

Other questions I have asked the Minister of Health and Social Services are regarding what services are being provided to rural Yukoners as a result of this new funding. The people in the communities would tell me that they don't see any additional assistance for them. While we can certainly get behind the idea of keeping seniors and elders at home, there seems to be a disconnect between that concept and the actual doing of it.

My question is about how that money is being spent that we're receiving from the federal government in this regard and how much is going toward providing on-the-ground services for seniors and elders in Yukon's communities.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think we are going to just have to agree to disagree that the money is not being spent in the communities. If the member opposite has particular casework or a particular constituent who she feels needs to get into the minister's sight — if there is a particular issue, I am more than happy to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to make sure that Yukoners in our rural communities get equal access to health care.

I have been to the federal government with the Minister of Health and Social Services, negotiating a better deal for Health and Social Services. It is an interesting dialogue — you know, from the federal government's perspective — over many different governments — they all believe that they increase the amount of funding to health care to the provinces, but the provinces on the other hand — and this is usually led by Québec — disagree and believe that the percentage of the total of cost obviously is diminishing. In that conversation, both are right; both are wrong. It's more about, "How do we make sure that we have that accountability for the dollars that we do spend?"

Again, our commitment to Yukoners was to have a review of Health and Social Services, and that is a good narrative to bring to Ottawa when you're going there trying to negotiate monies for Health and Social Services and the territories — to be able to say, "Look, there are more expansive services, and when you expand your services and the scope of practice and

provide more services for Yukoners, that is going to come with a bigger cost.” But what we’re doing as well — on the other hand, we are trying our best to make sure that we are delivering these services in the most efficient way possible, trying our best to make sure that programs and services don’t suffer, but we work whole-of-government to make sure that we find ways to provide those services with the best bang for the buck.

I tell you, Mr. Chair, that goes a long way in the narrative when you’re going back to Ottawa. It was interesting this year in our meetings with the Council of the Federation in Saskatchewan — and it was actually Premier Kenney, who wears both hats. He sat as a federal minister and now also sits as Premier, and the conversations are very interesting, from his perspective, about territories and provinces and the constraints and their interpretation of the *Health Act*, compared to that perspective from the federal government. I don’t think it is necessarily a partisan thing. Of course, he was with the Conservatives, and it was the same narrative then as what we have now. But what I can say, Mr. Chair, is that, when it comes to Health and Social Services — when it comes to the health services and our ability to work with governments and to bring these conversations not only to the Northern Premiers’ Forums, but to the Western Premiers’ Conferences and then on to the Council of the Federation and also in the First Ministers’ meetings, when we have an opportunity for Health and Social Services to be at that table as well — I am very proud of the work that this government does to make sure that we maximize the amount of money for programs and services in rural communities.

**Ms. McLeod:** So the question I asked was: Where is the money? The Premier wanted to tell us about how they would like to make sure that people get the care they need — and that’s great. That’s great, but two years ago there already was a survey and a consultation done with seniors and elders throughout the territory and the minister promised that there would be a report on what they heard and what their plan would be going forward. That was two years ago. I don’t see any additional help for those people to date. I thought that, since it was a specific money question, that the Premier would have been able to tell us how that money was going to flow and where it was going to flow to, but I guess not today, Mr. Chair.

I would ask the Premier to get back to me on what the plan is, what the result of the survey with those seniors and elders was, and how their lives have been bettered in the last year with that federal funding.

I am going to ask some questions now. Yes, I have asked these in Question Period. No, I did not receive any answers. So I am hoping that today we can get some answers or at least a commitment to get some answers.

This summer, Whitehorse General Hospital experienced unexpected staffing leaves, which left many shifts not fully staffed in the maternity ward between May and July. Obviously Whitehorse General Hospital is important to all Yukoners, because, where possible, people from all over Yukon come into Whitehorse to have those babies. So I understand that support is often required from nursing agencies outside the Yukon to fill shifts, with the Yukon government covering travel,

accommodation, and, for some, weekly bonuses for nursing staff.

Has the minister considered providing specializing maternity certification to interested nurses to allow for a broader pool of local staff to fill vacancies in the maternity ward?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes, the member opposite did ask those questions in Question Period, and I can bring up the answer that the minister did provide. The member opposite did talk also about engagement.

Again, we have committed to doing better, more meaningful public engagement because we do believe that the perspective of independent citizens can inform the best possible decisions for Yukon — absolutely. We have made efforts to find out what meaningful public engagement looks like for Yukoners and we are working to make that a reality as well.

Yukon government launched a public engagement website, and of course members opposite know this — [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca) — in October 2017, and I always like to plug the website. It was to provide the public with a one-point access for all of our current engagement activities. Since 2017, we have hosted 68 engagements on [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca).

Again, the way that we get out and get information from the communities has been increased since the previous government. We know that some groups and stakeholders feel that they have not been adequately engaged on important issues in the past, so we want to do better at that. We are committed to continual improvement and to learning from our mistakes.

I do have to point out to the member opposite as well the great news that the Yukon Hospital Corporation is coming later on in this Sitting, which is another great opportunity to ask a myriad of questions — as well as operational questions of the department — let alone the questions that they have already asked in Question Period that they have gotten answers and responses to.

**Ms. McLeod:** I will grant that the minister provided responses, but I certainly don’t recall an answer.

Generally speaking, Mr. Chair, I would like to think that, when we get into debate on budgets, the minister is able to provide very fulsome answers to questions that we pose to her, so it’s unfortunate that we’re having this problem today.

I am interested to know what the current cost to the Yukon government is for sending patients out to Vancouver or anywhere else for radiation treatment and how that would compare to fitting out the hospital and providing treatment in Whitehorse.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As the member opposite understands very well, the expense of medevacs and medical travel is a large expense when it comes to our overall cost of providing health and social services. We are so lucky to have the services that we do have provided for us not only in British Columbia, but also in Alberta. When we go to negotiate with the federal government, it’s always hand in hand with our partners in medicine. We have a lot of great conversations with the jurisdictions that provide us with front and centre services when we have our medevacs coming in. It is absolutely a big expense — absolutely. I have heard the Minister of Health and Social

Services talk about this quite a bit on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, providing lots of answers as far as the costs that are associated with this.

I don't have those numbers right in front of me, but I will definitely endeavour to get those numbers back to the member opposite.

This is another interesting piece — when we went to talk at the First Ministers' meetings and the health ministers were with us at those meetings, it's hard for us to ask for pocketed, separated funding. Other jurisdictions don't want that at all. They want all the money directly into one lump sum and have all the abilities therein. For us, things like THIF and these other pockets of money — if we could have our own say on how we spend that money, it goes so far toward exactly what the member opposite is asking about right now — for that medevac travel and travel information. To be able to put the funds in and be able to see great local providers of that service throughout Alkan, which has the current contract and has done an amazing job over the years flying our patients and Yukoners to the services that they need — it is an extremely important part of our medical services — absolutely.

**Ms. McLeod:** I look forward to getting that information.

The Yukon Hospital Corporation released a milestone alert in September saying that it reached 10,000 patient scans. I am interested to know what the government thinks the current wait-time for non-emergency MRI scans is.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't have those numbers right now. She asked me if I could tell what I think those numbers are — I wouldn't speculate on something like that. It is a very specific question. I can imagine that this information — I'm not sure if it's available on a daily or yearly basis, but I will find out for the member opposite.

**Ms. McLeod:** We do have the health minister in the House with a briefing book. I am sure that it would hold this information.

It has been brought to the attention of my colleague by a constituent that government funding for a multiple sclerosis clinic at the specialist clinic is in jeopardy of being cut. First of all, I would like confirmation on that. If it is so, what is the reason for the cut to the funding?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will remind the member opposite that, in 14 years of Yukon Party government, I don't remember once where a minister would get up during general debate and offer more information to the members opposite except for in the last three years. It has happened here, and we have used that as the Yukon Liberal government in the past. I haven't necessarily seen that change the motive of the members opposite as far as the lines of questioning, but we have offered that in the past — obviously and absolutely. Right now, as well, we do have two departments that are in the supplementary budget, and that is what we are here to debate today — the supplementary budget.

I'm happy to answer some questions on those, not only here in general debate, but also when we get to Committee of the Whole for those particular departments — lots of very specific questions can be asked and answered. The member opposite has many ways to ask questions of the Department of

Health and Social Services. I think the Department of Health and Social Services has done an exemplary job of responding to the members opposite.

Whatever response we're going to give, you're going to hear from social media from them that we're not answering the questions. So, we'll weather that storm, and that's fine, but Yukoners who are listening to a supplementary bill that has specific and really important dollar values that we really should be focusing our attention on — those are important conversations. A conversation about the wildland fire management and the system there — probably the busiest season for 15 years. I don't hear one question from members opposite on that today.

The extra money being spent that we want to talk about with infrastructure and those reasons — lots of really important questions on this particular bill that we're standing up and talking about.

Again, if the members opposite — that's fine if they don't want to talk about this particular bill, and if they want to have questions about other departments, again, it's great to hear the questions, and we will do our utmost to make sure we get those answers back to them in a very timely fashion.

**Ms. McLeod:** Interesting to note, yet again, that the Premier doesn't think that the rules apply to him. It's also important to note that we had about three hours to debate a health bill this year with a value of over \$3.5 million. Clearly the Premier has just stood up and said that is not the most important thing to him. He wants to talk about infrastructure.

I would argue that health is pretty darn important to Yukoners. Yukoners expect to have some answers to their health questions. I don't know if it was some kind of strategy that they had in the spring where they didn't feel that they needed to call Health back, but clearly, there are questions that need to be asked and answered, so we're doing our job. We're asking the questions, and I would hope that the government would do their job by answering them.

These are not questions being asked simply because we have nothing else to do. Obviously, the topics we discuss in this House are important to our constituents and to all Yukoners.

One aspect of a debate is not any more or less important than another aspect of a debate. I have been corrected. What I have been saying all day today is \$3.5 million, but it's actually \$443 million.

Yes, I will continue to ask my health questions, and I will continue to expect some responses from the government so that Yukoners have the answers.

I have no answer to the multiple sclerosis question and the cut to the funding. I hope the answer is forthcoming. There are Yukoners who want to know. We were made aware that the MS gym and therapies at the hospital were dissolved. I'm looking for confirmation and an explanation of the closure of this service for people who do suffer from MS in our community and broader. I'm sure that will come when the government responds regarding the funding for the clinics.

I had some questions here about medical travel, but I think I'm going to pass them by. I think that's another format for those questions. But I do want to talk about home care, yet

again. This is so incredibly important to a number of Yukoners. Now, I seem to recall, when the Premier was seeking his spot as Premier of Yukon, that he went to a debate and said that there would be extended care for Yukoners in each of their home communities.

I have not seen that or heard it discussed by this Premier, but the focus has been on providing better home care services to communities and to the people who live there. Obviously, I support better care for those folks.

But I'm still after — I have spoken to the minister in the past about perhaps contracting out the heavy-lifting type of work that seniors can't do, and I know that the minister has said that she supports that extra assistance for them, but I haven't seen it happen.

As far as washing windows, washing walls, shovelling walks, and helping in the yard in the summertime — those are all things that are really important to keeping people in their homes for a longer period of time. So I guess I'm looking for — if something has happened in that regard and I don't know about it, then I wish to be corrected on that matter. But if I am right and nothing is underway, then perhaps the government could tell Yukoners what the future plan is and when they might expect to see some help.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite talked about communities and the supports in care there within extended care. I am very proud of the work that we have done to build healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities. We have invested a lot of money in the communities. We want to make sure that every community has equal access to services — as much as possible as what is being offered in Whitehorse. Being a rural MLA, I definitely know the importance of that, as the member opposite obviously does as well. We have invested more money in Yukon communities in the last two years than was invested in the previous four. That is a fact. Through the federal clean water and waste-water fund, through the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, through the small communities fund — over \$50 million has been spent in the communities through those funds alone. We have updated the comprehensive municipal grant to provide predictable, sustainable funding for Yukon communities. As we spoke about already, there are the mental wellness hubs in Carmacks, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, and Dawson City. We supported housing projects in Yukon communities, including funding First Nation housing providers to increase the number of housing units. We have repaired and reopened the Ross River bridge, which is a vital community asset. It was great to be there this summer and actually walk on the bridge and see the upgrades. We paved the Dawson runway and improved the Mayo aerodrome. We partnered with the RCMP to commit to renovations and buildings — new detachment buildings in Ross River, Faro, and Carcross.

We have also supported 32 rural homeowners' access to clean drinking water through the domestic water well program. The list goes on about community projects across the territory.

I completely agree with the member opposite that funding for the communities and making sure that they are healthy and sustainable in all areas is extremely important, including

continuing care. The Minister of Health and Social Services has spoken a lot about this and has answered this question many times in the Legislative Assembly about what we are doing differently compared to the last government when it comes to collaborative care and when it comes to meeting people where they are and making sure that we provide the services there. Again, the minister has answered these questions a lot on the floor. I don't have anything new to add from what the minister has already clearly outlined, but again we are very proud of our building of relationships and of advancing reconciliation, modernizing Yukon, building mental wellness supports, renewable energy projects — you name it — and working with the other governments when it comes to these initiatives, including extended care.

**Ms. McLeod:** I asked about what additional supports were being put into home care, and I found out all about the paving of the runway in Dawson.

I have a question about the children's dental program. Obviously oral health is a really important aspect of physical and mental health. I have a question about dental care for students. It seems that, rather than offering dental services to students in the area of Kluane — and that would include the other communities — parents are being forced to bring their kids into Whitehorse to receive dental care. I am wondering what the status of the school program is and whether or not it is reaching the communities of Destruction Bay, Beaver Creek, and Haines Junction.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When it comes to dental health in the communities, it is an extremely important initiative for this government. We have committed to and continue to commit to making sure that we have these services in the rural communities, and we will continue with that commitment. I don't have any specific numbers on me right now because there are no line items in the supplementary budget on dental care in the communities. It is a very important topic, and if there are some updates from the minister, I will make sure that the minister gets them.

**Ms. McLeod:** I have a couple of questions about the funding for the adult daycare. In June of this year, it was announced that the government funding would be discontinued for Helping Hands Adult Day Care, which has been serving Yukoners with disabilities for about 20 years. Government claimed that it would be more efficient and in the best interest of the clients to place them in other programs.

I'm wondering what led the government to make this decision. What was the evidence that suggested that they would be better served in other programs? Has that been successful? Have all those clients been placed in other programs that are achieving the desired results for those clients?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, just to reiterate, I would ask the member opposite to repeat the question. I apologize. I didn't catch the actual question.

**Ms. McLeod:** It would be my pleasure. The question was regarding adult daycare. In June of this year, it was announced that government funding would be discontinued for Helping Hands Adult Day Care, which has been serving Yukoners with disabilities for about 20 years. The government

claimed it would be more efficient and in the best interest of those clients to see them placed in other programs.

My question was what evidence the government used to come to that determination and whether or not all of those clients have been placed into programs that are meeting their needs.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When it comes to providing these services, we absolutely want to make sure that, if a particular non-governmental organization is no longer there and available or no longer being funded — making sure that the services and programs are still being provided through other stakeholders.

This government does a lot of engagement and a lot of conversation with our stakeholders. The member opposite can be confident that conversations were had, not only internally in government with a whole-of-government approach, but with the stakeholders to make sure that the services that were being provided by a specific NGO are now being provided either internally or with other NGOs.

**Ms. McLeod:** There was an issue that came to our attention this summer involving the constituents of one of my colleagues, where they were asked to provide proof of residency for Yukon health care. The circumstances around how that came about caused them, and obviously us, concern. The department acknowledged that mistakes had been made and corrected them, but we have a few questions about what the process is generally as it pertains to when the department questions the residency of Yukoners and on what basis they choose to send a letter requiring proof of residency.

The correspondence from Insured Health to this family mentioned the department would be making some changes to ensure that this didn't happen again. Can the minister describe what changes are going to be made and what that looks like for Yukoners? What is required in terms of proof of residency? Because there are a lot of Yukoners who don't necessarily have a utility bill. How do we ensure that Yukoners are covered?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe it was the previous government who changed the number of months for residency in the past. I know that what we're doing on this side of the House — when it comes to sharing of data and accessibility of data, Health and Social Services has been working with the whole of government to modernize their systems to allow data to flow in a way that isn't going to be contravening any personal rights or human rights. Again, modernizing and digitizing the system is the best thing we can do to make sure that folks who need care get the care and aren't unnecessarily burdened when another jurisdiction would have more modern facilities.

**Ms. McLeod:** Those are all the questions I'm going to put before the government today. I want to reiterate how disappointed I am that the government did not come to the Legislature today prepared to answer questions on behalf of Yukoners. There are rules that govern our behaviour and expectations in this House, and clearly the government feels those rules don't apply to them.

It is disappointing. I hope that the government will re-evaluate their position on answering questions for Yukoners, because we have many days of this Sitting left. With that, I will just close my comments.

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

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any further general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I want to thank the Member for Watson Lake for her questions today. I will agree to disagree when she said that I showed up not ready to answer questions today — I have. I have lots of information available, based upon the 2019-20 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* forecasts. Again, just to reiterate, we have an increase of \$20.5 million in operation and maintenance and an increase of \$43.3 million in gross capital. Recoveries in capital are forecasted to increase by \$26.3 million. Changes to that capital include an increase to accommodate land and infrastructure development to meet the growing housing demands that we are noticing here, replace outdated and failing infrastructure, and help communities meet the needs of their residents. The majority of the increases will be offset by recoveries, which is the good news, Mr. Chair — which includes the sale of land as well as federally recoverable infrastructure projects.

The majority of the O&M increases relates to the cost of recently occurring wildland fire management, as we spoke about earlier in second reading. This year's season was extraordinary. It was definitely long and late. The exceptional intensity of the season — with fires in very, very close proximity to communities — has resulted in those significant costs that we are seeing in the supplementary estimates —

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

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Point of order**

**Mr. Cathers:** Pursuant to Standing Order 19(b), the Premier seems to be engaging in needless repetition, contrary to the Standing Orders. He appears to just be reading his introductory speech from Committee of the Whole, which the House has already heard.

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

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I am not reading those statements directly from second reading. What I am doing is — it's kind of ironic that now that we're talking about the supplementary estimates, the member wants me to sit down and not talk about them, but again, this is very relevant to the bill that we're debating here today.

**Chair's ruling**

**Chair:** I tend to agree with the Premier on this. I don't see it as a point of order. "Needless" is a very strong modifier, so carry on, please.



**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, as I was saying, the majority of the O&M increases relate to the exceptional season that we have had. I do want to take this opportunity to thank Wildland Fire Management. There are some amazing public servants working for Wildland Fire Management under the leadership of Mr. Damian Burns — also the First Nation crews as well. We are very lucky to have the expertise that we have. I don't need to tell you that, Mr. Chair, with your experience working in Wildland Fire Management. You know the people who I am talking about.

I will move on to talk about another increase in the operation and maintenance budget, which was to support a group of Yukon First Nations with an investment in a future Yukon innovation and knowledge economy by increasing accessibility to equity financing and capacity development, supporting Yukon technology companies. It really is an exciting program, and I want to commend the Minister of Yukon Development Corporation and Minister of Economic Development. Their team put a lot of time and effort into this.

We have heard rumblings in the past about some types of opportunities that just didn't make it to fruition. What we saw with the Minister of Economic Development was a long-term focus on the priorities of a growing technology community, but also the ability, capacity, and sophistication of the First Nation development corporations that he is working with. What we have seen here with Panache was an opportunity to really help to support our Yukon tech companies. I couldn't be prouder of the work that the Deputy Premier has done on this particular file — and obviously the team.

The business incentive program — capital spending had increased as a result of significant program uptake. This indicates that Yukon contractors and tradespeople, apprentices, and businesses are benefitting from this program, and that is exactly what we want to see. The Yukon Development Corporation capital increase offsets an undersubscription for the innovative renewable energy initiative, which occurred in some previous years.

We saw changes again — and we've talked about this in the Legislative Assembly and heard the members opposite talk about the Challenge Cornerstone project and try to make it seem like we are cutting this funding. That is absolutely not true, Mr. Chair. The changes to the Challenge Cornerstone project cash flow requirements for this fiscal year are reflected in the supplementary budget. The project is fully supported by the government. We will continue to look forward to moving it ahead within the next few years.

As this is still in the financial framework and that money is still earmarked for the Challenge Cornerstone project, it would be very hard for us to take the advice from the Yukon Party to change that money into something else for another project. We're committed to working with the cornerstone Challenge project. I think it's an excellent, excellent initiative, and we're extremely excited. It's too bad we had to delay this project, but I believe the president of the society did a great job of explaining to the public why that decision was made.

Mr. Chair, the annual deficit of \$5.95 million tabled in the spring session in the 2019-20 main estimates is now forecasted to be \$20 million, and the net debt did go — that was forecasted at the end of the year — went from \$57.9 million to \$78.9 million, which is extremely important to reiterate here in the Legislative Assembly.

With all that being said, I do know that we try our best to budget up front. We try our best to make sure we have one budget. When you take a look at efficiencies inside of government — if you have two budgets that are closer in size or both big, it's a lot of work for public servants. It really is. With the changes we have made with the Department of Finance — increasing the capacity therein under the leadership of my deputy minister — we have an amazing opportunity here to budget everything up front. Really, when you take a look at how we reflect on our supplementary estimates, the narrative is there. These are unforeseen circumstances, like Wildland Fire Management — opportunities and being able to flex, based upon federal dollars at 25 cents per 75-cent federal contributions and being able to move quickly and nimbly on your feet when it comes to the pressures of a growing economy and an extremely positive economic outlook.

That outlook, as we know, shows that we're doing well in the Yukon; we really are. Mining sector activities remain prominent in the outlook, largely supported by the start of Eagle Gold mine in Mayo — up in your riding, Mr. Chair. It was quite an opportunity to be able to be with you, Mr. Chair, for the sod-turning ceremony not that long ago and to see the progress of a junior company in Yukon being able to make the arrangements and agreements and the partnerships with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun in such a positive way — reaching out to the greater community of Mayo and making sure, whether it's contractors or the municipality or working with us — asking those questions about how we can build capacity — but most importantly, being able to increase the amount of local people who are working on that project and the amount of Yukoners working on that project — that cannot do anything but bolster our economy.

Having Yukoners come home — a lot of good, hard-working Yukoners who have been down in the oil patch or in other jurisdictions, taking our skilled tradespeople outside of their homes — to be able to go up there and talk to individuals who are telling me great stories about moving back to the Yukon and working in their backyard, how happy they are, and how thankful they are for our support for this project.

It's an extremely important sector of our economy. You don't have to ask me about that, Mr. Chair, being the Member for Klondike. Mining is an extremely important part of not only our economy, but of our social fabric as well.

We do have a robust labour market that has created some upper pressures on wages and has made it difficult to fill job opportunities and retain employees. Higher incomes and healthier job prospects are contributing to a tightening of a housing market, particularly in Whitehorse. The Member for Lake Laberge and others have in the past talked about the government. It is hard for the private sector to compete when you have a government where it is a good place to work. We

realize that. We do, and we realize that also, with a healthy economy, there are pressures on our labour markets. We are keenly aware of that, but again, when we see this development and production from two new mines driving the outlook — the announcement of Minto going into production again — just fantastic news for the people of Selkirk First Nation when it comes to their economy.

When you take a look forward, we have some growths in our real GDP, following from the 2.7-percent increase in 2018. The real GDP is expected to grow again by 3.0 percent in 2019, with growing averages at almost three percent over 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and into 2023.

When it comes to estimates moving forward, I am not much for speculation. It is nice to see those numbers, but again, GDP is one consideration of growth and one consideration of prosperity. That is why we want to expand that concept. We want to take a look at our performance plans, we want to take a look at the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and we take a look from a time-to-time perspective of how we are doing as Yukoners.

It's one thing to say the sectors are growing and the economy is growing — we have an important responsibility to not only grow our economy, but to also grow the environmental awareness and the social services that make sure that Yukoners are living healthy lives. So, it's one thing to see a booming economy; it's another thing to be able to see, through the performance plans, through the index of well-being, where we are and how we are moving forward. So I'm extremely proud of the work that's being done in that pursuit.

Mr. Chair, I could go on with more of the fiscal update — more of the economic update — with the tight labour market conditions or the positive economic climate that does contribute to rising incomes and strong consumer spending. I could talk more about the fact that, as of June 2019, workers in the Yukon are earning over \$1,170 per week — which is almost five percent higher than a year ago and well above the national growth of 2.5 percent. Average weekly earnings in the Yukon trail only the other two territories as far as the highest weekly earnings in all of Canada.

But what I will do is cede the floor to the members opposite for any more questions on the supplementary budget.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier just gave us a long speech that we've heard before but didn't answer some very reasonable questions that were asked by my colleague, the Official Opposition critic for Health and Social Services. It's disappointing to see this lack of interest and accountability by the Liberal government. My colleague, and also the Chair, reminded members earlier of what the rules are regarding general debate. The Clerk's office sent out a clarification in this Sitting, as typically occurs in every Fall Sitting since I have been a member, reminding members that, if members have any questions concerning votes — that being departments — that do not require new appropriations, the point in proceedings at which to raise them would be during general debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole. That is exactly what we're doing.

The government made a choice to avoid having individual departments — or, I should say, avoid having many individual

departments — contained within the supplementary estimates, but it appears that the Premier is taking that a step further and thinking that gives him the excuse to avoid accountability in this Legislative Assembly and to avoid answering reasonable questions.

Contrary to the spin the Premier is attempting to make fly here in this Assembly, debate during departments is not typically, in the history of this Assembly, just about the specific dollar amounts contained within a bill, but also about policy issues and other related issues affecting that department, because that is the time when members have the best opportunity in the Legislative Assembly to ask those questions.

In the past, ministers have answered those questions, rather than simply saying, "Well, perhaps we'll get back to you later." This government, in terms of leadership in answering questions, could be characterized as the "perhaps we'll get back to you later" government. We are still waiting for action in a great many areas, and the Premier gave himself a raise, but we're really questioning what that was for.

I was hoping, between the Member for Watson Lake's question — my colleague, the critic for Health and Social Services — that the Premier would have taken the opportunity to get himself a briefing on the questions she had asked or just generally on the matters we're dealing with today, but unfortunately, we got a long speech from the Premier and no answer to reasonable questions.

I do have to remind members and the Premier that it's not like we surprised the government with the fact that we were going to ask questions about Health and Social Services. In the interest of collaboration and in the interest of giving officials a heads-up, our House Leader advised the Government House Leader at their meeting this morning that we intended to ask questions about Health and Social Services, and we suggested that they may wish to get officials to be available to support the minister and the Premier during debate.

It appears the Premier didn't like that. He didn't want to answer questions. So he decided that he was going to stick to a rather dismissive and arrogant talking point and tell members that perhaps he would get back to them later and dismiss their very reasonable questions — which, I remind the Premier, are on behalf of Yukoners.

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

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier is muttering off-mic. We saw him earlier laughing dismissively when my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, was asking him reasonable questions that reflect the health priorities of Yukon citizens. I have to remind all who are listening that this is the same Liberal government that deliberately, in the spring, did everything except turn backflips to avoid debating the Department of Health and Social Services, because they're embarrassed of their appalling record of failure in that area — and so they should be.

Mr. Chair, we saw in the spring that the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education combined, had only 4.4 percent of the total hours in the Sitting — just two afternoons for the two departments combined for debate on those matters. Those budgets, for those who are not

familiar with it — the budget for Health and Social Services alone is \$443 million. I will repeat that again: \$443 million. That's almost 30 percent of the government's entire budget. The total staff of that department numbers over 1,400 people. The Department of Education budget is \$214.5 million. The combined total budget for these two departments is \$657.9 million, which is 45.8 percent of the government's total projected expenses for the year.

In comparison to spending a mere 4.4 percent of the hours in the Sitting on that, we saw the government devote a significant effort to fluff and frippery, including 18 ministerial statements in the Spring Sitting that were primarily re-announcements of things the government had already announced via press release or through other manners. By comparison, we spent 3.5 percent of the Legislative Assembly's time debating those statements, which is more than was spent on each of Health and Social Services and Department of Education individually. So the government is more interested in talking about re-announcements and photo ops than talking about something that is essential to Yukoners — the Department of Health and Social Services.

We were looking forward to this fall. We were looking forward to the opportunity to perhaps get some of the questions that we asked in the spring that the government refused to answer at that point answered here in the fall.

As I mentioned, my colleague, the Official Opposition House Leader, gave the government a heads-up at the House Leaders' meeting this morning that we were going to ask Health and Social Services questions this afternoon, giving them full and fair opportunity to line up officials — and for the Premier to perhaps interrupt his busy schedule of photo ops and actually get a briefing on the matters for which he is responsible.

So this has been a very disappointing afternoon, Mr. Speaker, but we will let Yukoners judge for themselves whether they believe that it is appropriate for the Premier of the Yukon and the Government of Yukon to simply say in response to reasonable questions, "You can't expect us to have the answer to that information now, but we might get back to you later" — which is effectively what they have been saying.

Mr. Chair, I am going to ask another question that my colleague, the Official Opposition critic for Health and Social Services, asked the government last week and got a non-answer on. The government formed their hand-picked health care review committee, and that committee is currently consulting and surveying Yukoners on the idea of charging Yukoners a health care premium. They have floated the number of \$900 per person per year on this official survey. That is essentially a health care tax. The Yukon Party has come out clearly against that. The government has the opportunity to say — yes or no — is this government proceeding with health care premiums? Will the Premier give us a straight answer? If he recognizes that we are right and these premiums should not be implemented, will he assure Yukoners right now that this Liberal government is not going to implement what is effectively a \$900-per-person health care tax?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I guess I have to apologize. I guess speeches in the Legislative Assembly are the sole proprietary

right of the Member for Lake Laberge, so I apologize if getting to my feet and speaking to the specifics of the bill that we are debating is not what I'm supposed to do in his eyes.

Mr. Chair, I also thought that the conversations of the House Leaders had some sort of rules to them, but I guess that is out the window as well, because it fits the member opposite's view. I will say that the members opposite do come forward with suggestions in the morning. I remember being the opposition in the House Leaders' meetings — I don't remember ever getting my opinion asked at that time, but I digress. The members opposite have decided that they want to speak today about health care. That is great — it really is. Today, we are talking about the supplementary bill. So that's what we are going to speak about today.

We do appreciate the input from the members opposite and we do appreciate the questions. People who are working in the departments — I already went up and checked with the department. There were lots of questions on Health and Social Services, so we are committing to get back to the member opposite. It turns out — from talking to the department — that a lot of those questions were already asked and answered, but I guess the Yukon Party doesn't like the answers we provided, so we are going to get — it's a situation where we are just going to have to agree to disagree as far as whether or not those questions were answered. Again, what we will do is commit to answering these very, very specific questions again as we are here in general debate.

I guess announcements and photo ops are the proprietary rules for the Yukon Party and we are not allowed to do those. I get it and I understand it. It's good to know. But I won't apologize for talking about the bill here on the floor. We have prepared for those conversations and we are ready to talk about this particular bill. If I can answer general questions in general debate, I am absolutely happy to answer those questions. Absolutely. For the questions that I can't answer, I will endeavour to get those answers for them — no problem — which is lot more than I can say — again, Yukoners can take a look at Hansard and go back to general debate over and over again in this Legislative Assembly. There are lots of conversations that were had in the Legislative Assembly in general debate. Mr. Chair, you can look at answers or non-answers that were given in the past in different departments.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As far as the government goes — and I know that the members opposite don't want to hear this; they are just going to talk off-mic while I try to explain and answer their questions — again, maybe this is why they don't think we answer the questions — it is because they talk when we answer those questions.

I will take our record compared to theirs when it comes to being accountable — answering and responding to the questions from members opposite. In the past, what we saw from the Yukon Party is that, if a question was asked and the minister didn't have enough information, we just wouldn't get a return. We have done 223 legislative returns already in this legislative session, Mr. Chair.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I know the members opposite don't like that because they are talking off-mic. Every time I answer the question, they just keep on talking because they just don't want to hear these answers, I guess. These are the facts. It's the truth. We are very accountable. We are endeavouring to get them answers. I am prepared to speak generally, and I am happy to answer the questions in general debate here. We are not obfuscating; we will answer the questions if I have a general answer for the member opposite.

Specifically, he talked about the health care review and repeats his narrative — his meme — all the time about a health care tax, and he thinks that we should answer a specific question on a review process that isn't finished. The ministers, the MLAs on this side of the House, and I all have a lot of opinions when it comes to some of the recommendations — absolutely — but I want to respect that process too, Mr. Chair.

Same thing — we had the opposition wanting us to hedge some bets in different processes before. We waited until the review and the recommendations came in. That's when we decided to say, "Look — this is the thing that we are going to move and these are the things that we are not going to move on." Again, I'm asking the member opposite to have patience for the process.

If we are going to strike an independent committee and if we, then, in the Legislative Assembly said, "Well, not this or not this" — again, that would be problematic. In the past with other reviews, we waited until we got the recommendations, and then we voiced our opinions. That is leadership, Mr. Chair. You have to respect those processes.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The members opposite don't like the answer to this question. I always know when I have a good answer because they start talking, and then they can say that they didn't hear the answer. We will respect that process, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Cathers:** The record will show that the Premier did not answer a very simple question that I asked, and that was about whether or not this government is going to implement what is effectively a health care tax — the \$900-per-person-per-year health care premium that they are currently actively considering.

I would point out, as I noted earlier, that — with due respect to the chair of the committee, whose opinion I do respect — when the Premier picks a chair of a committee who previously recommended health care premiums — if you don't want health care premiums, you put it in the terms of reference, because you know that is going to come out as a possible recommendation. That's leadership. The government is responsible for the terms of reference that they set and the people they appoint, not just to the Financial Advisory Panel — which the Premier has used as an excuse to raise fees and fines across the board, taxing Yukoners, effectively, to the hilt — but also, in this case, through their health care review. They have used the review as an excuse for lack of action, and clearly the fact that they won't rule out the idea of a health care tax leaves Yukoners, including me, thinking that it certainly looks like the Liberal government is prepared to consider a health care tax as

one of the options. Certainly it is in their survey, and they could have made sure that it was not.

I am going to ask again a very simple question: Will the Premier rule out a \$900-per-person-per-year health care tax — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite can evoke false premises as far as what our intent is by having an independent review — doing a scan — again, not a recommendation, Mr. Chair, but a scan — of other jurisdictions. The members opposite, with their very biased, sponsored advertisements on Facebook, would have Yukoners assume that there is a done deal here when, really, in this process, the IEP survey only identified examples of what other jurisdictions do. That's all it did — yet the members opposite would have you believe that it is a recommendation. To me, that is definitely not leadership. That is something else altogether. That is misleading. That is misleading, Mr. Chair — and so they can continue with that sponsored advertisement. The good news is that Yukoners pay attention to more than just the Yukon Party's tweets and social media. It's a good thing, because if they were going to take a look at that, they would have thought that we have already made a decision — which we haven't — and they would also think that this is a recommendation — which it is not.

I will reiterate: British Columbia is the riding that has a \$900-per-year charge. This was not — and the member opposite is not even listening anymore. I am answering his question and he refuses to listen. That makes sense — when they leave this Chamber and what they put on their accounts — this was not a suggestion for Yukon.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will repeat again — and they don't like this because they are talking off-mic again — that this was not a suggestion for Yukon.

**Mr. Cathers:** I am sorry to disappoint the Premier, but I was listening to his answer. I can walk and chew gum at the same time.

Mr. Chair, this is a lack of leadership by the government. They have a pattern, with panels and boards, of floating ideas of the new taxes or new fees that they want to impose on Yukoners and then hiding behind them, pretending that they have no association with them. Well, the government chose the terms of reference. They chose what was in and what was out as far as this committee's mandate. It's the same as with the Financial Advisory Panel.

So again, we have seen the government, in some cases — like when they decided that they were going to try to recover some of their burned political capital in terms of the green energy side of things — they decided to kill the 20-megawatt thermal plant that they had just had Yukon Energy spend money consulting on all of last year. They could step in, in that case, but as we see with the case that my colleague asked about earlier today in the situation of the Southern Lakes storage concept, they won't give people a straight answer about whether they are going to go forward with that or whether they are going to listen to public opinion.

In this case, it is a fair assumption that Yukoners are not going to support the \$900-a-year health care premium that is in

the survey that is out right now from the government's hand-picked health care review panel. Why worry people, if you're not prepared to go there?

A very simple question — the Premier can rule out the effective health care tax right now — yes or no? I will give him one more chance. Will the Premier rule out the idea of a \$900-per-person-per-year health care premium in the Yukon — yes or no?

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

**Chair:** Mr. Streicker, on a point of order.

### Point of order

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** In Standing Order 19(a) it says that we shouldn't speak twice to a question. It also says below that we shouldn't be repetitive. It seems to me that I have now heard this question twice and the member opposite is asking it a third time.

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

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The minister is misunderstanding what that section actually refers to. It does not prevent a member asking a question more than once. It is in reference to — if the member reads that clause — 19(a) says — I will read the first part: "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member: (a) speaks twice to a question, except in the case of a mover in concluding debate, or in explanation of a material part of a speech in which that member may have been misunderstood, in which case the member shall not introduce new matter." So that of course is a reference to the fact that, during a reading on a bill or reading on a motion, you can't speak to the same thing more than once, unless you are the mover.

The minister might want to get a briefing on the Standing Orders.

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

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm happy to answer the question, Mr. Chair.

### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** On the point of order — I do tend to agree with Mr. Cathers on this issue. Mr. Cathers, please.

**Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to repeat the question: The Premier has the opportunity right now. If the Liberal government is not seriously contemplating a health care premium, which we view as a health care tax, which they are currently saying it might be \$900 per year — the Premier has the opportunity to end the worry that Yukoners have about that topic right now and rule out the possibility of implementing that \$900-a-year health care tax. Will he do that — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite is bordering on the ridiculous now. Again, I just got to my feet and said that the member opposite makes it seem like this is a recommendation from the panel. It is not a recommendation from the panel. He is asking me to speculate on something that isn't even a thing.

So again, this is not a suggestion for Yukon. It was merely pointing out what other jurisdictions are doing.

Now, the members opposite can continue to do what they do — they hedge bets, they speculate on the future, and in the end, when it doesn't actually materialize, well, that's fine because they have already got out there misleading anyway.

It happened last year. They kept on talking in the Legislative Assembly about a two-percent cut — it never happened. Again, Mr. Chair, we keep on hearing from the opposition these stories and these hedged bets.

I will answer the question again. The independent panel was only identifying examples of what happens in other jurisdictions. The member opposite should know that there is no recommendation at this time for this. It is just a suggestion. How can I say yes or no to something that is not even a recommendation?

So again, Mr. Chair, the member opposite can continue to do what he does — and I guess they find that effective because they can go out and mislead. But we answered the question. Again, he just mentioned that, with the fees and fines reviews, that all of a sudden there are all these huge taxes. I would like to ask the member opposite: Does he really believe that there are more taxes? There are less taxes now, Mr. Chair, under this government. We have changed the small business tax and the corporate tax. Yukoners are paying less taxes now.

Now, as far as the fees and fines review — Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the member opposite which particular fees or fines he is referring to that are now so expensive that Yukoners can't afford to pay them. I'm happy to have a debate on the specific fee or fine that the member opposite knows about.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, I am trying to answer the question, but the members opposite just keep on talking off-mic. They don't want to hear the answers. I know when I am being effective in the Legislative Assembly when the members opposite just put their heads in the sand and don't want to hear the answers because I hit a vein. There you go, Mr. Chair.

Again, when it comes to energy — my goodness gracious. How many millions of dollars did the Yukon Party waste with their next generation hydro charade? It was unbelievable.

I know there were particular projects on that which made it to the final six, which First Nation governments had said before they even started: "Do not consider these, because we will not be in favour of them." Yet they went ahead with it anyway. It was millions. It wasn't 10 million; it was closer to \$20 million in this particular exposé.

Again, the member opposite can criticize what we're doing, but they have to remember that Yukoners remember the past. They know what happened in the past, and again, our record speaks for itself. To reiterate and to answer his question today, for the second time — and I'm sure we will keep on answering it — it's not a recommendation; it's merely an exposé of what other jurisdictions did. The members opposite can continue to make it seem to Yukoners that we're considering something that is not even a recommendation, but that's just simply not so.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, that is a really unfortunate characterization the Premier is choosing to make. What the Premier is suggesting now — is the Premier saying that, when government proposes something and when the government ask questions, that Yukoners aren't even supposed to take it seriously?

We know we're hearing jokes from people about the surveys that effectively are treated like a referendum where you can vote as many times as you want on the questions, and there are jokes about the Liberal government practising government by SurveyMonkey but, Mr. Chair, this is serious stuff. When Yukoners see something by a government department or a board created by government — in this case, the Premier's hand-picked health care review panel — and they are asking a question about whether something should be done, that is a proposal that is in front of Yukoners.

Right now, they are proposing health care premiums. A \$900-a-year amount has been floated in the survey, but they are specifically asking whether Yukoners would support a health care premium. They are currently consulting on the possibility of implementing a \$900-a-year health care premium, but the Premier is dismissing it, saying, "Don't ask us about that." That's just an independent panel that, oh, by the way — in a convenient side note — the government hand-picked and set the terms of reference for.

People are concerned about this, and they're wondering if the idea of co-pays has been floated for increasing co-pays from medical services and increasing fees for continuing care. Again, this is something the government is clearly currently looking at. Will the Premier give us a straight answer? How much should seniors, who are currently planning for their retirement, expect to pay in increased continuing care fees? Will he give us a straight answer on that — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think I gave the straight answer — this will be the third time now. It is interesting — again, the survey simply identifies what other jurisdictions are doing. There is no recommendation on the table. What is interesting is the YEU did negotiate under the guise of the Yukon Party a health care premium tax to be covered for all of Yukon government employees. That would be a significant tax — a significant cost to the government — if they were to proceed with a \$900-per-year premium. Again, it didn't materialize, but it was negotiated by the opposition when they were in government. Now, that's interesting, because in this case, there's no negotiation. It is purely a scan of other jurisdictions.

I find it really rich that the member opposite would give me a lecture on what Yukoners deserve to know. I think they deserve to know the truth, and the truth is that there is no current recommendation from the independent commission on this particular issue.

I have answered that question a few times in the Legislative Assembly. The member opposite doesn't like the answer, because it doesn't fit his narrative, so he'll continue to press on this issue. But I have answered the question three times now, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Cathers:** The record will show that the Premier refused to be accountable to the Legislative Assembly and to

Yukoners and answer a question that people are generally concerned about. In fact, Mr. Chair, I heard about it — actually, today, I guess it was — when I went out at lunch hour. I bumped into people in the coffee shop who were concerned about the proposed \$900-a-year health care tax. It is unfortunate — we see a government that is on the verge of its fourth year in office and is still hiding behind panels and refusing to tell Yukoners what they plan to do. People are genuinely worried about the cost they may pay.

Again, the record will show that I asked another very simple question, which was: For seniors who are planning right now for their retirement and may have to be in a continuing care facility, how much should they be budgeting and expecting to pay in increased continuing care fees and increased co-pays for medical services and drugs?

The Premier has the opportunity to give a straightforward answer. Will he do that — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm not going to speculate about the future, but I do know that we currently enjoy some of the best premiums right now and best services for care for seniors in the country. For the member opposite to make it seem like we're suggesting or considering something that we're not — again, it's an interesting tack.

I again will get the minister to respond again to this question. She has answered this question in the Legislative Assembly a few times. We have answered the question for the member opposite, but they still want to create a certain narrative and make it seem like something is happening that's not.

**Mr. Cathers:** So let the record show, yet again, this is — the Premier has an almost perfect record this afternoon of dodging every question he has been asked and suggesting that the opposition is unreasonable for daring to ask it.

I'm going to move on to another item. Clearly the Premier is not going to answer those two simple questions and is going to leave Yukoners wondering about how much they're going to be paying in increased health care taxes, or effectively taxes in the form of a premium.

In the health care review — it was interesting in the comprehensive review that at the back of the document — again, it's something where the terms of reference were set by this government under the Premier's direction or under the Minister of Health and Social Services' direction — but clearly a decision of the Liberal government. We looked at the back of the review and it says, "The two foundational elements of the comprehensive review..." — the first of those elements is cultural safety and cultural humility. That's fine. The second of those two foundational elements is data analysis and performance management. I also don't have a problem with that one. But if these are the foundational elements of the health care review, I have to ask the question: Where is the reference to quality health care, patient outcomes, and reducing wait times? Why are none of those matters important enough in the view of this Liberal government to make any of those a foundational element of the comprehensive health review?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think, again — you know, the member opposite would have you believe that all work stops as

the review moves forward and that's simply not the case. I believe that the minister responsible has done an extraordinary job of working to make sure that not only are we working on a collaborative model of care, but we are also reducing the amount of wait times at our hospitals.

Again, he can look to a specific page and not see the word that he's looking for, but that doesn't mean that the Department of Health and Social Services isn't extremely diligent in making sure that programs and services and emergency care are being worked on with upgrades to the hospitals, with monies for collaborative care, with working whole-of-government. Again, because that particular initiative is not on one page, the member opposite would have you believe that it's not occurring.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, that was a ridiculous answer from the Premier. We're talking about what the foundational elements are in the comprehensive review. This is not me providing my editorial comment of what I think the foundational elements are. I took this from the *Taking the Pulse* discussion paper where it said, "The two foundational elements of the comprehensive review..." It's just quite frankly bizarre that you have a health care review — that the two foundational elements of it are cultural safety and humility, and data analysis and performance measurement. Where is the focus on quality health care for Yukoners in a timely manner, reducing wait times — and so on and so forth?

The Premier likes to talk a good line about what he claims the Minister of Health and Social Services is doing. The Liberals are very good at writing talking points, but the facts do not line up with their talking points. This is the same government that we have seen mishandle the Many Rivers situation. Yukoners were left across the territory without mental health services as a result of this government's mishandling of that file. This is the same government that has taken the former Centre of Hope in as a government facility. We have seen the growing social problems associated with that as a result of mismanagement during the Minister of Health and Social Services' watch.

In the comprehensive health review — again, back to the specific question — the government had every ability to control the terms of reference and the foundational elements of the health care review. One would suggest — I would certainly suggest — that reviewing things you are not prepared to consider is paying the people on the panel a lot of money to do work you know you intend to discard. So to that end, I will go back again to the issue of the health care tax, the increased fees and co-pays, and what appears to be planned increased fees for continuing care. If the Liberal government is not considering any of those things, the Premier has the opportunity to just rule it out. Why won't he rule it out if he's not considering it? Well, the answer to that is quite obvious. If they won't rule it out, it means that they are seriously considering going down that path.

I will go back again to the foundational elements. Where in those two lovely sounding foundational elements of the health care review was the focus on patient care, quality health care outcomes, and reduced outcomes? Why is that nowhere to

be found in the foundational elements of the Liberal government's health care review?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is pretty interesting — it is actually hypocritical, really — for the Member for Lake Laberge, who had a health review when he was minister that had recommendations for health care premiums, yet those premiums did not materialize. Now he is saying in this time frame, it's different. He is putting words in our mouths, saying that if we don't do this ipso facto, that means this. He knows it is simply not true.

It is really interesting as well how he blew over how important culture and humility is by just saying, "Well, that's fine." That's amazing. It's unbelievable actually. This is a foundational element of our health care.

Mr. Chair, we will ensure that data analysis and program management regimes match up with what we implement in the one health platform. Again, it's extremely important to this government that we reduce wait times. I tell you what — as we get into those recommendations and get into the meat of that, we will see from this report many different recommendations. I am sure of it, because of the professionalism of the stakeholder engagement. This is an important concept to many Yukoners. It will be addressed and it will be dealt with in the review.

There are six overall themes and those qualities are absolutely, fundamentally embedded in those, but the member opposite won't see that, because he is not looking for it.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Chair, again we see the flailing by the Premier on this issue. The Premier is very conveniently glossing over the fact that, first of all, the previous health care review was done as a result of the collective Cabinet decision, not any one minister. When that review came out with a recommendation to consider health care premiums, it took that government very little time to immediately say that we are not going down the road of health care premiums. The Premier said that once it came out — exactly — as soon as they came out with the fact that they were considering it — we were very clear about that.

It's interesting. Again, we note that the government very conveniently crafted the terms of reference so that the committee would consider health care premiums. It was clear that this was their intent. I should note that the Premier attempted to suggest — well, more than attempted, he outright stated it. He claimed that I was dismissing the value of cultural safety and humility. Of course that is exactly contrary to what I said. I do recognize the value of that as a foundational element of the review. I do recognize the value of data analysis and performance measurement as a foundational element of the health care review, but they are missing the single most important element, which is the focus on Yukoners' health care — quality health care for Yukon patients in a timely manner. That is nowhere to be found in the foundational elements of this Liberal government's comprehensive health care review.

The list — if Yukoners wish to go through it — of foundational elements — the one about data analysis talks about issues like disconnected data sets, data-sharing mechanisms, and unclear data roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Chair, of course those issues are important, but they are not more important than the patient. They are not more important than receiving the health care you need from the right professional in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, we see this government continuing to duck responsibility and suggest that they will get back to us later.

I have to remind the minister that when he suggests that my colleague, the Official Opposition critic for Health and Social Services, should just write a letter to the minister, that minister — the Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister of Environment, and the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation — has the worst record of any in the Liberal government for timelines of response in getting back to members. I am still waiting for a response from that minister in her role as Minister of Environment to a letter that I wrote her last December.

Yukoners with health care issues that they want addressed expect their government to respond in a much more timely manner than a 10-month reply window — or, for specific health care casework that I wrote the minister about, it took seven months to get a response on that. I know that colleagues have had similar experiences with the minister, and that is, of course, a decision — ultimately the Premier is responsible for Cabinet and their conduct, including when they choose not to reply to members of the Official Opposition, members of the Third Party, or the public about issues that we have written on.

To suggest that a response maybe half a year later or so is a reasonable substitute for answering the questions now is not a reasonable answer on the part of the Premier.

I point out that the Premier seems to find health care questions hard. We gave them ample heads-up to have officials ready. I have been in the situation, as Minister of Health and Social Services, of answering health care questions, including when I was sworn into Cabinet — I was Minister of Health and Social Services and it was my first role — I was sworn in during the morning, and I had to walk down into Question Period that afternoon. I answered more questions in my first four days as Minister of Health and Social Services than the Premier has answered this afternoon. This Premier, of course, is at roughly the three-year mark and on the verge of starting the fourth year in office. The answers that we get are, “Well, maybe try again later.”

We talked about wait times. We saw the issue of cataract surgery wait times exceeding the three-year mark with, according to government’s official numbers, some 350 Yukoners on the wait-list for cataract surgery. The government, after intense pressure from the Official Opposition and the public, finally relented and put additional money into that last year.

My question for the Premier is a simple one: What effect has that had on reducing cataract surgery wait times? What is the current wait time for cataract surgery in the Yukon, and how many people are on the wait-list? Perhaps the Premier can answer that question since he has struck out on all of the questions that I have asked him so far.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is an interesting tack — to answer the question and then be told that I’m not answering the questions.

Let’s go back to the terms of reference. There is nothing in the terms of reference — which are public, by the way — that indicate support for a health tax. The only time we hear about this is actually from the member opposite, which is interesting.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, talking off-mic when I answer his question — again, that’s why he thinks that I don’t answer his questions; he is not listening.

It’s an interesting tack. We have answered the question as far as wait times. Overall, there are six different themes, and those qualities are embedded in those themes — absolutely — so we answered that question as well, which is contrary to what the member opposite would have you believe.

Talking about the actual panel itself — it is absolutely committed to engaging and involving First Nations, municipal governments, health care providers, the public, and non-governmental organizations to hear their thoughts on potential system improvements. We are not hearing any of that from the Yukon Party. What we are hearing is a specific and misleading other narrative as opposed to a really important initiative. I would urge the member opposite to get engaged in this process.

In addition to the work that the panel and the Department of Health and Social Services is doing in partnership with NGOs across the Yukon to strengthen the relationships, to support NGOs, and to improve outcomes for Yukoners — that’s just the beginning. The department plans on hosting the first NGO forum to ensure the success of this initiative. We have hundreds of employees who work very hard every day to deliver services to Yukoners, and we want their feedback.

The member opposite is not interested in this process. He is interested in making this political as opposed to helping out with the process.

We are looking for that feedback on what is working and what is not working. That’s an extremely important part of what we are doing. We also need their ideas on how to improve the services that we are delivering to get better value for our money. This comprehensive review is an assessment of Yukon’s health and social services systems, including key cost-drivers in areas for improved coordination and integration of services. My goodness — answering health questions. It’s not as hard as the member opposite would have you believe.

The five values are: access, quality, sustainability, coordination of care, and reconciliation. If the member opposite doesn’t think that, inside of that alone, we are not talking about wait times or better services — whether it comes to cataracts or general emergency rooms — I don’t know where he is getting his information. That’s just in the five values.

Then we have the six themes, and those six themes of the review are: primary health care and delivery models — surely to god, in delivery models, we are going to be talking about wait times — absolutely, Mr. Chair — coordination of care within and outside of the territory is another theme. Coordination of care — we’re definitely helping with that. System structures to better meet the needs of individuals with



multiple layers of need — aging in place, pharmacare, pharmaceutical benefits, and social supports. The two fundamental elements of the review are cultural safety and cultural humility, and data collection analysis and performance management.

The member opposite would have you believe, by reading one page, that we are not considering wait times, and that's just simply not true. It's an interesting tack. I don't think that is necessarily what Yukoners need. I think they need the full picture. We're urging people to get involved in this process. We're urging people to know the facts by engaging with the independent panel itself. Over the next several months, we're going to be talking with our employees to gather their thoughts and provide their feedback to the panel that they have worked to shape their recommendations on how we're going to improve our health and social services system. That's what we're going to do.

We're not going to be deterred by the member opposite trying his best to make it seem like we're doing something that we're not. What we will do is continue with the process; we will continue down that road, because that's what we told Yukoners we were going to do. Again, the review will build on the work that was completed and the recommendations from the 2008 health care review that was done with the Yukon Party and also the 2013 clinical services plan and the 2007 Financial Advisory Panel's final report.

That's a lot of general information, when it comes to health care. If there's a specific question that I missed, we'll take a look at the Blues and endeavour to get that specific information back for the member opposite from the minister. I believe that the goal was to reduce these wait times quite considerably — to months, compared to the years under a previous government.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier fails to mention that they only relented and put money into cataract surgery after the Official Opposition pounded them relentlessly on this issue because of the 350 Yukoners who are on the waiting list. I do appreciate that they finally listened to the voice of Yukoners who were calling for assistance.

But there are other areas where people are facing unacceptably long wait times. An example of this is for an MRI. We know the MRI facility has been a valuable addition to the hospital, but we're hearing reports of wait times of several months. I have heard from a constituent that he was told as long as five or six months for an issue that he was dealing with. It appears that the solution would be to provide the hospital with additional resources in this area so that they could add additional staff for that. We don't see that anywhere in the health care review — the investment in increasing technology here — and we don't see any action from this government.

In terms of the health care review, I'm not going to spend too much more time talking about the foundational elements, but in the Premier's long, rambling — and somewhat flailing — narrative, the Premier is conveniently ignoring the fact and trying to gloss over the fact that quality of care for patients and access to health care in a timely manner was clearly an afterthought for this government, because it was not included as one of the foundational elements of the review.

The Premier gave us a rambling explanation of why he says it's addressed in other ways, but clearly, it's not front and centre in the review, while saving money is. We don't disagree with trying to reduce the cost, but improving health care services should have been a central element of the health care review.

If the Premier wishes to actually break his perfect record of non-answers this afternoon and give me an answer about whether the government is prepared to provide the hospital with increased resources to address their wait times, then I would be happy to hear it. We have also seen that the hospital — for the third year in a row, the government has not given them an increase to their base O&M budget to even keep up with the rate of inflation, while they're seeing high bed pressure and dealing with cost increases, such as witnesses have previously told us, where in chemotherapy alone, the costs have gone up by about double in the space of a three-year span. There are also increases to medical imaging and labs. So why has the government not provided the hospital with additional resources in this budget? Can the Premier advise us as to what the hospital is having to do right now to deal with what are, in real terms, cuts imposed on their funding by this Liberal government, which chose not to provide enough money to keep up with the rate of inflation?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, completely not true, as far as cuts. What we see is a Department of Health and Social Services that is growing in size, not decreasing in size. It is clearly in the mains, if you look at page 13-16 — as far as overall spending, it's increasing, not decreasing.

It's hard for Yukoners to take the member opposite seriously, when right away, he is giving information that is completely not factually accurate. It's interesting that the member opposite talks to us about wait times for cataract surgery. Under his government — under his leadership in the ministerial role — I believe the wait time for that was three years.

That is down to four months now. The member opposite can say that wait times are an afterthought for this government. I think I will take our record compared to his any day when it comes to that.

I want to talk about the great relationship that we have with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the specialist services that have been brought in — pediatric, orthopaedic surgeon, psychiatrist, et cetera — reduction in wait times and better collaboration. The Yukon Hospital Corporation — they are going to appear at a later date. I would ask the member opposite if he would ask them if they believe that there are cuts. I think he has tried that before and he didn't get the answer he was looking for from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and he certainly is not getting the answer he is looking for here because it is just not factually true.

Back again to the themes — this concept that he is trying to get Yukoners behind — and I don't think anybody is going to buy it if they are actually looking at the facts. The review consists of six themes, all of which address the issues that the member opposite is addressing here today.

So again, the fundamental elements are not themes per se, but they are underlying all of the themes. So to say that this constitutes some kind of afterthought — again, it is just not true. If you take a look at track records of wait times — this government compared to the last government — from three years down to four months for cataracts — again, we'll put our record up and let the facts determine what Yukoners should be led to believe.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, the Premier conveniently glosses over the fact that it wasn't until we relentlessly pounded on the government's failure to act on cataract surgery that they finally listened and provided additional funding. The Premier knows of course — as we all do — that when chairs of boards who serve at the pleasure of a minister or Cabinet come into the Legislative Assembly, they are not really in a position to contradict the government without risk of being fired if they don't toe the official line. We have seen of course the Minister of Health and Social Services, who is also the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation — and we recall when she fired the housing board and then misrepresented the nature of that to the public.

It is certainly clear what the government —

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

**Chair:** Mr. Streicker, on a point of order.

#### Point of order

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I believe I just heard the Member for Lake Laberge referring to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation misrepresenting the truth, which I believe contravenes Standing Order 19(h).

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, the Speaker has ruled in the past that there is a difference between accusing somebody of uttering a deliberate falsehood or doing as I said — I said that the minister had made statements that were misleading about the facts. I did not accuse her of intentionally being misleading. I left that for members to judge for themselves, so I don't believe I contravened that Standing Order.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I tend to agree with Mr. Cathers on this one. There is no point of order.

Mr. Cathers, please.

**Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have to point out that, when you pull out the one-time increases to the hospital budget, such as the increase for cataract surgery and additional funding that was provided for those types of matters, it does certainly appear that it has been a case of effective decreases to their O&M budget for three straight years. We know — the Minister of Health and Social Services actually admitted it on the record in Hansard in the spring of 2017 — that they have given the hospital a one-percent increase. This is in contrast to the fact that we know from the Yukon Hospital Corporation — prior to leaving office — that they were looking for a four-percent increase that year. Again, it's very

concerning that this Liberal government's neglect of health care has been absolutely appalling.

Mr. Chair, in the hope of getting answers to questions — we have heard the Premier again claiming that the questions are too specific for him. Well, they are not more specific than what members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party have asked previous governments and received answers to. Again, we provided the government with more than enough notice that we were going to go into the Department of Health and Social Services-related issues in general debate, since the government had chosen to table a supplementary budget that doesn't allow us to go into other areas.

I am going to ask the Premier some other questions that he may find too specific, but they are in his capital plan. We see the reference in the capital plan to the secure medical unit, with a price range estimate of \$5 million to \$10 million in the government's capital plan — as tabled by the Premier and shown on page 5 of their capital plan — which of course we have characterized as the "capital concept" due to its inaccuracy.

Can the Premier tell us what are the current estimated capital and O&M costs for the secure medical unit?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Specifically, to the secure medical unit — as the member opposite rightly pointed out, it's on page 5 of the Budget Address. That is in the planning stage right now. It's not slated to be completed until 2021-22. This is a great question to ask specifically to housing, because they will be here representing in Committee of the Whole when it comes to the supplementary budget.

There were a couple of other different comments that I do want to go back to here. It's pretty interesting to hear the member opposite not give credit where credit is due. Fourteen years of Yukon Party government and they couldn't reduce the cataract wait time, but yet we reduce the cataract wait time, and now it's because of the member opposite. That's a fish tale that is very hard to swallow for Yukoners.

I'm very happy that the opposition does their job and acts as critics for particular initiatives. I'm even happier when this government — because it's the right thing to do — makes things like wait times go from years to months. It is interesting for the member opposite to pat himself on the back and to say that it was only because he said for us to do it, even though he could not do it. That is definitely an interesting tack. It's a gift the member opposite has, really.

The member opposite talks about our five-year capital plan. That capital plan — we're hearing from the private sector about lots of benefits to this. Any new initiative from us — whether it be the five-year capital plan or the Yukon financial advisory plan or working whole-of-government or the performance plan — these are all tough initiatives. Modernizing legislation — the *Motor Vehicles Act*, off-road vehicles — a lot of things that the previous government just did not have the fortitude to tackle and try to get done, even though it was a conversation for sure for the five years I was in opposition — absolutely. It's hard to get these things moving forward, it is, and I have to give a shout-out to the public servants who are doing extremely difficult but important work

for Yukoners, moving forward to modernizing legislation, moving forward to make sure that we provide the programs and services and reduce the wait-lists for hospitals. I think the real credit shouldn't be given necessarily to any political party; it should be given to the public servants.

The member opposite can pat himself on the back and say he's the reason why this government — the Yukon Liberal government — reduced the wait times for cataracts. I'm going to say it was definitely a whole-of-government approach, working with the public servants — whether it be policy in the Executive Council Office, or the dedicated public servants of the Health and Social Services department, or the folks who are working for the corporation as well. That is exactly where the credit is due — not to the Member for Lake Laberge — that's for sure.

That five-year capital plan is making capital spending more transparent and it is allowing government, industry, and Yukoners to have more time to plan for extremely important projects. That five-year capital plan provides greater certainty than ever before. Now, the members opposite will joke about it, but they can't deny that there is more certainty — there is more information than there ever was.

The other government couldn't get a one-time budget — they would have to do two shots at a budget per year. We have synched that process so that public servants have more time to work on implementation of programming. We have now had a five-year capital plan, which was never something that the previous government considered, and we're doing more for Yukoners on it.

In the spring of 2019, we met and we shared the details of this plan with Yukon First Nations — again, extremely excited as they look at opportunities to stack federal funding and knowing what our priorities are by working whole-of-government with all the communities and then being able to have a longer-term vision of how to make sure that we maximize the local potential of the local tradespeople — yet the members opposite make a mockery of this process. I guess it is because they didn't come up with it. Ah, I'm starting to see a theme here, Mr. Chair.

Again, this long-term planning — and this long-term capital plan specifically — allows us to better plan, to better forecast, and to better time-manage procurement processes. We're putting out tenders earlier so that vendors have a better opportunity to prepare and to plan for seasonal projects and so that Yukon government is able to leverage the best times of the year for construction.

Mr. Chair, I am very, very proud of the work that the departments and public servants are doing on this whole-of-government approach and working with all of our stakeholders for the betterment of Yukon citizens.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Silver that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

### Chair's report

**Mr. Hutton:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.*

### The following document was filed October 17, 2019:

34-3-11

Safety and Security Issues, letter re (dated July 3, 2019) from Hon. Pauline Frost, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, to Liz Hanson, Member for Whitehorse Centre (White)