



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 60

3rd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, November 9, 2020 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2020 Fall Sitting

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

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

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Yukon Liberal Party

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

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Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 9, 2020 — 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. Mr. Pillai: I would ask the Assembly today to welcome some individuals who are here for our tribute to Farmer of the Year: Mr. Mario Ley; Dionne Laybourne; and their children, Emerson, Aislyn, and Dietrich.

I would also ask you to welcome two of our leaders in the Agriculture branch, Mr. Brad Barton and Mr. Kirk Price.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: I know that not all the guests are in the Legislative Assembly yet. We are juggling things around a little bit to ensure that everyone has a chance to be here for the part that they're attending for today.

I would like to welcome the Porter Creek Secondary School students. We have Gabriel Hopkins, Rylee Reed, Alia Krueger, Brendan Gregory, Daniel Hansen, Annabelle MacLeod, Xander O'Donnell, and special guests with them, Mr. Jason Cook and Felicity Brammer, and the principal for Porter Creek Secondary School, Peter Giangrande. We will also have today Joe Wickenhauser, the executive director for Queer Yukon, and Edwine Veniat, my ministerial advisor. We also have folks from the Women's Directorate and Justice listening in today, as there is not enough room for everyone with the restrictions in seating.

Thank you very much for being here today. I am looking forward to the business of the day.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Aboriginal Veterans Day

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to National Aboriginal Veterans Day, which took place this past Sunday. National Aboriginal Veterans Day honours the many courageous First Nation, Inuit, Métis, and other indigenous veterans who have served in uniform throughout Canada's history. Up to 12,000 indigenous Canadians have answered the call since World War I, and sadly, approximately 500 have died in conflicts around the world. Unfortunately, their valour and courage went unrecognized for many years. After witnessing the horrors of war, many who survived came home to a country

that did not see them as equal citizens or provide them with the same rights and benefits as their fellow soldiers.

This year is the 75th year anniversary of the end of World War II, and I want to highlight two Yukon First Nation citizens who took part in the conflict: First, I want to recognize Alex Van Bibber from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, who died at 98 years old in 2014. Van Bibber was one of the last Yukon First Nation veterans to serve in World War II. He survived the war and returned to Yukon, where he spent the rest of his life giving back to his community. However, like so many other indigenous veterans, Van Bibber may have fought for his country, but he lost his official Indian status in the process.

Many returning indigenous veterans gained the right to vote, which was still not afforded to all indigenous people. Many lost their official status and benefits as were then outlined in the *Indian Act*.

In spite of these challenges, Van Bibber would go on to become active with the Assembly of First Nations, receive the Order of Canada, and become a founding member of the Yukon Outfitters Association and the Yukon Fish and Game Association. He was also given a lifetime achievement award by Indspire, formerly known as the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

Chief Elijah Smith was also a World War II veteran and Order of Canada recipient. After the war, Chief Smith went on to, of course, lead the creation and signing of the *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* historical document. This year, he is being considered to be featured on the country's next \$5 bill. In spite of his leadership roles, Smith was also one of the thousands of World War II indigenous veterans who lost their status due to their service in the war. He was also denied the benefits and same compensation given to fellow non-indigenous soldiers.

After serving on Canada's behalf in support of human rights, both Van Bibber and Smith came home to a country where their indigenous people did not receive equal treatment. National Aboriginal Veterans Day is meant to bring this history to light and to properly recognize the veterans like Van Bibber, Smith, and thousands of others who fought on behalf of Canada. In 1991, Canada began to address the past wrongs with an agreement to compensate indigenous veterans who did not receive the benefits that they deserved. In 2001, a beautiful monument was erected in Ottawa to honour those who served and died.

On behalf of the Government of Yukon and all Yukoners, I want to express our deep appreciation and respect to all indigenous veterans who have served and continue to serve with courage and dedication. Your sacrifices will never be forgotten, nor will your important role in keeping our country and Canadians safe. We will honour your contributions by continuing our path toward reconciliation.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Aboriginal Veterans Day, a day observed annually on November 8 in

Canada. This special day recognizes the significant contributions of indigenous veterans past and present, military members who serve and have served our country in conflicts around the world and also on the home front throughout Canada's war efforts and during peacetime.

Thousands of indigenous people have served over the years, voluntarily enlisting in the Canadian military from all regions of the country. They have been on the front lines. They have worked in support of military campaigns. They have made contributions to war charities and they have volunteered labour in war-time industries. They came together for our country and we come together in recognition of their contributions. The contributions of the indigenous people of Yukon were monumental.

The war brought entire communities together to raise funds. Resources and materials were collected. Fundraisers were held and many efforts were recognized nationally. But it was not until recently that stories began to surface about the extensive efforts of indigenous Canadians stepping out to join the Canadian forces and other supports. Stories of Yukon individuals and community contributions have been recounted over the years here in the House and always deserve special mention — stories like that of Chief Moses of Old Crow and the Vuntut Gwitchin people who raised money for overseas efforts. King George VI presented the community with the British Empire Medal for their leadership and loyalty, strengthening ties between Canada and England. And stories of those Van Bibber boys — Dan, Alex, and Archie — and their experiences both overseas and serving on Canadian soil over the years — stories of those who helped by serving as guides as the Alaska Highway road link to Alaska was built through the Yukon wilderness — a massive war effort in the early 1940s by two countries: Canada and the United States.

So, we thank all indigenous veterans for their service, for their contributions, for their efforts and sacrifices for us throughout our history and especially today. Lest we forget.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to pay tribute to National Aboriginal Veterans Day, commemorated November 8 and to all the indigenous Canadians who have served Canada, both in times of war and in peacekeeping. Despite the fact that more than 12,000 indigenous people served in the major conflicts of the 20th century from the world wars to Korea to many peacekeeping missions the world over, with the loss of an estimated 500 lives, it was not until 1994 that National Aboriginal Veterans Day began in Winnipeg. It began because aboriginal veterans were not and had not been recognized in Remembrance Day activities.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, I have shared that my awareness of the difference in how Canada's military veterans were treated was ingrained early. The stories we hear today about the lived experiences of indigenous Canadians past and present who served this country echo those I heard as a child growing up. These were stories about two young men — one, my father — from the prairies who answered the call to serve

overseas during World War II — friends who were treated as equals when it came time to war, but in times of peace, their government and the institutions that they had gone to war to protect and serve treated them very differently. Denial of services, to veterans' benefits, and denial of the right to the most basic democratic right in a democracy — the right to vote — persisted for many years.

Mr. Speaker, it has been remarked upon many times that the indigenous people of this country have shown remarkable patience in the face of persistent and system racism. In 2020, some may find it hard to believe that it took until 1995 — 50 years after the end of the Second World War — for indigenous people to be allowed to lay Remembrance Day wreaths at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to remember and honour their dead comrades, or that it was not until 2001 that the first monument commemorating the role of indigenous people during the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War was dedicated in Ottawa, or that it took until 2003 for the Government of Canada to provide veterans' benefits to First Nation soldiers who had been denied them in past and to Métis veterans who had never received them.

Mr. Speaker, despite the recalcitrance of Canadian governments to honour and respect the many contributions of Indian, Inuit, and Métis men and women who volunteered to serve on behalf of all Canadians, First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people continue to serve Canada in operations at home and overseas, as they have done for more than 200 years. Today we remember all of the indigenous people who have served or given their lives, and we express gratitude to the more than 2,700 indigenous members of the Canadian Armed Forces who continue to serve on behalf of all Canadians.

Applause

In recognition of Intersex Day of Remembrance

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government in tribute to Intersex Day of Remembrance. Intersex Day of Remembrance falls on November 8. It was initiated by intersex advocates as a day to remember loved ones we have lost and to bring awareness to intersex issues. Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary definitions of male or female bodies, including sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, and hormone and chromosome patterns.

Experts tell us that between 0.05 percent and 1.7 percent of the population are born with intersex traits. These estimates are similar to the number of people born with red hair.

Intersex people often live with stigma and discrimination just for being born in their own bodies. In recent years, awareness of intersex people and recognition of the specific human rights abuses that they face has grown. This is due to the work of intersex human rights advocates.

Intersex people may face forced or a coercive medical interventions, harmful practices, and other forms of stigmatization due to their physical traits. According to Organisation Intersex International, only a handful of jurisdictions have actually implemented measures to prevent and address such abuses, and effectiveness of these provisions

has not yet been fully documented. For decades, medical professionals have pushed the notion that the necessary treatment of intersex people is with a concealment-centred approach. This approach means that intersex people are encouraged or even forced to hide who they really are.

The purpose of these interventions is often not based on the health or well-being of the individual, but rather they are done to mask the patient's intersex. It is meant to surgically or hormonally alter the patient's body in order to conform to society's limited scope of what a typical male or female body looks like. This approach can go as far as lying to parents of intersex children and to intersex folks themselves.

Concealment-centred approaches to medicine have proven to be scientifically ambiguous and do more harm than good. It is time to face the facts: gender and sex are a spectrum, and it is time to look beyond our binary biases. I urge all of you to educate yourselves on intersex issues and be the strong ally that the intersex community deserves. Today I stand in solidarity with them.

According to the Intersex Society of North America — and I quote: “People who are intersex will tell you that the primary thing they've been harmed by is induced shame about their intersex.” It is time to reduce the shame that people feel and work toward a more accepting society. The best way to reduce shame and reduce harm to intersex folks is to talk openly and honestly about intersex issues. LGBTQ2S+ folks deserve to feel safe, heard, and honoured in all spaces across Canada and especially in Yukon.

Applause

Ms. White: On behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party, I stand to recognize the important movement and advances of intersex awareness. What started as a conversation in 2003 and led to an e-mail exchange between two people in 2004 was the beginnings of what is now two international days in a week-long series of events to recognize and celebrate the intersex folks among us. Seventeen years ago, the emergent intersex movement was still trying to find its way in a world where few people knew what intersex was and fewer people were openly talking about their own intersex status.

An intersex person does not fit the typical definition of “male” or “female”. This means that they have variations in their chromosomes, genitals, or internal organs. Being intersex relates to biological sex characteristics and is distinct from a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. An intersex person may be straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual and may identify as female, male, both, or neither. Because their bodies are seen as different, intersex children and adults are often stigmatized and subjected to multiple human rights violations, including violations of their rights to health and physical integrity, to be free from torture and ill treatment, and to equality and non-discrimination.

Intersex folks who have had to go through unnecessary surgeries and medical procedures to normalize their appearance are forced to live with the consequences and decisions that were made by others. The procedures that they were put through have detrimental effects on a person's physical and mental

health. Despite that, the surgeries are frequently justified on the basis of cultural and gender norms and discriminatory beliefs about intersex people and their integration into society. Discriminatory attitudes can never justify human rights violations, including forced treatment and violations of the right to physical integrity. It is with the belief that this is not acceptable, right, or just that the intersex visibility movement was born.

The first Intersex Awareness Day was framed as a grassroots effort to raise awareness around intersex. They encouraged other organizations to join in with it. In short, they put it out there in the hope that different groups and different people would somehow take up the banner and make it into something. That first year — 2003 — nothing much came of it. What was started to give what was then a very small community a sense of belonging and something to talk about or to use as an excuse to share their story with people who were interested in hearing about it has grown into a vibrant international movement. Once 2004 came along, word had spread about Intersex Awareness Day and events were planned throughout the world by different advocates and were taking place in community forums, on campuses, and in community centres. This momentum continues to build to this day.

It is fitting that the original idea behind the day is still with it, recognizing the very earliest pioneers who were out on the front lines in the intersex movement, unafraid to be out and seen, not ashamed of the body they were born in, because, Mr. Speaker, it's time to change society and not bodies.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Farm Family of the Year

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government and the Yukon New Democratic Party to pay tribute to Yukon's farm family of the year, Mario Ley and Dionne Laybourne, as well as their children who are here: Emerson, Aislyn, and Deitrich.

Each year, our Agriculture branch, with the help of the agricultural community, recognizes a farmer based on their accomplishments, volunteerism, farm management skills, and the use of innovative ideas. Mr. Speaker, Mario Ley and Dionne Laybourne are exemplary in their hard work, commitment to animal welfare, and contributions to agriculture in the Yukon. I cannot think of a better farm family to honour with this award in 2020. Mario and Dionne have been operating their Can Do Farm for over a decade on their agricultural properties in the Ibex Valley just west of Whitehorse.

From their start in hay production, Mario and Dionne have broadened their operation over the years. They are now raising and selling cattle, pigs, chickens, and turkeys, and they seem to be expanding year after year. Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of hard work, success, and commitment all Yukoners respect.

Mr. Speaker, I had a bit of a moment to get to speak with the family at our agricultural conference on Saturday. What stood out for me is something that Mario said. He said that when he arrived in Yukon about 20 years ago — the day he arrived, he knew he was home, like so many. What better time to say that I would like to congratulate Mario Ley and Dionne

Laybourne as Yukon's farm family of the year. I wish you both the best in your ambitions and efforts to provide locally raised products for Yukoners — and Mario, in your continued leadership in Yukon's agricultural community.

I would also like to take a brief moment to acknowledge the many amazing Yukoners who were also nominated this year for Farmer of the Year. The list of agricultural operations is impressive and it demonstrates the growing self-sufficiency and dynamic local food production in this territory: Agnes Seitz and Gertie Share of Needle Mountain Food Forest and Gardens in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne — Agnes and Gertie are the runners-up this year — Agnes is a respected local food producer and educator; Megan Waterman of Lastraw Ranch in Dawson City; Kate Mechan and Bart Bounds of Elemental Farm in Takhini Valley; Lucy Vogt of Vogt Enterprises and Market Garden in Dawson; Scott and Jackie Dickson, owners of Takhini River Ranch; Derrick Hastings with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in teaching and working farm in Dawson; Gerry and Ann-Marie Stockley on the Mayo Road; Pauline Paton, Paton's Patch Farm at Fox Lake; and Shelby Jordan of Bon Ton and Company, who is an agricultural food processor in Dawson.

I congratulate all of the nominees and I want to thank you all for your contribution to Yukon agriculture and to our continued efforts to create food self-sufficiency in the Yukon. To all members and to those listening today: Please continue your support of Yukon agriculture, and I hope that delicious meats raised and processed by Mario and Dionne at the Can Do Farm have found a regular place on your tables at home.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the Yukon's 2020 farm family of the year: Mario Ley and Dionne Laybourne and their children, who are owners and operators of the Can Do Farm as well as my constituents.

Their farm, located in the Ibex Valley, is a producer of hay, beef, pork, chicken, and turkey. It is known for its natural and sustainable approach with animals being raised mostly on a local diet. Can Do Farm is aiming for significant growth next year, with plans well underway for the operation of an abattoir and meat-processing facility. In addition to slaughtering, cutting, and processing their own animals, Can Do Farm plans to have the capacity to provide services to other livestock producers. As well, they are planning, I understand, on a retail outlet, offering fresh meat cuts, as well as speciality creations such as smokies, jerky, sausage, and bacon. I understand that their plans also include sales to restaurants, as well as to the hotel industry. This type of expansion is a great example of the potential of Yukon agriculture as well as the future promise here in the Yukon.

So, congratulations to Mario and Dionne, and I wish you the very best of luck in your endeavours in the next year and beyond. Congratulations, as well, to all who were nominated for this year's recognition.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

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 supports reorienting Yukon's health care system from a traditional and fragmented medical model to a focus on population health, accompanied by integrated person-centred care across the health and social system.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House:

(1) congratulates the American people for successfully conducting their presidential election and selecting Joe Biden as their president and Kamala Harris as the first female, Black, South Asian vice-president ever; and

(2) looks forward to working with the new administration on matters such as cross-border safety, trade, and protecting vital salmon and Porcupine caribou habitat.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, as established by Motion No. 6 of the First Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly and amended by Motion No. 380 of the Second Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly and Motion No. 71 of the Third Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly, be amended by:

(1) rescinding the appointment of Wade Istchenko; and

(2) appointing Brad Cathers to the committee.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT, notwithstanding Standing Order 2(1), during the 2020 Fall Sitting, the Legislative Assembly shall:

(1) stand adjourned from its rising on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, until 1:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2020; and

(2) meet on Friday, December 4, 2020, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., or to an earlier adjournment time if so ordered.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Yukon communities to ensure that rural Yukoners have reliable and consistent access to all standard, in-person banking services, as offered prior to the transition from the TD bank to CIBC.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Minister of Education to respond to any outstanding correspondence from the J.V. Clark

School Council regarding staff housing shortages for teachers in Mayo.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that all government buildings are accessible to staff and the public by removing snow from public sidewalks, bike racks, and parking lots in a timely manner.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure the safety of seniors living in Yukon Housing Corporation residences by clearing snow and ice from entrances, sidewalks, and parking lots in a timely manner.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon aviation industry

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Our Liberal government has made it a priority to support Yukon's aviation industry. Aviation is critical to our modern northern lifestyle, keeping our communities connected and helping to grow our economy. Our government is making historic investments in Yukon's aviation infrastructure to support a strong future for northern airways, but in March, the COVID-19 pandemic clobbered the global aviation sector. Yukon's aviation industry, like most other jurisdictions, saw traffic decline more than 90 percent in some cases. Despite this once-in-a-century event, they continue to provide essential services, such as medical travel, medevac, and the delivery of critical medical tests outside the territory.

In the face of lockdowns, border restrictions, self-isolation orders, and hot zones across Canada and around the world, people are not flying as much. Despite this, local operators have embraced innovation and demonstrated determination and resilience. Our government has supported the Yukon aviation businesses by waiving commercial fees and working collaboratively with the federal government to provide operators with the financial support to maintain essential services. To date, we have provided more than \$3 million to our carriers.

Today, I am pleased to announce that the federal government will provide an additional \$7.1 million to support Yukon's aviation industry. With the goal of providing broad support to the Yukon aviation sector, we will be distributing the funds based on demonstrated need from carriers. We are here to make sure that these carriers can continue to operate. We don't want them to suffer financial hardship in the delivery of essential services that Yukoners rely on. Air North will be eligible to receive up to \$5.7 million to maintain the current scheduled flights south to Vancouver and north to Dawson City and Old Crow. Alkan Air will receive up to \$300,000 to continue to provide medevac services across the territory and down to the lower mainland. Additionally, \$1.1 million is available to support other Yukon charter and rotary carriers

based on provision of essential services and a demonstrated financial need.

This funding will go directly to our air carriers to ensure that they can continue to service the territory in these unprecedented times. It will ensure that they can maintain critical linkages to our communities and keep the territory connected. It will ensure that food, equipment, supplies, and medicine reach people living in remote communities in a reliable and timely manner.

I am pleased to announce that the Government of Yukon is also extending the waiving of aviation fees until March 31, 2021. This will save the aviation industry approximately \$234,000. In total, the fee waiver is saving Yukon air operators more than \$1 million. The aviation community continues to be deeply impacted by COVID-19, but it has demonstrated tremendous tenacity and unparalleled tenacity to continue their operations.

Our government is committed to supporting Yukon airlines to keep our communities connected. This funding and support will ensure that they can continue to provide services that Yukoners rely on. I want to thank Yukon's aviation companies for all their efforts.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise to speak to this. Certainly, support for the aviation sector through this economic downturn is important. I won't go through the host of reasons why, as the minister just did a pretty good job of that. But, in short, the aviation industry has been completely devastated due to the pandemic. That is why our support as legislators is so important.

On October 21, the Yukon Party brought forward a motion to enhance supports for the aviation industry. That motion called on the government to do the following things: ensuring that all air travel funded by the government to southern destinations be required to be with a local air carrier; ensuring that all government initiatives that involved air travel include strong provisions to mandate the use of local aviation companies; and, of course, supporting the development of meaningful interline travel agreements between Air North and mainland carriers.

While the Liberal government initially opposed the motion and made a number of amendments to remove any action from it, I am happy to report that, by the end of the debate, they had reversed their position and the motion ended up receiving unanimous support in this House. It is tangible actions, such as getting the government to book and use contracting to encourage only using local aviation companies, that I think will be beneficial to supporting this industry through the recovery. While today's announcement is certainly welcome as well, I do have some questions for the minister that I'm hoping he can answer when he is on his feet again.

This funding envelope was first announced at the beginning of August, with the provision that the territorial government would then have to negotiate a bilateral agreement with the feds before we got today's more detailed announcement. Can the minister tell us why there has been a

95-day delay between when the funding was first announced and today, when we finally got the details?

The press release states that \$7.1 million only covers up until December 31. As December 31 is only seven weeks from now, what is the government's plan to support the aviation sector beyond the end of this year? Certainly, no realistic expectation suggests that the aviation industry will rebound by December 31, so it seems short-sighted for the government to only announce funding that expires in just a few weeks rather than an extended long-term recovery package.

Another question that I have is with respect to the support for the entire aviation sector in Yukon. The money announced — while two companies appear to have approximately 85 percent of the entire funding pot earmarked for them, that leaves just shy of \$1 million left for the dozens of other local aviation companies. To be clear, we do not oppose the support going to our larger companies, but we are left wondering why so little is being offered to all the rest of the industry. I will quote from an October 16 letter that went to the Premier and our Member of Parliament signed by 12 of these companies that states — and I quote: “We believe it should go without saying that it is not only the larger carriers affected by the COVID pandemic. Smaller carriers, both fixed wing and rotary, based in the Yukon have seen a steep drop in revenues due to the pandemic, and are struggling to survive.” The letter goes on to request that the Government of Yukon develop a relief program for the assistance of smaller fixed-wing as well as rotary-wing carriers.

As the government received this request nearly a month ago, I am wondering: Why hasn't the government responded to this letter from industry yet?

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to respond to the ministerial statement of the day.

Aviation does have a long history in Yukon. We just celebrated 100 years of aviation this past year. As mentioned, aviation plays an important role in tourism, wildfire protection, medevacs within Yukon and to Vancouver or Edmonton, mineral exploration, and providing air service to Yukoners to communities, and, of course, a critical link to Yukon's only fly-in community of Old Crow.

We know that the Yukon aviation industry is hurting due to the pandemic, with reduced flights and people just not travelling to or within Yukon or travelling Outside. In May, this government announced the waiving of all commercial aviation fees from April 1 to December 31, 2020. The waiving of these fees has now been extended until March 31, 2021, and we support that. We are, however, curious about the private businesses impacted by the waiving of these fees.

NAV Canada is one such private business. NAV Canada is a fully privatized civil air aviation service provider. NAV Canada staff are the people who keep our aircraft in the skies and ensure safe landings and takeoffs. They too have been hurt by the pandemic and the massive reduction in flights across Canada. From their website, it says: “Our revenues come from our aviation customers, not government subsidies. By investing

in operations and controlling costs, we strive to keep customer charges stable, while improving safety and flight efficiency.”

So, I am curious: What consideration has this government given to NAV Canada and the loss of their revenues, and are there any other businesses impacted by the waiving of all of these fees?

We are pleased with the federal announcement of funding for Yukon's aviation industry and the announcement of this government's redistribution of these dollars — \$5.7 million to Air North and another \$300,000 to Alkan Air, as well as an additional \$1.1 million to support other charter and rotary carriers. These are important companies to Yukoners and are deserving of support in these unprecedented times.

We have talked about this before, and I will ask again: Is this government prepared to put their money where their mouth is and support Air North by providing policy direction to all departments that Air North be the airline of preference for government employees travelling outside of the Yukon? Is this government prepared to put this into policy so that, when the pandemic has passed, our local airline will continue to grow and serve the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, as always, I welcome the opposition's thoughts this afternoon on this very important matter. I am a little bit disappointed, Mr. Speaker, by the revisionist history and crass politics expressed by the Leader of the Official Opposition over there as it pertains to the motion that we came together and actually passed unanimously — and here it has been sullied by the member opposite. I regret that — it does a disservice to this House, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to turn to what is really important to Yukoners this afternoon, and that is that these are trying times for the aviation industry in the Yukon, across Canada, and around the world. This industry is absolutely critical to our territory. It must survive beyond the pandemic, and so any company that has lost money and is in danger of closing its doors must reach out to us and we will help, Mr. Speaker. Reach out to us and we will help.

The Department of Highways and Public Works has been working very closely with industry and over the last month I have personally spoken with virtually every aviation operator in the territory. I have heard their views on contracts, on insurance, on pilot certification, and this year's exploration, mining, outfitting, and tourism seasons. We are listening and we are working with industry and our federal partners to implement measures that support this critical industry to make sure that they survive this pandemic. That is really important.

Last year, we also invested heavily in the aviation sector so that they could flourish. As the members opposite know, we have dramatically increased spending on aviation over our term in government. We have paved Dawson's runway. We have built an all-weather maintenance facility up there to support that critical piece of infrastructure that we promised and we delivered on. We certified and invested in Mayo. We are going to have new airline lights up there. We have made very large and critical investments in Whitehorse, including the

connections for aircraft to the terminal. We have invested in new equipment there.

We have invested in snow-clearing and maintenance equipment that is cutting edge and replaced a lot of dilapidated snow-clearing equipment that we inherited when we took office. We have a baggage-handling system and security enhancements up at the airport, Mr. Speaker, that are currently underway. We're improving the food-services sector up at our airport in Whitehorse. We have a long-term strategy that we've been working very closely on with industry and the community. We're making lease lots available here in Whitehorse and in Mayo.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the aviation industry was made prior to the pandemic. It's continuing through the pandemic to make sure that our operators make it through to the other side of this global health crisis.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about buying airline seats on flights out of the territory. I will say that under our current government — this year in particular — the percentage of government seats purchased on Air North flights has never been higher. We were a bit shy of 100 percent this year. Recently when I checked, it was about 93 percent of government flights on Air North. This is higher than it has ever been, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue this. It's absolutely critical that we support our local airlines and make sure they survive this pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have talked about the interline agreements. I know that this is an important issue. I know that in 2012, they were struggling to make this happen. We are going to continue to work with our partners to make sure that they survive this pandemic in a healthy fashion.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Panache Ventures return on investment

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a year since the Yukon Liberal government gave \$2 million to a private venture capital fund, Panache Ventures, based in Montréal.

At the time, we learned that this was a grant of \$2 million and Yukon taxpayers would not realize any return or financial benefit from the investment. It was stated by participants that the intent of the investment was to provide access to equity for all Yukon entrepreneurs.

So, can the Minister of Economic Development tell us how much of the Panache Ventures fund has been committed to Yukon companies? How much has been invested in Yukon companies so far as a result of this \$2 million that this government gave to a Montréal firm?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm happy to rise and to speak to this.

So, in 2019 — just for a background for Yukoners — in partnership with seven Yukon First Nations and Panache Ventures, we made a significant investment into the future of Yukon's innovation knowledge economy by increasing access

to equity, financing, and capacity development to support Yukon's technology companies.

This investment helps close an identified gap that we have seen. This came from industry. They were told that they need more access to venture capital. Of course, that is part of the reason why we did this work.

The investment strengthens entrepreneurial opportunities for Yukon First Nation development corporations by opening up a new avenue in their investment strategies as well and really focusing on partnerships through chapter 22 and returning benefits to Yukon communities. This investment will support capacity development in Yukon's technology sector, including access to an international network of funds investors. We were supposed to have 100 CEOs here this summer. Of course, with COVID, we are moving that to next year, but it's a great mentorship opportunity, as well as seminars in investments.

I am happy to see this year in Silicon Valley in the C100 group, the Yukon being noted for innovation. Now, companies and organizations across the country are wondering how you can bring First Nation development corporations in with government to have these types of investment vehicles. So far, Panache has invested in one Yukon-based company — Proof Data Technology — and has committed to make efforts in investing in up to three more. I will get the exact financial number for that —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hassard: In the 2019 Fall Sitting of this Assembly, the minister claimed that, by giving \$2 million of taxpayers' money to this Outside firm, Yukon companies would have opportunities for mentorship. The minister further stated that, due to this investment in — and I quote: "... the very near future...", over 60 CEOs from a number of companies would be hosted by Yukon. At the time, Panache Ventures representatives publicly stated that they planned to visit Yukon regularly and spend time speaking face to face with local entrepreneurs.

Will the minister tell us when and how often representatives of Panache Ventures have visited Yukon since the \$2 million was shipped south in September of 2019? How many Yukon companies have been provided with mentorship?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Again, I will get the number that was invested in Proof Data Technology.

What is important is that this is a 10-year fund, so it's over a period of time. They will look for particular strategic investments that meet the goals. The others that have come to the table — we have the Alberta development corporation, Québec pension fund, Adidas family, National Bank — the pedigree of investment here is extremely significant. All of those jurisdictions have done their background and due diligence.

I will check — the representation is that there is a young gentleman from the Yukon who represents the interests of the First Nations on that board. He is a director with Chu Niikwän Development Corporation — Kwanlin Dün's development corporation — and also, I believe, a chartered accountant.

We will have the department reach out to him to get a report on mentorship, if there are any new investments on the

horizon, and what is the plan to reschedule the CEO conference that was supposed to happen this year — hoping, of course, that COVID has gone aside — and anything else that we should bring back to the Legislative Assembly on this good investment and forward-looking vision that we have seen from these First Nation development corporations.

Mr. Hassard: So, over a year and one company, and we don't know the dollar amount. The minister has indicated that, due to giving this Montréal firm \$2 million, the Yukon economy would expand and that Yukoners could expect to be getting jobs in the technology sector.

Will the minister explain how the Yukon economy has expanded due to this \$2 million that was shipped south, and what new jobs have been created as a direct result of Yukon taxpayers giving this \$2 million to this Montréal firm?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As we hear from across the way some comments about: “Good question” — you know what — the entrepreneurial city of the year in 2018 was Whitehorse. We spent the weekend even at the agricultural conference in the NorthLight Innovation centre. We are seeing company after company come in. I look forward to budgetary debate when we can get into the numbers on jobs that we are seeing increase in that sector — something at a speed we did not see previously.

This private equity is just one element of that opportunity to access capital to increase — we saw last week — the work we did will be coming to the House to talk a bit about that — an analysis done on angel investment with NACO Canada. Again, really putting our shoulders into the entire ecosystem to ensure that there are opportunities there. So, we do see new jobs.

Even this month, we heard that the government wasn't leaning in — 400 jobs recovered or in place right now — again, leading the country as the lowest — when you go apples to apples — the lowest unemployment rate in the country and the best ratio of jobs available to people unemployed.

Once again, I think that our economic track record stands for itself. I think that the opposition should reach out to the First Nations that invested and see what they think and if this was a good investment. Is this really what the spirit of that chapter 22 was all about?

Question re: COVID-19 pandemic business relief funding

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, the Minister of Tourism and Culture announced that there would be a tourism relief package coming. That was three weeks ago, and we are still waiting for details.

Can the minister tell us when the details for the relief package for restaurants and bars will be announced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thanks for the question. Our government — I think that I have stated this a number of times — had a very swift, quick response to the global pandemic that we are currently facing. We put in place the types of programs that were needed. We worked with our business community to identify those — the cancelled events program. We then put in place sick-leave benefits. We put in place a Yukon business relief program.

Yes, a couple of weeks ago, I announced that we are investing a further \$15 million toward our tourism sector. We have announced the accommodation piece and will continue to work with our partners to identify further relief that is needed. We have worked with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to do a thorough analysis.

We make our decisions based on evidence on this side of the House, and that is what we will continue to do. We will use Yukoners' money in the best possible way going forward. I look forward to further questions.

Mr. Istchenko: For the record, I was asking about a relief package for restaurants and bars.

Three weeks ago, the Minister of Tourism and Culture announced that there would be a tourism relief package coming. That was three weeks ago, and we are still waiting for details.

Can the minister tell us when details for the relief package for RV parks will be announced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I think I was pretty clear in my previous answer that our government has put in place business relief programs that were led as a one-government — but specifically by Economic Development — to support our businesses. All of those businesses that the member opposite is talking about are eligible for the Yukon business relief program.

We have worked with our partners in Canada. We were the first to respond in Canada to put in place a program like this, and we will continue to work with our partners to ensure that their needs are met. We are finalizing the data that we have worked on with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, and we will continue to make good decisions about that.

I look forward to another question.

Mr. Istchenko: So, three weeks ago, the Minister of Tourism announced that there would be a tourism relief package coming. That's three weeks ago. Like I said earlier, we are waiting for details.

Can the minister tell us when the details for the relief package for outfitters and wilderness tourism will be announced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, I'll keep repeating myself. I'm not sure that the member opposite is hearing the answers that I'm giving. I mean, we do have programs in place right now for all Yukon businesses, and that absolutely includes tourism businesses. All of the businesses that the member opposite has talked about today are covered under the Yukon business relief program. They will continue to be covered.

We are making evidence-based decisions and using the money that we've identified for further relief for the tourism sector. We are going to make decisions that are good for Yukoners, because we have limited funds. We have a supplementary budget that is before us and we want to make the best use of those funds going forward. We're looking toward recovery, as well, so those are all considerations that we're working on right now.

I look forward to releasing the tourism relief and recovery plan when it is ready. I look forward to having those discussions with members opposite if we ever potentially get into

department debate on Tourism. I absolutely look forward to having that discussion with you.

Question re: COVID-19 impact on education system

Ms. White: This current school semester has been extremely difficult on folks. Whitehorse school administrators, educators, bus drivers, teachers' aides, parents, and students have all been impacted by half-day, in-person classes. A quick look at public forums and social media will tell you that it has been brutal.

What's not clear is how the impact of half-day classes is being measured and how that information is going to be put into action for the January semester.

Can the minister say at what point Yukoners affected by half-day, in-person classes will be surveyed and if this will inform recommendations for the January school semester?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The decisions made previously with respect to the school reopening plan, the ability to return 5,700 students to full-time, five-days-per-week education in our school system, is something of which we are extremely proud. It can only have been done because of the hard work of students, parents, educators, and administrators.

We have had to adapt the programming for grades 10 to 12 students at the three larger high schools in Whitehorse. That programming is being assessed daily, and it has been assessed daily since August 19 when school went back to full-time classes. We are working with administrators.

I don't disagree with some of the preamble in the question today, because it is on the shoulders of educators, administrators, students, families, and parents as to how successful the return to school has been, and that assessment is ongoing. We are working with all of those individuals — all of our parents, students, families, and all of our partners in education — for the purposes of determining how to best move forward so that students are safe.

Ms. White: Many students are struggling academically due to the half-day, in-person classes. Students are feeling depressed and unmotivated. Busing has been a nightmare for many families, and this has also affected city buses and their passengers. Educators, staff, and families are feeling burnt out. The same can be said of parents trying to struggle with their kids' learning and well-being with their own struggles. In order to help them, it is important to understand what the difficulties are that they are facing. What is working and what isn't? More importantly, how is that being measured by government?

Will students and educators be surveyed for feedback on half-day, in-person classes, and how will their input shape the January school semester?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, this is a great question, and I am happy to rise today to address it.

I should say, before I get to the concept of a survey, that I certainly don't disagree that many students have had difficulty adapting to the programming. It is full-time learning. I think I want to note that for Yukoners — and making sure that we also balance the input here in the Legislative Assembly with the idea and the information that we have about some students who are

doing quite well under this regime. It's certainly not the answer for everyone.

We have been told by students that they have time for their lives, that they can play a sport, sometimes they have a job, and that they are really enjoying the opportunity to learn in different ways throughout the curriculum. There are reduced discipline issues in some schools, and there is extra time for counselling with students and time for their work that has not been their experience previously.

There will be a survey of students, staff, and families. I believe that it will go out this week — if not, early next week. The target date is November 16. The concept, of course, is to repeat the survey that occurred in August and to use that feedback.

Ms. White: If there are aspects of half-day, in-person classes that aren't working or that can be improved on, the government needs to have a system in place to get that feedback and act on it. This is true anytime, but it is especially true in the middle of a pandemic that has had major impacts on the way we live. A public commitment to improve the success of each Yukon learner exists through the school growth process. This commitment to action focuses in part on the use of evidence to guide decisions and actions.

What evidence is being used to guide decisions and actions about half-day classes and how will this affect the January semester?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I again appreciate the question and the opportunity to speak to families and Yukoners about the importance of the survey that will be coming out. We are surveying staff, families, and students, as I have said — in November, going forward. It will be a small window so that we can gather that information quickly and determine how to increase supports for students and how to increase supports for administrators and teachers as well. I can indicate that school councils are supportive and had input to the questions that are going forward with respect to this survey and that our partners in education have been working with us to determine how best to ask these questions. We will give students time in class to produce and work on the survey so that we are sure to get their input and input from their families as well.

It is due to the hard work of the administrators, teachers, educators, school councils, First Nation governments, and other partners that our plan has been able to be executed — keeping kids in school in a safe way since August 19. We continue this work on a daily basis and look forward to the input that we will have and the feedback we will get in the survey to determine how we can best go forward in serving those students.

Question re: Shingles vaccine

Ms. Hanson: When the government announced that the Shingrix vaccine would be provided for free to seniors aged 65 to 70, many Yukoners asked why this government is ignoring the scientific evidence recommending that all healthy adults 50 years and older get the vaccine to prevent shingles and the serious complications from shingles. This vaccine is 97-percent effective in those aged 50 to 69 years old and 91-percent effective for adults 70 and older.

The chief medical officer of health's 2018 *Yukon Health Status Report — Focus on Seniors* recommended that the Shingrix vaccine be part of our public health program for seniors between the ages of 65 and 79.

Why would the minister not follow the recommendation of the chief medical officer of health and provide free Shingrix vaccines to all seniors aged 65 and over?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to funding for the Shingrix vaccine — I want to just note that, historically, we haven't funded Shingrix in the Yukon. So, I'm very pleased about that. I think that the decision to go ahead and start funding and supporting our seniors is one that we're very proud of. I think the department has done its due diligence with respect to providing and including additional vaccines. Of course, we certainly want to help the well-being of Yukoners and provide the best quality care to our seniors. The offering of Shingrix vaccine to seniors — expanding access wasn't done historically, so we're very pleased about that. Certainly, we'll take that direction or recommendation under consideration as we go ahead. Being that this is new, we will go ahead as planned and implement the recommendations and that is to provide Shingrix vaccines to our senior citizens aged 65 to 70.

Ms. Hanson: In addition to the recommendation of the chief medical officer of health for Yukon, the *Putting People First* report recommends the expansion of the public health vaccine program. I quote in section 2.14: "Expand the department's vaccine program to incorporate new vaccinations recommended by public health available at no cost to clients."

It goes on: "Providing vaccines can reduce system costs, avoid new costs and have public health benefits such as reducing time off work or away from school. Vaccines can also prevent or reduce serious medical conditions that require expensive treatments."

This minister has publicly endorsed the *Putting People First* report, so why is she ignoring the recommendation of the panel regarding access to new vaccines that can prevent serious medical conditions?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I certainly want to acknowledge that we are providing and expanding the public health vaccines. We are taking the direction — following suit, of course, as we look at the programs across the country. We are consistent with Ontario and the BC First Nations Health Authority on this age group. If there are further recommendations, we will certainly take that under consideration.

We have gone ahead and implemented expansion of vaccines specific to Shingrix, but we've also expanded access to HPV vaccines and we are offering coverage for PrEP for Yukoners at risk of contracting HIV. So, we are looking at an expanded scope of practice. We will continue to do that as we look at implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

Ms. Hanson: The question today is about the Shingrix vaccine. Contrary to what the minister said, it is only available to a narrow band of ages 65 to 70. Almost 35 percent of senior households in Yukon report an income of less than \$40,000 per year after taxes. Given the high cost of living in Yukon, \$400 is just too much for many seniors to pay — yet this vaccine can

prevent serious medical conditions that can have long-term health impacts on seniors, along with increased costs of health care to the Yukon government. Many seniors are unable to afford the two-dose Shingrix vaccine.

Will the minister tell seniors who can't afford the \$400 Shingrix vaccine why this government refuses to make the Shingrix vaccine available and free to all seniors, not just to a few?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will just reiterate what I had said previously: This is the first time this program has been offered in Yukon. With respect to the comments about expanded health vaccines, we are taking that beyond. We are looking at other health priorities in Yukon.

The decision to fund Shingrix for people 65 to 70 is based on clinical evidence and research on cost-effectiveness, and it is similar to programs in other jurisdictions. As I indicated, the BC First Nations Health Authority provides coverage for Shingrix for those between the ages of 65 and 69.

We certainly are interested. We have taken into consideration the recommendations from our *Putting People First* recommendations. We will consider those as we move forward. Looking at including Shingrix in our vaccine program in Yukon — I am very pleased about that. I want to assure seniors that these vaccines are available at no cost to them, as recommended by the department.

Question re: Yukon Energy Corporation general rate application

Mr. Kent: The 2019 annual report of Yukon Energy Corporation states — and I quote: "Yukon Energy is planning for a General Rate Application (GRA) for future years." This is the process by which the utility requests increases to how much they charge for electricity.

Can the minister tell us when Yukon Energy will be submitting this rate application? How much of a rate increase will the Energy Corporation be looking for?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just a little bit of background — the Yukon government and Yukon Energy recognize that paying, of course, more for electricity is hard on individuals.

I think it is key to understand this rate conversation. I always like to have an opportunity to speak to it because what Yukoners felt in January and February — many Yukoners had a very significant increase in their electric bill. Really, that was the balancing, or the reconciliation, of the credit card that my friends across the way decided to run up for five years without going to rate.

Coming into my particular job in this role — what we quickly found out was that, previously, the expenditures that were ongoing at Yukon Energy Corporation year over year were not going to rate because, of course, those are tough conversations to have with Yukoners.

The commitment that we made, coming into office, was that we would look at the consistent process of going to rate, working with the Energy Corporation and letting that board make that decision every couple of years. So, in January, we saw people's rates go right up — the opposition, of course,

commenting on that but not telling everybody that, actually, they were their expenditures, for the most part.

I will reach out to Yukon Energy. I know that they are working on a rate application. They want to make sure that, every couple of years, it goes up so that we can see, not those large anomalies, but just small blips as we go forward — which is really important for everybody to balance their budget when they are sitting at the —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Kent: I am hoping that the minister comes back with information on when he anticipates that rate application to be submitted and how much the Yukon Energy Corporation will be asking for.

I am curious: Has the minister been briefed on the GRA that Yukon Energy has worked on, and did he speak to anyone at the Yukon Energy Corporation or on the corporation's board about the timing of it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have, in a briefing, been told that they are working on a rate application. I think that they are trying to get their timing in place as quickly as possible.

We have said, "Do the work that you have to do. Those are your decisions." The only direction that I have ever given is that I think that it would be prudent to make sure that you are going to rate every couple of years. We don't want to see the situation where there is interference.

I am hoping that they get their package together soon. I think that is the right thing to do. We don't want to see situations again where the credit card got run up for five years — with a whole bunch of other stuff that hopefully we get to talk about a bit on expenditures here for Yukoners to know.

So, again, what I will do for the Legislative Assembly — I will reach out to Yukon Energy Corporation to try to get a handle on exactly when they want to file their rate. As well, of course, Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation will be right here, so the opposition will have lots of opportunity to ask about why we have done the things we have done and why they have done the things that they have done.

Mr. Kent: We have heard a couple of times on the floor of the House that the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation are coming. Hopefully, the minister, when he is on his feet for this final response, can tell us exactly when they will be coming before we rise this fall.

We understand that the Yukon Energy Corporation was originally planning a general rate application for the end of last year; however, that did not end up going forward. So, can the minister tell us why the Energy Corporation did not go forward with a rate application for the end of last year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation will be coming this fall. I don't have the exact date. I think that the member opposite can ask the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation, when they come in, exactly why they have made their decisions over the last number of years. Hopefully, I will have that information back about when they are going to come here to visit and to answer questions from the opposition.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 321 regarding membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 321

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 321 regarding membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Motion No. 321

Clerk: Motion No. 321, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, as established by Motion No. 6 of the First Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly and amended by Motion No. 380 of the Second Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly and Motion No. 71 of the Third Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly, be amended by:

- (1) rescinding the appointment of Wade Istchenko; and
- (2) appointing Brad Cathers to the committee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have brought this motion as the Government House Leader is required to do. I have done so at the request of the Official Opposition. They are choosing membership of an individual member whom they would like to see on this committee. I am happy to bring this forward and have unanimous consent to proceed with its debate and to make the change on the membership of the committee.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Government House Leader. I did bring this to her attention last week and she moved very quickly to make this happen. I understand that there is a meeting coming up very shortly of the Public Accounts Committee and we wanted to adjust the membership from the Official Opposition, so I do appreciate her bringing this forward in a timely manner.

Ms. White: I would just like to thank the Member for Kluane for his time on the committee and, of course, welcome the Member for Lake Laberge as he takes his spot.

Motion No. 321 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further government motions?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 322 regarding changes to the schedule of the 2020 Fall Sitting.

Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 322

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 322 regarding changes to the schedule of the 2020 Fall Sitting.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Motion No. 322

Clerk: Motion No. 322, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, notwithstanding Standing Order 2(1), during the 2020 Fall Sitting, the Legislative Assembly shall:

(1) stand adjourned from its rising on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, until 1:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2020; and

(2) meet on Friday, December 4, 2020, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., or to an earlier adjournment time if so ordered.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is a topic that was recently discussed by House Leaders. Each of the parties have — I understand — supported this concept. We are bringing forward this motion for the purposes of officially changing the schedule, which would be affected when the motion passes at the end of this week — actually, at the end of tomorrow — in recognition of the importance of Remembrance Day ceremonies, as well as the schedule for travel for some members who would be returning to their constituencies to participate in those kinds of things and the important community opportunities that would avail them.

I can also note that this motion — the way it has been worded and presented — and I thank the other House Leaders for their participation and interest in this topic — will not affect the 45 days for the Sitting because, while we would not sit on November 12, that has been replaced by a full sitting day scheduled for December 4. I understand their support for this from the other parties as well.

Mr. Kent: Yes, I will just quickly offer support on behalf of the Official Opposition to this. It is important to our rural MLAs that they're able to be in their constituencies for any Remembrance Day ceremonies that may be taking place. We appreciate the negotiations that took place between House Leaders to arrive at a solution that would respect the ability of especially rural members to travel back to their communities and not cost us one of the allotted 45 days for the Fall Sitting by agreeing to the five-day Sitting in early December.

Ms. White: Although the Yukon NDP caucus is not affected by driving to and from town for Remembrance Day ceremonies, we do support our rural colleagues and I hope that they are able to safely participate in the ceremonies in their communities without the stress of coming back to town for November 12. So, we were happy to support the motion.

Motion No. 322 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 9: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 9, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McLean.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I move that Bill No. 9, entitled *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that Bill No. 9, entitled *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. McLean: We have covered significant ground during debate on this bill in the House. I want to thank all members for their participation and contribution to the discussion. I would like to take a few moments now to remind all members of the content of the bill one more time before the final vote.

The *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act* will prohibit anyone from performing conversion therapy on a minor. Additionally, to protect vulnerable Yukoners, it prohibits substitute decision-makers from consenting to conversion therapy on behalf of another person. This act ensures that conversion therapy is not an insured health service in Yukon for anyone, regardless of their age.

This act is specifically designed to protect people of any gender identity or sexuality from harmful practices aimed at changing their sexual orientation or gender identity. I am so proud that we are moving forward to protect the safety of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

With the passing of this bill, Yukon will be joining three other Canadian jurisdictions that have enacted legislation bans on conversion therapy.

There are also multiple jurisdictions throughout Canada that have taken steps to ban conversion therapy, including the federal government. On October 1, 2020, the federal government reintroduced legislation in Parliament to criminalize conversion therapy. We will continue to monitor this legislation as it proceeds.

In the meantime, I am reassured knowing that many other provincial and municipal governments across the nation are committed to protecting human rights by banning conversion therapy. I believe that this legislation will have a substantially positive impact on the LGBTQ2S+ community in our territory. We are allies. We need to be here for them by actively working to end discrimination and any practices that aim to do them harm.

Several national organizations continue to express serious concerns and opposition toward conversion therapy. This includes the Canadian Psychiatric Association, Canadian Association for Social Workers, and the Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health. The Canadian Psychological Association has stated that conversion therapy, or reparative therapy, can result in negative outcomes such as distress, anxiety, depression, negative self-image, a feeling of personal failure, difficulty sustaining relationships, and sexual dysfunction.

We as a government continue to be lobbied. People are trying to convince us not to have this important change in legislation happen. Stoptheban.ca is a website that became live recently. While it is geared toward the federal government, we have lobbyists reaching out to provincial and territorial governments as well.

The opening statements on the stoptheban.ca are very concerning — and I quote: “Justin Trudeau’s proposed ban on so-called ‘Conversion Therapy’ is an unprecedented assault on civil rights, religious freedom and Christianity itself. If passed, Bill C-6 will jail parents for affirming gender-confused children in the sex they were born, pastors for providing spiritual guidance, and therapists for counselling clients who voluntarily ask for help with unwanted sexual feelings.”

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that some individuals might see this important legislation that is aimed to protect our children as “an unprecedented assault on civil rights”, as they put it. It concerns me and makes me question the silence from the Official Opposition all the way through this process — few comments and no questions during Committee of the Whole were asked by the Official Opposition. As we already discussed on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, a few comments from the Member for Lake Laberge were not very well-received by members of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Where was the new leader of the conservative Yukon Party when this happened? What was the response?

I recall a recent speech from the new leader of the conservative Yukon Party talking about diversity and inclusivity going forward. This is not what we have seen on the floor of the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I can tell you that inclusivity was not reflected during the legislative process on Bill No. 9.

That silence and lack of clear leadership was disappointing at most, and it was rather concerning to me and other members of this Legislative Assembly. I thought about it a lot, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if that was a lack of knowledge on how to address the members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. If this is the case, I invite the members of the Official Opposition to be in touch with Queer Yukon or other equality-seeking groups to ask the questions that they might have. Such an easy thing would have prevented the Member for Lake Laberge from telling us that conversion therapy does not happen in Yukon, when, in fact, we know that it has happened and could be happening at this very moment.

Furthermore, there are also tremendous resources available on the QMUNITY website. This important information is found on qmunity.ca by clicking the “learn” tab. I invite

everyone to go there and learn more. This bill is something that many communities and organizations in Yukon have demanded. I am so pleased that we are ready to now pass this legislation.

The desire for a ban was originally expressed through a petition tabled in this Legislative Assembly, extensive feedback from the LGBTQ2S+ inclusion, public engagement letters, letters from multiple Yukon non-governmental organizations, and the working coalition consisting of the Yukon LGBTQ2S+ societies. I would like to take a moment to honour the youth who were leading the charge for equality in our community. I commend the Yukon Gender and Sexuality Alliance for their advocacy during the past few weeks while the bill was up for debate. Thank you for sharing your voice with us and thank you for your bravery. Thank you for listening into the Legislative Assembly when you were able. I know that we will keep channels of communication open with the Gender and Sexuality Alliance and LGBTQ2S+ organizations as we finalize our government’s action plan on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion.

By developing an action plan based on our engagement with the LGBTQ2S+ community, we are actively examining what services, programs, and policies must be changed to ensure inclusivity and non-discrimination. I look forward to sharing that action plan soon.

I would also like to thank all of our stakeholders, Yukon government officials, and all staff who played a role getting to where we are today in passing Bill No. 9 in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. A heartfelt thank you for all of your hard work and commitment.

I would like to close with an important quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere... Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” By approving this bill, we are removing threats to justice and dangerous practices to valued members of our Yukon communities. This is beneficial for all Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill No. 9, the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*. This legislation will prohibit conversion therapy from being provided to minors or adults for whom there is a court-appointed guardian. It sets out that the substitute decision-maker does not have the authority to consent to conversion therapy for a person and it clarifies that conversion therapy is not an insured health service. We support this legislation.

The legislation came about following a petition of the Legislature that was organized by the students of both Porter Creek Secondary School and F.H. Collins Secondary School. In particular, the work to organize the petition was led by the schools’ gender and sexuality alliances. My colleague, the MLA for Kluane, had the opportunity to meet with the Porter Creek Secondary School Gender and Sexuality Alliance in the Rainbow Room early last year. He was impressed by their leadership and fearlessness in tackling this issue. He has expressed to our caucus how much he appreciated meeting with

the GSA and the concerns, issues, and hopes that they expressed to him.

More recently, the leader of the Yukon Party met with the Porter Creek GSA to learn about their lived experiences and discuss their thoughts on this bill and many other issues facing the LGBTQS+ community. I would like to thank those students on behalf of the Yukon Party for their courage and leadership in bringing this forward. I would also like to thank the Leader of the NDP for working closely with these students to bring forward their petition and for advocating on their behalf here in this legislature.

Beyond the petition, the Yukon government was also urged to take this action by the federal government, who wrote a letter to two Yukon ministers in July of 2019.

In that letter, the federal government urged the Yukon government to take this action. Since receiving the petition from Yukon students and the letter from the federal government, the Yukon government has now brought forward this bill.

We recognize the importance of this bill in signalling to Yukoners that the practices that this bill seeks to address are dangerous and harmful. We believe that it is important to protect vulnerable people from harm. No person should face discrimination, intimidation, or physical harm simply because of who they are. We also believe that all Yukoners should feel accepted and safe in this territory and in our society.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the GSA, who have petitioned the Yukon government, for their efforts and leadership. Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party will vote in favour of Bill No. 9.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Conversion therapy is a reprehensible so-called treatment to convert or change a person from being their authentic self. It harms and stigmatizes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited persons. It undermines their dignity and negatively impacts their equality rights and lives. It reflects myths and stereotypes about LGBTQ2S+ persons. Conversion therapy is, by definition and at its very core, harmful. It is critical that we recognize the evil done by discrimination and the practice of conversion therapy — the collective idea that a human must be other than their true selves.

Over 30 percent of the thousands of queer and trans people in Canada who have experienced conversion therapy have attempted suicide. Many have taken their lives. In fact, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that conversion therapy works; in fact, data suggests that the practice is dangerous, and most medical communities have denounced it as unethical.

As noted above, the word “therapy” is misleading. There is no scientific basis for conversion therapy. Practices often vary widely and are not regulated. It is not medically certified.

It has been questioned in this Legislative Assembly as to whether this bill, Bill No. 9, is the business of government. It is absolutely the business of government to provide safe places, safe communities, and equitable communities. It is also the right thing to do.

Societal change obliterating discrimination and true equality can be slow to come and must be the result of combined and sustained effort. One way in which we signal that change and acceptance is by changing our laws. The federal government has recently reintroduced legislative amendments to the *Criminal Code* to ban conversion therapy, a critical signal to our society that these practices will not be tolerated.

The legislation proposes five new *Criminal Code* offences related to conversion therapy. These include: causing a minor to undergo conversion therapy will be a crime; removing a minor from Canada to undergo conversion therapy abroad will be a crime; causing a person to undergo conversion therapy against their will will be a crime; profiting from providing conversion therapy will be a crime; and advertising to offer to provide conversion therapy will be a criminal offence.

The Government of Canada has committed to working with provinces, territories, municipalities, and other stakeholders to ensure that Canada is a country where everyone — regardless of their gender expression, gender identity, or sexual orientation — can live in equality and freedom.

It is critical that our other levels of government also pass legislation within their jurisdictions to make and support our society’s progress and reduce harm, which is why my colleague has brought Bill No. 9 to this Legislative Assembly. As you have heard from the minister, our proposed Yukon legislation is leading edge and will protect the rights of our youth. It will also protect those individuals seeking information and counselling about their personal lives, which is also like the proposed new federal laws.

The practice of conversion therapy harms people. Banning the practice and the addition of conversion therapy practices to the *Criminal Code* is a good first step, but it must come with education efforts to change the structures and social attitudes that underlie such practices. Repairing the damage that has been done and that continues to occur must be a priority. We need to acknowledge and improve the poor societal supports for queer and trans people and the social and health inequities that they face.

It is one of the first issues that the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister responsible for the Women’s Directorate and I worked on together in early 2017. In fact, it is very important to us and to all of our caucus, both professionally and personally, that our laws reflect an equitable Yukon.

Diversity and inclusion are among Canada’s greatest strengths. Canadians must feel safe in their identities and feel free to be their true selves. Yukoners must be supported to be who they truly are and to live fully healthy and safe lives. I am so proud of the work that our government has led to make our community more equitable, more inclusive, safer, and progressive.

I would like to thank our guests for being here today and for all the days that they have come. Your dedication to change is true, and today we see true change.

Ms. White: It's a pleasure today to speak in favour of Bill No. 9, the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*. Holy cow — it has been a long time to get to this spot. I was reminded today that the radio interview that Mercedes Bacon-Traplin and Aidan Falkenberg did with Sandy Coleman on *A New Day* was actually not that long ago — less than two calendar years, I think. That conversation started — I got the e-mail shortly thereafter that said that denying that conversion therapy was a thing that could happen. Like many, I had no idea. It didn't affect me personally and I didn't know someone who had lived through it, but Mercedes wanted to have a conversation, so she asked if I would meet with her, and that is what started my involvement in this process.

It has been one of those journeys that I feel really privileged to have been on. We have a group of students here — some are new to the Rainbow Room and some have graduated and moved on — but knowing that, when I first met students at Porter Creek Secondary School from both F.H. Collins Secondary School and Porter Creek, we couldn't make eye contact at first. When we were talking about the issue, people wouldn't look at me all the way. When we were introducing ourselves, I got told "These are my preferred pronouns". I said, "Oh, it's not about your preferred pronouns; it's about what do I call you? Who are you?" So, we started building that relationship. In that time, I've seen these beautiful rainbow wings come out of these students as they have gotten stronger and stronger. I know that you keep welcoming people into your space and you build them up and you'll set them free.

Partially, it's definitely in support of the leadership. We have principal Peter Giangrande here today, who was vice-principal before and who has never once not showed up for the kids in his school. When he is asked to participate, he is there. When we talk about leadership, we have to talk about leadership from the top and how you show what leadership is by participating and by emulating and by supporting. So, we've seen that at Porter Creek Secondary School.

We've seen that with the teacher support for the GSA at F.H. Collins. We've seen that across the territory as other schools have tried to replicate what has happened at Porter Creek. But today, when we're talking about this, I think about how far we've come just as society, but also how much further we have to go.

It's really important because the lessons the students taught me was that, in the absence of law, something can happen. So, it wasn't that we knew what was going on was happening, but I've heard anecdotal stories now. I know it has happened in the territory. I know people have been told that they are not valued as the people that they are and that they need to change. So, I'm saying that I know it has happened here.

In the absence of law, something is possible. What we're showing right now is that we as lawmakers are standing up and saying that is no longer acceptable. I think that is the power. As Mr. Cook said to the students today as they were downstairs getting ready to come in, this doesn't affect just the young people who are in the gallery today, but it affects those who come behind them. So, they're making it a safer place for the

students who aren't quite in high school yet and for any kid in the Yukon. They're making it a safer place.

For that, I think we all should be very proud, but mostly I'm proud of all of the work that the students have done. I think Lori Fox said it really well in their opinion piece in the CBC, where they said, "... the safety, equality and autonomy of queer lives is not ours to give; it's theirs to take." I think today we're making that much easier.

Mr. Gallina: I just want to take a few minutes to reinforce some of the key points made by my Liberal colleagues here today and points that I brought forward during second reading of this bill.

As I was writing this, I couldn't help but recognize the social divide the US election is causing. Tensions are high around the world right now and we saw a polarizing political election with one particular party allowing bigotry to run rampant and flaunting it at every junction.

This House unanimously supported the motion brought forward by the Leader of the Third Party to support the Mi'kmaq First Nation and their fisheries. Through that motion, this House stood in solidarity and voted to denounce the violence and injustice that they are currently facing. Politicians with completely different priority lists and completely different objectives and views for our people all came together and acknowledge the mistreatment, the miscarriage of justice, and the importance of standing in solidarity with minority groups.

Mr. Speaker, supporting our LGBTQ2S+ community is no different. Without question, conversion therapy of any kind is both physically damaging and mentally toxic. Allowing conversion therapy to exist in any capacity sets a dangerous precedent for the further mistreatment of minority groups. For example, if we don't restrict the use of conversion therapy, we are sending a message that says, "If you're First Nation, we've got your back. But if you're First Nation and gay, we don't care if you're marginalized as long as it's not because of your heritage or skin colour." Discrimination of any kind is simply unacceptable. Intolerance should not be tolerated. Allowing anyone the flexibility to cause mental or physical harm to another human based on personal belief and discrimination challenges the very foundation on which Canada was built — a foundation of diversity and acceptance. It challenges the authenticity of our existing unity and support for marginalized minorities.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the argument that suggests that freedom of religion supersedes someone's right to be free from discrimination or free from persecution. I am not simply seeing the scientific evidence to support the effectiveness of conversion therapy. We know for a fact that this therapy leads to psychological distress and that it leaves victims with increased depression, anxiety, self-destructive behaviour, and disassociation. If there is to be no shame in being First Nation, Black, Latino, or Asian, then there certainly can be no shame in being trans, queer, gay, bisexual, lesbian, or whichever sexual identification you carry with you.

Canada's historical past of residential schools paints a disturbing picture of the impacts of trying to force a group of

people to be something that they are not. Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to hear that the conservative Yukon Party will vote in favour of this bill. While parties have shown support, there are some members of this Assembly who see this important legislation aiming to protect our children as an “unprecedented assault on our civil rights”, as they put it. That, coupled with comments from the Member for Lake Laberge that were not well-received by the members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, concerns me and makes me question the lack of conversation from the conservative Yukon Party Official Opposition all the way through this process.

With only limited contribution from this conservative party, with two of their members stating that they will support the bill and another one of their members speaking to the infringement on civil rights that this will bring by adopting this bill, I think that they would very much like this debate to be over with. Frankly, I think that this type of conversation makes them feel uncomfortable, but even if it does make them or anyone of us feel uncomfortable, it is a very important conversation. It is important to the community members whom it represents, and it's important to us as legislators to understand and adapt to new ways of thinking to protect citizens from psychological and physical harm.

Mr. Speaker, where did the leader of the conservative Yukon Party, Currie Dixon, stand in these conversations? What is his response? From a recent speech, the new leader talked about diversity and inclusivity, but we do not see this inclusivity on the floor of this Assembly among the conservative Yukon Party members — certainly not when the Member for Lake Laberge is telling us that conversion therapy does not happen in Yukon when, in fact, we know that it has happened and could be happening here at this very moment.

I would like to ask: Has the Member for Lake Laberge had conversations with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community to ask them if they have been subject to conversion therapy themselves or if they know that this practice is happening here in the territory? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the member has had those conversations, and that would lead me to say that the conservative Yukon Party is not diverse or inclusive, contrary to what their leader states.

My colleagues and I have had those conversations with parties on both sides of this issue, and we are firm in our belief that conversion therapy has no place in our society. The LGBTQ2S+ community needs our leadership, and they need our support at every junction of discrimination that they face. We can't paint our crosswalks with rainbow colours for the public to see and then allow physical and mental abuse to continue to plague children behind closed doors. I do not support or condone the physical or mental abuse of anyone, and I expect that every member of this Legislative Assembly would agree with me.

I choose to stand behind the people who need our support and ban the practice of conversion therapy, and I thank those who took time out of their day to join us in these discussions here today.

Speaker: Is there further debate on third reading of Bill No. 9?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest and an open heart to the remarks of my colleagues in the House on this really important topic. I thank them for their thoughtful contributions and for our discussion on this bill today as we move into the final vote.

Based on the comments from the opposition, I am happy to hear the steps taken recently and I encourage folks to continue to do that and to find ways of understanding. At its heart, we are talking about the future that we want to create for our territory — a future that I think most of us agree should be more inclusive. Our debates and conversations in the Legislature are very important. It helps us to make sure that we are on the right track to creating exactly that future.

Our government has a vision to support healthy, vibrant communities. It is one of our key priorities. Part of having a healthy community is ensuring that it is safe for all Yukoners to express who they are and who they love without fear. LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners deserve the same rights and protection that we all enjoy. That is why this legislation is so important. We have heard from the LGBTQ2S+ community that banning the harmful practice of conversion therapy is long overdue.

As I have said, three other jurisdictions in Canada have already banned conversion therapy, and we know that banning conversion therapy is the right thing to do. As the fourth Canadian jurisdiction to implement a legislative ban, we are sending a message. We must always stand up for what is right. We must use the tools at our disposal to protect all Yukoners, including those who are marginalized.

I think of those members of our community who have been working toward equality for so very long. I continue to learn so much from the members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and their tireless advocacy they do in Yukon. Thank you for all your hard work and your dedication. You have been critical in the development of this legislation but also in pushing governments, employers, and all of us to recognize your rights. Thank you once again to all the students. Thank you for coming here today. Thank you for following through on your commitment.

You're setting the path for the next generation that even comes behind you. I think that your bravery and stepping into your role in our democratic system is really important and it's vital.

This bill is part of a broader approach to creating a more inclusive Yukon. Through the development of this government's action plan on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion, we are developing ways in which our programs, policies, and services can be more inclusive for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. We're working collaboratively — we'll continue to do that. We will do nothing for you without you, as we've stated all the way through. That's our commitment.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members for their thoughts and contributions on how to make our laws more

inclusive and equitable for all Yukoners. I'm really looking forward to the vote. Let's continue to move forward to make lasting changes together, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion for third reading of Bill No. 9?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 9 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 9 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Bernard enters the Chamber announced by her Aide-de-Camp

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Sexual Orientation and Gender Protection Act and Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (2020).*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
Government bills.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 16: Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015 — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 16, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 16, entitled *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 16, entitled *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Government of Yukon is pleased to bring forward Bill No. 16, entitled *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*. Today, at second reading of Bill No. 16, I will discuss the bill in detail as well as the context for these changes.

The proposed amendments to the *Condominium Act, 2015* may be divided into the following main components. Firstly, it will modify insurance requirements to create greater flexibility for condominium corporations to respond to the changing insurance market. It will establish a clear reserve fund system. It will change voting entitlements and permit proxy voting under the legislation.

Bill No. 16 will clarify rules related to condominium liens. It will modify timelines for developers and purchasers and the delivery of documents and funds in that process. It will provide a comprehensive legislative framework to create and manage mixed-use condominiums and establish special requirements for bare-land condominiums.

It will clarify the application of some other laws. It will create new and modifying existing definitions. It will expand a list of matters to be governed by the bylaws of a condominium corporation and introduce various technical amendments to reduce inconsistency and conflicting provisions. It will modify the list of regulation-making powers under the act. Lastly, it will modify transitional provisions to allow owners and developers an opportunity to prepare for and implement the new legislative requirements.

Mr. Speaker, as I present the topics in some greater detail, I would like to emphasize that the amendments represent one piece of a broader initiative known as the Land Titles modernization project. The *Condominium Act, 2015* was developed as part of the Land Titles modernization project and is the product of years of engagement with various stakeholders, including the Law Society of Yukon, the City of Whitehorse, the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors, First Nation governments, real estate lawyers, surveyors, the business community, condominium owners, and lastly, the federal Surveyor General Branch.

The act was passed in May 2015 and, to bring the act into force, accompanying regulations are required. In November 2018, the Department of Justice launched an engagement on a set of summary documents outlining proposed provisions to be included in the condominium regulations. In January 2019, the draft regulations were released and a more detailed engagement was conducted through to March 2019.

It was clear during the engagement that many parties believed that further amendments to the legislation were required in order to have regulations that responded to the issues identified during the engagement. Based on the feedback from the land titles drafting committee and the stakeholders advisory committee, an independent consultant was retained to provide an expert opinion on the regulations and any amendments to the act that might have been necessary.

This process concluded in November 2019, and the proposed amendments have been drafted throughout 2020. Those proposed amendments are based on the results of the public engagement process on the regulations, based on the opinions received from the independent consultant, based on the legislative development in other Canadian jurisdictions, based on the consistency between this act — the *Condominium Act, 2015* — and the proposed regulations, and based on the recommended practices in relation to Yukon procedures for property and condominium development.

The first major component of the proposed amendments is the modification of insurance requirements. In recent years, condominium corporations have been experiencing a significant increase in insurance premiums and difficulty in obtaining coverage. The proposed amendments to the act — those contained in Bill No. 16 — create greater flexibility for condominium corporations to respond to the changing insurance market by exempting a condominium corporation from obtaining or maintaining insurance against specified perils if it's not reasonably available.

We'll also do so by providing flexibility to unit owners if a condominium corporation is unable to obtain or maintain insurance against specified perils and they can review and decide — through a special resolution on insurance risks — the amount of insurance and the deductibles against the loss resulting from a particular peril. So, there is flexibility built in for the corporation.

It will also address adding insurance provisions related to managing real property in the case of bare-land condominiums. It will also provide a prioritized scheme in the event of a loss. It will include an insurance provision on fixtures and introduce regulation-making power related to the “standard unit” description.

With respect to reserve funds, the proposed amendments would allow for the establishment of a reserve fund scheme that requires the developer to establish a reserve fund by contributing 25 percent of the annual estimated common expenses into the reserve fund. The reserve fund system would exist for pre-existing condominiums and new condominiums but would not apply to condominiums with two or fewer units. Furthermore, condominium corporations that are created after the day of the coming into force of the act would be required to comply with the reserve fund requirements, including the development of a reserve fund study and contribution schedule. The proposed amendments allow for a transitional period for the pre-existing condominiums to comply with the reserve fund requirements. That is an important component, Mr. Speaker.

Pre-existing condominium corporations that are 10 years old or older on the day of coming into force of the act are

exempt from the reserve fund study for a period of five years so that there is time for this requirement to be met. After that period, those condominium corporations may waive the reserve fund study requirement annually through a special resolution. So, there is some flexibility for condominium corporations and the owners of condominiums who participate in those condominium corporations.

Additionally, pre-existing condominium corporations that are less than 10 years old on the day of coming into force of the act are exempt from the reserve fund study for a period of five years, as I have noted. Finally, I would like to reiterate that condominium corporations with two or fewer units — such as duplexes — will not require a reserve fund or a reserve fund study.

Moving on — the third major component proposed in the amendments contained here in Bill No. 16 is for voting entitlement and proxy voting. During our engagement, we heard that condominium corporations are facing difficulties in conducting condominium business due to the non-presence of voters in general and special meetings. The *Condominium Act, 2015* currently sets minimum quorum requirements to conduct business at a general meeting and limits the number of proxies. Thus, the proposed amendments here in Bill No. 16 provide availability of voters while maintaining the integrity of the voting process. It does so by: allowing unit owners to hold more than two proxies; identifying specific individuals who cannot hold proxies; allowing proxies to be only used for a specific purpose; and enabling electronic voting and specifying a unit's right to vote as per section 11 — that a unit may have more than one vote.

These amendments enable condominium corporations to complete business in a more effective and efficient manner and give people who cannot be physically present for the meeting a way to participate. I think that it is an incredibly important option in the days of COVID-19. We have learned many things during this process, and one is a way to be more flexible and have more participation through alternative means in decision-making — and, in this case, ownership by individuals who have condominiums and want to participate in those meetings.

I would like to turn to another component of the proposed amendments, which is clarifying rules related to condominium liens. The *Condominium Act, 2015* does not provide an adequate system for condominium corporations to register liens against the title of a condominium unit when owners are delinquent in paying condo fees or other expenses. The proposed amendments in the act include provisions to clearly set out rules about condominium liens, what can be included in a condominium lien, and a method of enforcement of liens. I will now turn to highlight some of the important amendments related to those condominium liens.

Under a claim of a condominium lien, it is proposed that a condominium corporation cannot obtain a decision from the court to take ownership of the unit. It is also proposed that a registered claim of a condominium lien is an encumbrance and is enforceable under the *Land Titles Act, 2015*. The proposed amendments also create uniformity in the builders lien

provision of the act with the *Builders Lien Act* — so aligning those pieces of legislation.

The next component speaks to modifying timelines for developers and purchasers to deliver documents and funds. The proposed amendments would modify such timelines by including a 15-day timeline for the delivery of funds to a purchaser in the event of a purchaser's contract rescission. It will also remove written permission as an alternative to an occupancy permit, and it will clarify the list of documents that a developer must give to a purchaser under the following two scenarios: if an agreement of sale for a proposed unit is entered into before the registration of a condominium; and if an agreement for sale of a unit is entered into after the registration of the condominium — so, clarifying the situations in which these provisions will apply.

The six components of the proposed amendments provide a comprehensive legislative framework to create and manage mixed-use condominiums and to establish special requirements for bare-land condominiums.

First, mixed-use condominiums — for clarification, these are types of condominiums that have both commercial and residential components and they are an emerging form of condominiums here in the territory. Establishing a legislative framework to create mixed-use condominiums requires several amendments to various provisions of the *Condominium Act, 2015*. They are included here in Bill No. 16 to remedy that situation. The various provisions include defining “sections” and “mixed use developments.” They also include requiring disclosure of documents — such as proposed bylaws of a corporation in the case of mixed-use developments, enabling bylaw development for sections, for various types of matters pertaining to sections, and enabling and requiring amendment of sections through bylaws. Also, it will allow providing a mechanism related to the expenses of sections and, lastly, define unit owner's responsibilities to pay condominium fees in the case of mixed-use developments.

These are all important components of these kinds of development projects. They are also important components to permit these kinds of development projects in a community or various communities where mixed-use condominiums really enhance the relationship of living in such a building to our communities.

Moving on, I would like to discuss the establishment of special requirements for the bare-land condominiums. Bare-land condominiums such as attached-row house-style buildings are a very common form of condominiums here in the territory. The *Condominium Act, 2015* does not address bare-land condominiums and related matters — such as their creation, their modification, or their use — and it doesn't do that in a manner that addresses the special requirements for bare-land condominiums. They are a different kind of development. The current *Condominium Act, 2015* does not address those issues.

Not addressing this gap would leave bare-land condominiums largely unregulated; therefore, the proposed amendments here in Bill No. 16 are to modify the definition of “bare land units” and “attached buildings” and to integrate the

managed real property concept into various sections of the act along with common property and common assets.

The next component is the application of other laws with respect to the *Condominium Act, 2015*. It is important to note that the act allows a condominium corporation to develop bylaws that restrict the age of persons who may reside in a residential unit; however, the *Human Rights Act* considers age as a ground that is protected from discrimination. Therefore, a consequential amendment to the *Human Rights Act* is proposed that allows condominiums to restrict the age of persons who reside in a residential unit to 55 years of age and older.

The *Condominium Act, 2015* contains a number of “must” provisions that impose legal duties on various parties and may create offences under section 3 of the *Summary Convictions Act*. The *Condominium Act, 2015* already contains an offence provision that states that anyone convicted of an offence under a select number of provisions is liable to a fine of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment of up to six months. Other “must” provisions within the *Condominium Act, 2015* are considered private law matters. It is proposed to exclude the *Condominium Act, 2015* from the application of section 3 of the *Summary Convictions Act*.

In order to create clarity within the legislation, the following new definitions have been proposed in Bill No. 16: “attached building”, “bare land condominium”, “common assets certificate”, “exclusive use common assets”, “fixture”, “managed real property”, “recreation facility contract”, “spouse”, and “substantially completed”.

Furthermore, the following definitions are proposed to be amended in the act: “bare land unit”, “buildings”, “common assets”, “mixed used development”, “section”, and “special resolution”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, moving to governance, bylaws are a framework for a condominium corporation to manage, administer, control, and maintain a property while enforcing rules in a fair and equitable manner. The list of matters to be governed by the bylaws has been expanded to include the following: insurance, the interest rate charged by the corporation on money owing, exclusive use of common property and common assets, sections within mixed-use developments, decision-making for tied votes, voting by electronic means, fines, and unapproved expenses — all again to provide some certainty to developers and owners. It is also proposed that matters that need to be governed by the bylaws be divided into mandatory and optional bylaw categories.

Moving to administrative matters — technical amendments have been proposed to address inconsistent and conflicting provisions and ambiguous use of phrases and inconsistent use of defined terms. Multiple provisions under the *Condominium Act, 2015* mentioned various types of records that a condominium corporation should produce and maintain. To reduce this ambiguity, a comprehensive list of documents has been proposed. The proposed amendments also ensure consistent use of language with terms such as “approving authority”.

Furthermore, the proposed amendments also modify the list of regulation-making power to include implied easements,

proxies, insurance by corporations and unit owners, standard unit description, records that are to be maintained by the registrar, and condominiums on leasehold land.

Finally, the last component speaks to modifying transitional provisions to allow owners and developers an opportunity to prepare and implement the new legislative requirements. I have already shared details of the transitional period related to the reserve fund studies. The following legislative changes to the act are being proposed to allow for a transitional period for some other topics — including allowing condominium corporations 18 months to transition to the new insurance requirements. It also includes incorporating regulation-making power to manage any difficulty arising out of the transition to this act from the previous act for a five-year period. It exempts agreements and contacts entered into on or before the commencement of the act, including agreements of purchase and sale and developers' management contracts.

These proposed amendments will ensure a logical transition from the old act to the new act without undermining existing rights or interfering with ongoing transactions. The engagement on Bill No. 16 and regulations has allowed us to gain essential feedback so that we could deliver this bill to the Legislature. It will make necessary changes to the *Condominium Act, 2015* to allow the implementation of regulations that will protect the rights of Yukoners who enter into this type of arrangement.

Mr. Cathers: We will be supporting this going forward to Committee. We will have a number of questions at that time, including why it has taken so long to come up with the changes. The *Condominium Act, 2015* was passed roughly five years ago and we are now seeing a bill making 80 pages of amendments to that legislation. The regulations themselves are still somewhere mired in process. I do appreciate the fact that this is a significant piece of work, but we have a number of concerns from Yukoners who are affected by this legislation about the speed of the development of this.

So, we will be asking some questions regarding that as well, as well as the specific details and concerns that we have heard from Yukoners, including condo owners. As well, we would note that, if there are Yukoners who continue to have questions about this legislation that they would like to bring forward and they have not been heard yet by the government, we would be happy to ask reasonable questions when this matter comes forward for discussion in Committee. The legislative structure itself is important, and we will be asking a number of questions once we get to the Committee stage.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for her opening remarks on *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*. As the minister noted, this act brings forward significant amendments to the *Condominium Act, 2015*. As she remarked, that's notable — particularly since it was only in 2015 when the *Condominium Act* was modernized.

These are substantive and detailed amendments. Quite frankly, they will take time to work through. The draft regulatory summaries for public engagement pertaining to

governance, reserve funds, and general matters, and the draft regulatory summary for public engagement and guide for condominium owners and buyers — those two documents alone provide extensive background information, and we thank the legislative drafters and policy analysts who prepared them.

As we work our way through the proposed amendments in Bill No. 16, *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*, we will want to explore questions that arise from those documents and others, along with how issues identified have been tracked into the proposed amendments. We also anticipate that there are other questions or issues that we have been made aware of, and we look forward to engaging with the minister on those as well.

We do support the need to ensure that the legislation and regulations governing what has become a burgeoning part of the Yukon's — in particular, Whitehorse's — housing sector are effective, efficient, and equitable and that — most importantly — once passed by this Assembly, they are put into place as soon as possible.

We hope that the work necessary to have the regulations needed to bring the *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015* has largely been done so that the many existing condominium corporations and those in the process of being formed will know the rules of the game.

We are aware that, during the extensive consultation that the minister detailed, there were detailed summaries prepared of proposed key elements of the regulations required to implement the *Condominium Act, 2015*. They were prepared on matters including — as the minister identified: phased condominiums, leasehold condominiums, bare-land condominiums, mixed-use condominiums — in addition to the regulatory guides that I had already identified.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of areas that I just wanted to comment on in terms of the minister's comments in opening this for debate. First of all, I want to just say there are 80 pages to the *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015*. The legislation itself is 156 pages. I will make a plea again — as I did during the briefings and as I have done repeatedly in this Legislative Assembly: When we get a complex piece of legislation, it would be really helpful to have a crosswalk so that, as we're going through the proposed legislative amendments, we can see what the original document looks like and the proposed amendments — so that it shows how we're making changes here. In the absence of that, this is quite a byzantine and bizarre kind of process. I will just put that on the table.

I will have particular interest and concerns — and interest, I guess — in terms of the modifications being proposed with respect to insurance requirements and what the concept of "greater flexibility" means and the definition of specified "perils". I am aware as a condominium owner — so, I'm declaring my interest publicly — that the issue of insurance for condominiums in Whitehorse has not been exempted from — not just resistance, but the refusal from many major insurance carriers to provide insurance to condominiums across the country. That has placed significant pressure on individual condominium owners as well as condominium corporations.

As an example, the water portion of my condominium bill — my insurance bill — which the line item for that went from — when I got the renewal, the proposed increase was from \$16 a year to \$5,600 and something. Needless to say, I declined that, after asking the question: “Was that for the whole building or for just my unit?” I was told that it was just my unit because somehow Whitehorse is like some of the flooded areas in Québec. It’s not true, but then, as you push back, you start realizing that this is a systemic issue that is impacting a housing choice that many Yukoners have made — and are making — and oftentimes, they are finding themselves quite shocked with some of these matters that come before them.

The issue of reserve funds I think is deserving of some discussion in this House. There are a number of elements or aspects of that. I am looking for clarification and a better understanding of what the implications are — because I do agree that this is really important. I think that most people who are moving into a condominium are unaware of the fact that they are buying into an arrangement where they are sharing the cost of the depreciation of their home with many others — possibly a few others. There are many condominium corporations in this town alone, I would suggest, where people will tell you, “Oh, it’s great, because we have very, very low condominium fees.” That’s a danger. It’s a huge danger, because when your roof needs to be repaired or your elevator conks out — or, or, or — there are many big expenses.

The notion that units that are 10 years or older are exempt and then might have five years more — that may mean that it is 15 years. I am putting this out there — because the way in which I heard it and why I think these issues need to be raised — exempt for five years before they have to do a reserve fund study.

There is a combination of factors at play sometimes in some of the condo corporations that we hear about in our office through concerns being expressed by individuals. Democracy is great, except when it doesn’t work. Sometimes condo corporations are not, in practice, very democratic. So, if there are provisions to waive on an annual basis — the need to have a reserve fund study may mean that conscientious condominium owners are at peril, unable to sell their condominium — because who is going to buy a condominium when you don’t really know what the ongoing costs or the liabilities are? It’s like when you sell a home; you can expect that someone is going to want to do an inspection — to have a certified inspector do an inspection of the home that you are trying to sell — to make sure that you are telling the truth and that there are no surprises, such as black mould or a leaky roof.

There are a number of areas around the reserve studies. This is a complex area. As I said before, a lot of people assume that moving into a condominium — and it’s a lot of retirement folks — they just assume that it is an easy and relaxing way to live. Quite frankly, I think the experience of many people is that it is not. The liability continues — and the responsibility — so there are both responsibilities and obligations that owners of condominiums — and I would say that this also applies to the mixed-use ones, but I am speaking primarily of residential ones — so a key element of this is what public education will be

conducted and how, when, and what form will that take so that there is the caveat emptor there so that we have people making a decision to make the transition to condominium life that is well-informed.

The regulation piece — I would ask the minister to confirm — when I see the document, such as the regulations consultation on leasehold condominiums — and all those various consultations — whether it’s the one on regulation consultation on condominium conversion or leasehold or regulation consultation on phase condominiums, which talks about a draft regulatory summary for public engagement — they indicate that these are detailed summaries of proposed key elements of the regulations required to implement the act of 2015, but that doesn’t indicate to me that those are also key elements of what would be required to implement the act of 2020 with respect to amendments to the *Condominium Act, 2015*.

I ask that because there is a significant level of detail in these documents, and if that work has already been done, then I am hopeful that means that the regulations that are going to give effect to the *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015* are not going to be out there for another five years — that we are looking at a defined timeline to see regulations that will bring this *Act of 2020 to Amend the Condominium Act, 2015* into effect, because there is really a lot hanging on this. There is a lot of private capital that individuals have invested from individual condominium owners, from developers large and small, who have, in some cases, invested everything in terms of getting this new form of housing constructed largely throughout Whitehorse and significantly downtown and in Whitehorse Centre. The face of downtown Whitehorse has changed in the last five years with condominiums, and there are significant differences in how they are being managed.

There is a number of questions. I look forward to joining with others and working our way through this legislation. I would really ask, if it is at all possible, to see some sort of crosswalk of proposed amendments to the existing legislation so that the 80 pages of proposed amendments — well, so that we could do this most efficiently and make the best use of all MLAs’ time.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on second reading of Bill No. 16?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate on second reading of Bill No. 16.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I won’t be long. I will express my gratitude to the members opposite. I have made notes with respect to some of the topics during this debate that are of interest to the Official Opposition and some more notes with respect to the topics that we will review during Committee of the Whole with respect to the Third Party, the NDP.

I am pleased that there is support for these changes. I am looking forward to the debate and the details — although as noted, they are complex. They are also incredibly important for the developing area of law with respect to these kinds of

properties and the proposed amendments in Bill No. 16 seek to provide a balance between the economic development objectives and the consumer protection measures — an important line to walk and one that we will discuss much more in depth as we review the extensive changes to the *Condominium Act, 2015* that are presented in Bill No. 16.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion for second reading of Bill No. 16?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: 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 second reading of Bill No. 16 agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 205, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2020-21*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 205: *Second Appropriation Act 2020-21* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 205, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2020-21*.

Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, there were a couple of questions that were asked the other day.

I have a combination of some of the questions at the end of day — but also, after speaking to some of my colleagues on some of the other questions that we answered in the Legislature during general debate, there is a little bit more detail or a little bit more content from the departments. Again, this is why the departments really want to have the conversation when the departments are here. It is not only about just answering the specific questions, but being able to riff off of that topic on to other things that the departments are very proud of. Those are usually the conversations that we have when we go upstairs and debrief after general debate — the willingness of the departments to expand.

I will do a little bit of expanding now. I do urge the members opposite to ask these questions of the ministers responsible when they have their opportunity, past general debate, to speak to these issues.

The first one was with regard to the secure medical unit and questions therein. My response in the House was that we covered this that day and the Minister of Health and Social Services responded in Question Period as well, but I expanded a little bit further, indicating that the plan has been completed and that the funding was included in that five-year capital review for 2020-21. I also spoke about core funding increases for the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

After conversations with the minister, I just want to kind of expand on that a bit. The Department of Health and Social Services, community partners, and the Yukon Hospital Corporation — they are all obviously planning for that new secure medical unit — SMU, we'll call it for Hansard, moving forward here — SMU at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

In 2019-20, the funding was provided to the Hospital Corporation for planning and design, and the Hospital Corporation provided the department with a business case for review in 2019. During the 2020-21 fiscal year, we're continuing to engage with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other partners, including the psychiatrists, on the proposed clinic model to ensure a clear, clinical pathway across providers, given the current health system.

From the 2021-22 fiscal year to the 2023-24 fiscal year, funding has been put into the capital budget for the SMU. The new SMU is envisioned as a space that would improve the physical space, leading to better outcomes and safety for patients as well — which is extremely important — safety for the staff and the physicians, providing opportunities for

program enhancements to better support patients and to improve recognition and also respect for First Nation needs and culture.

We continue to meet with our Yukon Hospital Corporation partners about funding and shared priorities. The proposed model of care is a combination of the biopsychosocial model of health and also the holistic model, which includes physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health. This is a leading-edge model of care.

The current timeline for the SMU work has been determined through the government-wide capital planning process based on government priorities in the coming years.

Continuing on with questions to the Department of Health and Social Services in general debate — the member opposite asked about the government's decisions on recommendations for the health review and spoke about consultation with the Yukon Medical Association. Mr. Chair, the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services is one of — if not the most — significant consultations in Yukon history. It involved extensive engagement between the independent expert panel, Yukoners, Yukon First Nation governments, stakeholders, and Yukon health and social care providers.

The 76 recommendations in that final report — they absolutely represent a path forward that will be achieved through obviously continuing that discussion — engagement and involvement from all of our partners. I did mention that on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I just want to reiterate that after speaking with my colleagues.

We're already meeting with our partners to discuss this bold vision. We've had preliminary discussions with some NGO partners and the Hospital Corporation, and in August, we did establish the collaborative medical services committee to form a forum for working through these recommendations with the Yukon Medical Association. We will continue to do this good work. We're going to continue to work with the YMA and the collaborative medical services committee to consider the feedback of our physician partners so that we can work together to deliver the health care system that supports Yukoners to lead healthy, happier lives.

To continue riffing on this topic, we also continue to turn to our health and social care partners, including the Hospital Corporation, NGOs, allied health professionals, health care providers, physicians, communities, First Nation governments, and Yukoners to ensure that we are moving forward in the right direction and that we're doing that together. That's the most important part of this comprehensive review and engagement.

The YMA's support for the majority of the report's recommendations and their commitment to working with our government to deliver a high-functioning, person-centred health care system is a testament to our shared goal of serving Yukoners together.

I will continue to one other before I cede the floor to the members opposite — and I do have a whole list of questions that were asked at the end of our last day in general debate.

The member opposite talked about the cost of implementing the 76 recommendations and talked about a press

release from the Yukon Medical Association. In our response, we talked about *Putting People First* and the implementation and consultation process therein. However, just to expand on that a bit, if I may — we obviously are in a situation because of the global pandemic, and it is definitely putting a strain on the medical system. It is putting a strain on demands in general, but despite these demands, the Department of Health and Social Services is continuing to make significant progress on many other fronts, including the implementation of the recommendations from the final report of the comprehensive health review. *Putting People First* does provide a road map to transform our health and social services system to a more integrated and collaborative person-centred system that will better meet the needs of Yukoners.

The total proposed increase in the supplementary budget for 2020-21 for activities related to implementing *Putting People First* recommendations is \$10.469 million — to put things in terms of reference for the bill that we are debating here today on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

Here is a high-level overview of some of the supplementary costs involved in implementing *Putting People First* during the first fiscal year. Again — as I often do — I want to reiterate how important it is for the members opposite to continue this dialogue with the departments, as they appear after general debate, for a more comprehensive conversation on this. I will just provide that high-level input.

Improving and enhancing our medical travel program — that's an extremely important piece, for example. It is something that all Yukoners have been asking for as well. We have already announced that we are planning to double the medical travel benefit and apply it to the first day of travel for patients who need to remain overnight for medical care.

In addition, we will be providing a subsidy of \$75 for approved escorts starting on the first day of travel and a subsidy of \$75 for those travelling for medical treatment on the same day. The supplemental costs this fiscal year for the implementation and changes to our medical travel system are about \$348,000.

Past that, we have cultural safety training. To help address institutionalized racism and better ensure that our health and social services systems deliver appropriate and equitable care, we are making rapid progress on enhanced cultural safety training. In fact, we will be continuing to make cultural safety and humility training mandatory for all Health and Social Services staff. This training will happen over the next several years. The increasing costs for this fiscal year for this particular training is expected to be \$350,000. Of note, these funds are all fully recoverable from Ottawa.

When it comes to IT investment — again, there is a little bit more of a high level of spending — it is \$10.469 million. To continue on this, we have investments in IT. It is extremely important that we keep on improving our health and social services systems, and they require new investment in technology for integrated primary care physicians — for example, the 1Health electronic medical systems — recording systems — giving Yukoners web access to their health records — two of the *Putting People First* recommendations that we

are moving forward on. To help accomplish this, there is a proposed increase in the 2020-21 Corporate Services capital budget of \$7.4 million. This increase includes a transfer of \$2.5 million from the Highways and Public Works budget to the Health and Social Services budget and also \$4.9 million in capital funding to expand IHealth to primary care. This funding is partially recoverable.

In non-capital funding, the department is also seeking \$750,000 to implement IHealth within the Yukon Hospital Corporation and an additional \$610,000 for ongoing implementation with private physicians and clinics. Complete and accurate health information is absolutely foundational to a person-centred approach to health care, and IHealth will absolutely provide Yukoners with seamless electronic medical records in that system. We are very excited about this modernization.

Nurse practitioners — another recommendation from the *Putting People First* plan is to improve primary care for Yukoners living in rural communities. We are seeking an additional \$92,000 this fiscal year to hire a nurse practitioner in the beautiful community of Carmacks. We plan to hire additional nurse practitioners next fiscal year.

Just a couple more to note — I am sure that my time is running down — the bilingual health centre — this is in order to better serve our francophone community. We have proposed an increase in funding to \$209,000 to continue the planning for the bilingual health care centre. This is 100-percent recoverable.

We also have money in the budget for vaccines and to expand the scope of pharmacists — the total supplementary costs therein — whether it's expansion of vaccine programs to decrease the rates of cancer, HIV, or even for shingles right across Yukon — this supplemental cost this year is \$678,000.

To conclude all this, it is important to note that, while we may not see immediate savings on many of the *Putting People First* recommendations — which was kind of the question — making these changes will help to bend the cost curve and prevent other system costs — this is a long-term investment and it is a long-term vision and one which will improve the overall health and social outcomes of Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: If I could ask the Premier — there was something that he mentioned on November 5, here in general debate — and I quote: “I could riff off of that to universal daycare, using some of our pilot projects and looking in other jurisdictions in Canada about best practices.” I am just curious, Mr. Chair, if the Premier could give us a bit of detail around the work that the government is doing around universal daycare that he spoke of last week.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes — I mean, it is no surprise that we have been looking to the Québec model, when we are taking a look at implementation — conversations with the federal government and with the provinces and territories — that seems to be an obvious place to go. It's not the only place to go — outside of Canada, there are some other models of care as well that are very successful in early or universal childcare — but that was the genesis of that conversation, basically.

Again, the minister will have more to share as we go. I know that we have a pilot project right now in Watson Lake and in Dawson for two of the daycares that are in unique situations — and I know that is another model of care. That pilot project is an extremely important piece of the puzzle as well. But I don't have anything new to add at this point from the perspective of the department on universal daycare — but as that information becomes more available, we will definitely make it available to the general public.

Mr. Hassard: Another question that I have for the Premier — I was looking through Hansard over the past few days, just looking over Hansard from general debate. I don't see anywhere that the Premier has provided the House with the total number of FTEs for Yukon government. So, I am wondering if it is possible for him to provide us with that number. The number that I'm looking for is the total number of FTEs that will exist, including with this supplementary budget.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is interesting that the member opposite didn't see — I am turning to a page here that is getting pretty dog-eared as far as the number of times that we have talked about it.

In the 2020-21 main estimates — which included at that time 30 new FTEs for the year — again, we have had a big debate on the floor of the Legislative Assembly about how small that is for a year increase. If you include the 30 in that conversation, that would have brought our total FTE count at that time — when we delivered the mains — to 5,104.8. In this supplementary, there is an increase of 13 permanent FTEs, and there is also an increase of 75.2 term FTEs. That represents 1.7 percent of the total FTEs from the main estimates.

We've spoken a few times on the Legislative Assembly floor about how — from that 72.5, the majority of this increased support is attributed to our response to the COVID pandemic. That's why they're not permanent.

It also provided a continuing level of service that is expected from Yukoners even during a global pandemic. During the first portion of the year, the government also temporarily redistributed staff among various departments to assist with COVID-related supports as needed. The majority of this staff has now returned to their substantive positions and the government is taking steps to strategically recruit the staff necessary to support COVID-19 measures and public health measures over that long term.

So, when it comes to growth in general — Health and Social Services — we could talk about the several positions to address the early implementation of the *Putting People First* recommendations, including staff to support the successful initial implementation of the IHealth information network and support the virtual care options for Yukoners.

Also, there are a number of time-limited positions related to supporting the COVID-19 pandemic — as I spoke of — including the response unit team — amazing work that they've done there. Staff at the respiratory assessment centre — I can't thank them enough for the work that was done through that centre but also additional cleaning at long-term care homes and other 24/7 facilities. We mentioned as well the new permanent

position of a nurse practitioner in Carmacks. That would be one of those.

Moving to Tourism and Culture — there was additional supports required to maintain border control.

Then we had the Department of Justice and these are — as I list these departments, again, this is the new complement of FTEs in this year's supplementary — Department of Justice, to support the legislative requirements under CEMA — the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* — to establish a unit responsible for leading Yukon government's participation in the administration of justice agreements and justice-related negotiations with Yukon First Nations for restorative justice services and to provide a whole-of-government approach for a two-year pilot therein. Again, I urge the member opposite, when the Department of Justice gets to its feet after general debate, to ask them to expand on that — a really important process and a really important pilot project.

Highways and Public Works — some of the positions there were to maintain and operate the upgraded facilities at the beautiful Mayo airport. French Language Services Directorate FTEs were for the national coordination office to support the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. Yukon Housing Corporation FTEs were to administer the housing benefit program.

There are three more here, Mr. Chair. We have Energy, Mines and Resources — there was an FTE count there to administer energy programs under *Our Clean Future*; Child and Youth Advocate office youth engagement workers to conduct a review of school attendance; and last but not least, Community Services for wildland fire fuel management.

Mr. Chair, despite the necessary increases to deal with the pandemic response, the government continues to review alternative programs and services that could be more appropriately delivered through the private sector, other levels of government, or non-governmental organizations. While this government is making the necessary progress on cost-saving and efficiency measures, we are not making cuts to services that Yukoners depend on. One only has to look at other jurisdictions in Canada — and our hearts go out to some of the premiers and governments right now with the cuts that have to be made — we, here in the Yukon, are blessed. We will continue to ensure that we have the human resources necessary to assess and protect Yukoners during this ongoing pandemic.

Mr. Hassard: My question was: How many FTEs are there in government now — a total number? The Premier has said that there are 5,104.8, plus 13, and plus 75.2. According to my math, that would be 5,193. But just for clarification — I know that someday, somewhere down the road, we will end up with “Well, that was your number”. So, just for clarification: Is that the number that the Premier is saying today for the total number of FTEs in government?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes.

Mr. Hassard: Perfect. I had a couple of questions regarding the Public Service Commission. It is my understanding that the PSC will not be up for debate, so I'm wondering if the Premier can tell us today how many deputy

heads have hired or are in the process of hiring senior advisory positions?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have that in front of me right now — as far as information. I will endeavour to get the Public Service Commission to get back to the member opposite as to what that number is.

As we are talking about total numbers in Yukon, let's just talk for a moment — and this is a question that was asked previously. It is pertinent to the FTE count when it comes to — I guess that it's a little bit different here because this is about physicians, but it was a question asked from the Yukon Party on the last day about the total number of physicians. I am just adding this to the conversations about human resources. Let's just pivot to doctors for a second.

Based on the 2019 calendar year, Yukon has a total of 69 physicians practising in-territory and an additional 18 specialists. These physicians are supplemented by locums who provide backup and support covering in Whitehorse and also in our communities, obviously. There were 114 visiting and resident locums who provided backup coverage in 2019. Physician numbers are calculated annually, and the total number of physicians for the 2020 calendar year will be available after December 2020. I will leave it there.

This is another piece of information the other day — a question that was asked. I figured that I would add that information at this time as well.

Mr. Hassard: As I said, to the best of my knowledge — and unless the Premier can enlighten me that I am incorrect — the Public Service Commission will not be up for debate, so I know that the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission is sitting right behind the minister and they are actually texting jokes about whatever. So, I was certainly hoping that this would be our place to get the answers to those questions. I certainly hope that the Premier can get that information for us and provide it to the Legislature.

I am curious about the number of vacancies in government positions throughout the Yukon — if it would be possible to get a breakdown of those, both by community as well as by department. Again, I am sure that the Premier doesn't have that information at his fingertips, but I would certainly hope that he could either get that information from the minister directly behind him or if we would be able to get that in a legislative return.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have that information in front of me right now. The Public Service Commission isn't appearing because they don't have a budgetary allotment in the supplementary budget, nor does Yukon Housing Corporation. I know that this is where the questions are going to come from, from the member opposite. If he wants to ask all the questions, we will endeavour to get the answers back from those departments. I do have department officials here from Finance ready to talk about the supplementary budget. Both of those two departments aren't in the supplementary budget, but again, I'm happy to hear the questions asked today, and we will do what we have been doing, which is endeavouring to get those answers back to the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: I will just remind the Premier that we only had nine days in the Spring Sitting as well, so we didn't have much opportunity to ask these questions. I think that the Premier probably remembers that the Legislature didn't sit this summer the way we had hoped. Anyway, I will continue to ask the questions and hope that the minister directly behind the Premier can provide us with some information.

Last summer, the government announced the new employee housing policy for Government of Yukon staff, so I am wondering if we could get an update on how the implementation of this new policy is going.

Hon. Mr. Silver: There are lots of questions this term on housing, which is great. It gives me an opportunity to riff a bit here on the housing issues. We do know that we have changed a lot when it comes to housing in the Yukon under the Yukon Liberal government.

Community housing is now a thing. It's also called "social housing". It's absolutely vital for community resources and sources for housing. A lot of information that I receive from going to general meetings — AYC meetings and First Nation council and mayor and council meetings. We heard loud and clear that a one size fits all for the Housing Corporation is not the best way of going. So, what I've seen is that the housing association has done amazing work in really coordinating the effort of housing for the Yukon Housing Corporation in a way that has never been seen before, and that is community or social housing.

Many Yukoners are able to find housing in the private rental market or through private home ownership. We know that there are Yukoners who are in need of housing and require assistance to gain and maintain housing — absolutely. From April to September 2020, we supported Yukoners who lost income due to COVID-19 by providing a grant directly to landlords. This program helped tenants to pay rent and support landlords who may have otherwise lost income during the pandemic.

We're working on initiatives to support more community housing options and to align our programs with national housing strategies. I mentioned on the floor of the Legislative Assembly the great work that the team over there has done on the national level, chairing national meetings. Sometimes we have the only minister at these tables — the only indigenous minister from right across the country — extremely important information to add to the national conversations. Supporting the development of a full housing continuum where, with the national housing strategy in mind, all Yukoners have a home that suits their needs and that they can afford. That is the ultimate goal of these strategies.

We're guided by our Safe at Home plan — the housing action plan for Yukon, the aging-in-place action plan, the *Putting People First* report — to work with our partners on initiatives across the housing continuum, from emergency shelter to housing with support services, to community housing as the member opposite is asking of today, to the private rental market and into home ownership as well. The level of coordination is amazing right now.

Just a little bit about the major investments this year in housing — again, the economy pre-COVID was definitely booming and with the lowest unemployment rates in Canada.

We saw a new pressure that we didn't see in the previous five years where we have a booming economy and we are trying to keep up with not only social housing needs — affordable housing needs are extremely important as well — but with a boom in the markets. Here are some investments so far, and then I will get to the member a response as far as the staff housing and employees and the policies therein.

Over the next two years, there is \$18.8 million for the construction of the 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street 47-unit mixed-income housing development in Whitehorse, and \$1.1 million to plan the new Yukon Housing Corporation housing in Old Crow, Watson Lake, and Carcross. Over the next two years, the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years, there's \$5.77 million to the Challenge Cornerstone project — we are extremely excited about this one — in addition to funding already provided for the purchase of the land and the project development.

There is a fourth year of funding for the \$3.6 million in the housing initiatives fund, and \$2.4 million will flow to Yukon through a northern housing fund under the national housing strategy that I mentioned earlier. There is \$6.9 million for a First Nation energy-efficiency program and \$8.4 million for social and staff retrofits under the low-carbon economy fund. That fund is provided on a 75-percent Canadian government and 25-percent territorial government cost-matching ratio between the years of 2019 and 2023. There is \$4.1 million for the construction of a Housing First residence for vulnerable individuals. That is at 5th Avenue and Wood Street in Whitehorse. Construction was completed in November 2019. Tenants are to be moving in there soon, if not already. I don't know what the update is on that. There is a continued commitment of \$2 million from the Yukon government toward the municipal matching rental construction program for new rental units.

Again, I spoke about the shift to community housing. I could talk more about that if the member opposite wants. I do know that, when it comes to staff housing and housing for employees, we are very proud to have taken significant steps in modernizing our approach to housing for government staff in rural communities.

Our approach is new, and its aim is to decrease rental cost disparities in our communities, to incentivize private sector investment — which is extremely important as well — in rural housing, and to prioritize housing for employees considered to be critical for the community and community well-being.

In late May 2019, the government policy governing employee housing was revised as part of our modernization efforts. The updated policy prioritizes housing to essential positions such as health professionals and teachers. It limits tenancies to three years to encourage staff to consider other housing options in communities and realigns rental rates to be more reflective of the private market rates in each specific community.

I asked questions of the government when I was in opposition about this one-size-fits-all policy. It didn't make a

lot of sense to me to not incentivize government employees — like myself; I was one of those teachers who was in Yukon Housing. I believed then and I believe now that it was good to have that when I first got to town, but it only took me a couple of weeks to realize that this was where I wanted to be for the rest of my life — so how do I then grow roots in the community? I believe that limiting the tenancy policy to three years gives a government employee enough time to be able to look at some housing options outside of just staff housing.

With the new policy, it is only the second year of implementation. It is too soon to evaluate its impact. We will continue to implement the policy and to collaborate with our partners in communities in the years ahead to strive to achieve that long-term goal of affordable housing options and private market opportunities in the communities, which is extremely important.

Just an update on 5th Avenue and Wood Street — I wasn't sure if tenants started moving in or not, but tenants have. They started moving into the 5th Avenue and Wood Street Housing First project in February 2020.

Mr. Hassard: My next question was what the current wait-list is for employee housing — but then the Premier talked further about the staff housing. I will just remind the Premier that, when the press release first came out, it said: “The new staff housing model will maintain existing housing stock and current tenants will be able to remain in their homes for the next several years.” When the Premier was speaking a few moments ago, he talked about three years — so I guess if I could get him to clarify — when he gives us that current waiting list, could he also clarify if that three years is the length of time that the current tenants have in their current Yukon housing?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As I understand it, that three-year window is our current policy. I did mention, as well, that it has only been two years since implementation. So I am not sure what more information I can give him in general debate. Also, as far as wait-lists, I don't have that number in front of me.

Mr. Hassard: I am wondering if the Premier could commit to getting us that wait-list number, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe that the minister responsible has already committed to that. Again, I will talk to my colleague as far as what that number looks like and try to get back to the member opposite with the most up-to-date information.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that the minister has committed to it — but we still haven't got it, so I was hoping that maybe if I talked to the minister's boss, that maybe we would have better luck.

Just to go back for a minute to the universal daycare conversation that I had with the Premier here a few minutes back — when I asked about the universal daycare, he mentioned Dawson and Watson Lake. So, I am just wondering if he could clarify: Do those two communities now have universal daycare?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That is not what I said.

Mr. Hassard: Okay, so would the Premier be able to clarify what he was saying when he spoke of Watson Lake and Dawson?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I was just highlighting again increases to the expenditures to those two programs. The minister has talked about these pilot projects a lot of times in the Legislative Assembly. I think that the members opposite know that we put these in.

Again, we're very happy to help two daycares that — for years, when I was in opposition, I tried to get the attention of the government as far as their unique circumstances. I'm happy that the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation not only increased the direct operating grant but also significantly invested into both these daycares through a pilot project. Anytime I'm up on my feet with an opportunity to talk about these projects, I will.

Under the context of a universal daycare program, the member opposite is putting words in my mouth as far as whether this means that — I never said that. It's just a great opportunity to again say that we have put in place those two pilot projects. We're pretty excited about it. I know that — working with the board in Dawson, they were thrilled that they could increase the amount of services provided. Again, they were really thrilled with the announcement of, moving forward, a universal daycare system.

Mr. Hassard: It's rather interesting, I guess. I asked for details on universal daycare. The Premier spoke about pilot projects in Dawson City and Watson Lake. I guess I just assumed that he was — that's why I actually asked for the clarification because I didn't want to have the Premier later say that I was putting words in his mouth — so I thought this was the appropriate time to actually ask for that clarification. But, Mr. Chair, I guess not.

Anyway — since the Premier has said that they are unrelated, I guess maybe I'll ask the question again: What is the government doing on universal daycare?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I also said that they're not unrelated either. But anyway, the member opposite asked me about housing policies and staff policies, and I took that opportunity as well to talk about the investment that we're putting in housing. On the general topic of housing and on the general topic about daycare, I'm going to talk generally about both topics.

Mr. Hassard: So, if he's going to speak about daycare, could we get some information on universal daycare, Mr. Chair?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As I said again today and before, I don't have anything new to add.

I know that the minister responsible will update the House when we have more information to add about universal daycare. We made good on that commitment. We also said that we would take all the recommendations of the *Putting People First* plan. We know that the Yukon NDP have also said that they would also implement that panel's review. We still don't know if the Yukon Party would implement all of those recommendations or not.

Mr. Hassard: It is interesting that the Premier will stand here and say that he made good on that commitment to universal daycare, yet he won't tell us what they've done with regard to universal daycare. I guess I will give him one more

opportunity to make good on his commitment and maybe provide us with a bit of information, please.

Hon. Mr. Silver: So, Mr. Chair, again, we have nothing new to announce than what we have already announced. We are excited about the fact that Yukon will be providing universal daycare. We are excited about the new plan forward for our health care system. We are excited about our new plan forward when it comes to climate change as well. There are lots of things that we are excited about over here, not only about stuff that we've done in the past and where we are presently, but also looking forward and making major announcements that are going to be very pivotal in Yukon. They will be pivotal for single women, and single moms, as well. The members opposite are having a good laugh right now. We don't think that this is a laughing matter. We take this very seriously, but to answer the member opposite's question, I don't have anything new in general debate on the supplementary budget to say as far as our commitments to universal daycare.

Mr. Hassard: Just to be clear for the Premier, we are certainly not laughing about daycare, health care, single mothers, or anything else. We are just laughing at the fact that the Premier can brag about the things that his government is doing, but when we ask for very basic details, there aren't any. He is not able to provide us with anything. I guess that maybe the joke is on him, Mr. Chair, but I will leave it at that.

Mr. Kent: I would like to welcome the Premier's deputy of Finance for providing support here to him during general debate. My questions will focus on housing. I did let the Government House Leader know this morning that we would have questions on the Public Service Commission and the Yukon Housing Corporation today, as neither of them will be called as departments once we leave general debate.

The first question that I would like to ask the Premier is with respect to an issue that I raised last week. We received a letter from the J.V. Clark School Council — of course, that is the school council in Mayo. There was an initial letter sent on September 10 and a follow-up letter sent on November 5 that acknowledged that the September 10 letter hadn't been answered. I am curious if the ministers have reached out to the J.V. Clark School Council or the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun and talked to him about these specific concerns that they have with respect to staff housing for teachers in the community of Mayo.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I do know that he asked this question in Question Period directly to the minister responsible last week. I don't have any new information. I haven't talked directly to the minister responsible yet — if she has received any updates — but I know that the minister will endeavour to get that information to the member opposite as soon as she has it.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that, but I am hoping that the Premier can instruct his ministers to reach out to the J.V. Clark School Council. They have raised very significant concerns, and they have put time and thought into both of these letters that they sent. As I mentioned last week in Question Period, the November 5 letter that they sent said that, to follow up with our letter sent September 10, we have not yet received a response. So, I would have hoped that there would be a little more

urgency around that. If the Premier can commit to instructing his Minister of Education and his Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to reach out to the J.V. Clark School and, of course, speak to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun as a member of the caucus, that would be a good start. I think that would go a long way in helping to address some of these concerns around staff housing that the school council in Mayo has raised with us.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the suggestions from the member opposite. I do know that both departments are currently already working on this. They are working on a response, so I don't have to instruct the minister responsible to get working on something that both departments are already working on, but I do appreciate the member opposite's concern. I do also know that both of those ministers have a close relationship with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and absolutely can provide any information to him if they didn't already.

Mr. Kent: Just before I leave this subject then, I am curious what happened to the September 10, 2020, letter? Obviously, it was for almost two months that the letter sat somewhere in the department without being answered, so I am curious if the Premier has an update.

I asked this question last week during Question Period and didn't get a response. I am wondering if the Premier has an update on why an urgent letter from a school council regarding staffing positions and housing within their community essentially has sat for almost two months without being responded to.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have a response for the member opposite today as far as that time. In each department, we endeavour to respond to casework files as soon as possible. From my perspective, I have heard the questions on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I have heard the members opposite inform us that it has been two months. I know that the two departments are working on a response now. So, in getting that response, if there was a delay, hopefully that will be identified in the response — but I don't have anything new to report to the member opposite at this time.

Mr. Kent: As I said, I was copied on both of these letters. Hopefully, the school council in Mayo can get an answer on their concerns that they have raised here. Hopefully, it's timely, and perhaps ministers could reach out to the chair of the school council and let her know why there was such a delay in responding to that first letter.

When it comes to the Yukon Housing Corporation — I know that my colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, talked about the abbreviated Spring Sitting that we had. I know that we have talked about it a number of times, but we really didn't get a chance to get into some of the details of the Yukon Housing Corporation budget at that time.

On page 20-4 of the budget under capital votes for Yukon Housing Corporation, there is a line item for staff housing — \$2.101 million. I am just curious as to if the Premier can provide us with a breakdown of that amount. How much has been spent so far this year, and what is it being spent on?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If the member opposite could reference the page again, I am getting my operation and

maintenance and capital estimates out here, and I just didn't catch the page number.

Mr. Kent: It is vote 18 of Yukon Housing Corporation, and the page number is 20-4 — and it's capital vote 18-2. The line item is staff housing, \$2.101 million. Again, for the Premier, I am just curious as to what that money is being spent on and where it's being spent.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do see the number here in the main estimates — \$2,101,000. I don't have a further breakdown at this time. I know that the department is not showing up in the general debate for the supplementary budget because there are no new allocations for Yukon Housing Corporation.

I will say — I'm sure the member opposite will have something to say in response — but we did offer for the members opposite to come in and to ask questions of all of those departments this summer — the "five days in May", we like to call it — where the members could have had an opportunity to come in and question each department, each minister, and deputy minister for those five days. They did refuse to come in for that. But I don't have a lot of detail right now for that number.

I do know that there was money for renovation and rehab. As I recall, that money was about \$800,000, which would have come from that number for staff housing. There was also a number — about \$700,000 for energy retrofits. I believe that's also from this line item. Also, there were unit conversions that we do as well — and that's exactly where that type of funding would have come under.

I believe that number was around \$600,000. I don't have any more of a breakdown for the member opposite right now — again, being in general debate, for the supplementary budget of this year — but we'll see if we can get some more information for the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: I don't think it's going to be a surprise to the Premier that we'll agree to disagree on what happened during the summer with respect to calling the Legislature back or not calling the Legislature back and being given an opportunity to debate the budget. But here we are in the fall in general debate on the supplementary, and this is our opportunity, during general debate, to ask questions — particularly of those departments that won't be called individually going forward, so that's what we are focusing on here today. I let the Government House Leader know earlier today as well that we would be talking about the Public Service Commission and Yukon Housing Corporation today.

I am just trying to balance out these numbers that are in the Yukon Housing Corporation's main estimates versus the capital documents that accompany the budget in the tabling here. I am hoping that the Premier can help me out. In the main estimates, I mentioned the staff housing number of \$2.101 million. Then there is social housing of \$15.352 million — so that's \$17.4 million or so between the two. Yet, on table 18 on page 14 of their capital documents, it says that staff and social housing is \$5 million to \$10 million. The capital documents are a little shy of where the main estimates are. I am hoping that the Premier can reconcile the difference there for

me and let me know why two documents that were tabled at the same time appear to have conflicting numbers.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes, the second piece that the member opposite referenced is more of a general category, whereas there is a financial breakdown of the numbers in the main operation and maintenance and capital estimates. What you would see here in the table that he showed is building maintenance of \$10 million to \$15 million — equipment, staffing, housing — different categories there. Historical maintenance sites are different from staff housing and social housing — but the building maintenance number there is not just for one or the other. It would be more of an amalgamated number, whereas in the O&M and the capital estimates, you have breakdowns that are specific to staff housing — which I just outlined. That includes things like retrofits as well, which would be outside of that window.

Rest assured — all these numbers do get checked out with Public Accounts and through the work of the Auditor General. So, there's no discrepancy, just different titles on table 18 as compared to the O&M and capital estimates.

Mr. Kent: I just want to clarify with the Premier — I'm looking at table 18 in the capital documents. At the top, it says building maintenance at \$10 million to \$15 million, and equipment at \$5 million to \$10 million.

Then it says staff and social housing, \$5 million to \$10 million for this 2020-21 fiscal year. But then, when I go to capital vote 18-2 on page 20-4, it has social and staff housing at about \$17.5 million or so. So, I am looking for some assistance here — this says social and staff housing at \$17 million, and in here, it says that it's staff and social housing at \$5 million to \$10 million — about where the discrepancy is between the two documents.

Hon. Mr. Silver: When we take a look at table 18, these are ranges — of course, the ranges being anywhere between \$10 million to \$15 million for building maintenance, anywhere from \$5 million to \$10 million for equipment, and staff and social housing being that \$5 million to \$10 million there. When we take a look at the actual main budget, we could give a breakdown of the specific numbers here on the capital and operation and maintenance mains — because these are the numbers that are more specific — to the member opposite. For example, if we want the breakdown, the actual numbers of the social housing — we already took a look at what the staff housing number is. Those are the retrofits, the upgrades to the units — that type of thing — but when it comes to the actual capital vote — the \$15.325 million — we had renovations and rehabilitation of existing stock. That would have been about \$1.2 million — to break that number down a little bit further. We have energy retrofits of \$1.402 million. We have unit conversions here as well on the social housing side of things. As I mentioned before, in the staff housing, there was unit conversions, but also, over in the social housing — a \$50-million breakdown — there were unit conversions in there as well at around \$700,000; Carcross mixed-use sixplex of \$200,000; the Watson Lake Housing First project was \$200,000 in that as well; Old Crow mixed-use tenplex of \$750,000; also in that \$15.3 million was Whitehorse mixed-use housing to the

tune of \$9 million; the northern housing fund was also in that as well, which was \$1.9 million. All of those would add up to the \$15,352,000 amount.

Any of those renovations and rehabilitations — those are contracts for existing Yukon Housing Corporation-owned social housing units. The retrofits are energy retrofits that are identified for around 19 social housing units. The good news there, as we're breaking down these numbers, is that 75 percent of that is recoverable under the low-carbon economy fund. The unit conversions — the \$700,000 that I mentioned — are single-family dwellings that are two duplex conversions to help reduce the wait-list as well as over-housing. The priority there is going to projects that support aging in place within the communities. The \$200,000 that I mentioned in Carcross was for the design for a mixed-use sixplex there.

The Watson Lake housing unit was a design for a Housing First project there. The \$750,000 for the Old Crow multi-use — that was a tenplex in Old Crow. When it comes to the \$9 million, that was the multi-use building in Whitehorse. There is not much more to add on that in general debate.

For the northern housing fund, that is funding that is available for additional affordable housing and third-party proposals as well to build affordable housing. That was \$1.9 million. That is recoverable from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation through the northern housing fund. That is about it for those.

There were a lot of key budgetary changes from 2019 to 2020, including the Carcross multiplex and the Watson Lake housing — increasing and decreasing in different communities for affordable housing units. That is the breakdown of the numbers as they appear in the mains on page 20-4, vote 18.

As far as table 18 goes, again, these are more blocks of funding that have other connotations. You see over on the table here — staff and social housing, looking like it's a smaller amount for 2020-21 — this is for planned other real property and asset projects. That is from this year and moving forward to 2024-25, whereas the number of \$15 million and the number of \$2 million in the mains — I have now provided a complete breakdown of those two values. Suffice it to say, those are the estimates; that is the spending. That will be the spending for social housing, for staff housing, and for the renos therein. Also, since then, into the supplementary estimates that we're debating now — no new money. So that will be the comprehensive list for the social housing and staff housing breakdown.

Mr. Kent: We may look for further detail on some of those line items as we move forward.

I know that, prior to the start of the Fall Sitting, members of our caucus, members of the NDP caucus, and members of the government caucus all had separate meetings with the folks from Vimy Heritage Housing, the non-profit that is looking to develop an assisted-living seniors facility here in Whitehorse.

Of course, there is another project that is under construction right now. I think it is on Normandy, so I will refer to it as the "Normandy project" and then the other one is the "Vimy". I am just curious if there is any money in the budget for either of those projects right now, or are there any

commitments made to either of those projects from the Yukon Housing Corporation budget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm not really sure where the member is looking. Is he talking about money in the mains or specific money in the supplementary? I guess it would have to be the mains, but I would like him to clarify what he is asking.

Mr. Kent: I'm looking to know if there is any money in the mains under any of these existing funding envelopes or if there has been a commitment made that obviously hasn't shown up in the supplementary budget. But has a commitment been made by the Government of Yukon beyond the land — are we talking just a financial commitment for the capital construction? I know there has been a land promise made to Vimy, but has there been any commitments within any of these funding envelopes or commitments outside of the budget documents that we have here today to either the Vimy project or the one on Normandy that is privately owned?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have anything new to add because obviously there is nothing in the supplementary budget. But when it comes to Normandy, that is a privately owned and operated facility that is being built. There are 84 units — housing with supports — a residence for seniors. It is currently under construction. The anticipated completion is in the fall of 2020. Normandy will be built and operated in a partnership with local businesses — Ketz Construction, Borud Industries, and Northern Vision Development.

Once completed, this facility will meet the needs of seniors who want housing with support services — such as meals and assistance with day-to-day activities — filling a gap between two existing types of accommodations for seniors — government-operated long-term care homes for those who require intensive assistance with daily activities and also professional care on a 24-hour basis and accommodating for seniors in seniors residences where seniors can live independently. We recognize that adequate, suitable, and affordable housing is absolutely fundamental for building and maintaining strong Yukon communities as well as that social determinant of an individual's wellness, as well, which is extremely important.

Just a little bit of background — the Yukon Housing Corporation negotiated \$3.5 million toward a minimum of 10 units for 20 years, with the plan for that 84 units.

This funding arrangement was proposed to Northern Vision. I don't have a lot more information here in general debate, but I know that the minister responsible would have more to add. I know that when it comes to the proposal to Northern Vision, it was a partner in the project to help make up a shortfall in project financing. Northern Vision advised us of the shortfall. It is extremely important to recognize here that, when the private sector comes to us and says that they want to partner, that is when we get involved in these types of projects. We know that we have an excellent private sector. When it comes to providing housing, it's always great to be able to work with them.

When it comes to housing — spent so far for Normandy — it will be the fall of 2022. I think I said fall of 2020; I made a mistake. It will be the fall of 2022 for the Normandy project.

That is the update I have for the member opposite when it comes to Normandy. I do know that the City of Whitehorse is also providing some development incentives over the 10-year project. There is also the municipal matching rental construction grant in there as well. We do know that this is an extremely important partnership between the governments and the private sector. That is the update I have for the member on Normandy.

Mr. Kent: I was writing numbers down as the Premier spoke, so I will just ask this question: I think he mentioned \$3.5 million in funding for the Normandy project — so is there any funding commitment being made? Again, leaving aside the value of the land — which I know is an important aspect of the Vimy project — has there been any commitment made to the proponents of the Vimy project for funding or is this strictly \$3.5 million for the Normandy project? Also, where would I find that? Where is that number reflected in the mains? Obviously, there is not a supplementary, but where is that \$3.5 million reflected in the budget? Is it dollars from an outside agency, such as CMHC?

Hon. Mr. Silver: When it comes to Vimy, we absolutely appreciate the work that was done by Vimy Heritage Housing Society in developing its vision for independent housing with support for seniors. It's extremely important work — senior housing is extremely important to this government. We are exploring a variety of options at this point. I don't have much more to offer to the member opposite at this time. To support Yukoners while keeping sound financial principles in mind is extremely important to us. We're working with the Vimy Heritage Housing Society to explore sources of funding that support a financially viable project.

Most recently, Vimy received federal seed funding and we are providing support to assist with the development of their application for the CMHC's co-investment fund. Just a little bit of background therein as well — in June of this year, the Government of Yukon committed that it would hold the lot in Whistle Bend for the development until May 2021 to allow Vimy Heritage to finalize capital construction for this project.

We also are supporting the aging-in-place action plan as I mentioned — in reference to the Normandy project as well — with our partners to ensure that aging in place is an extremely important part of the collaborative Yukon-wide efforts. Housing is, as you know, Mr. Chair, one of the four pillars of this plan, which is extremely important.

Now, I know that, with Vimy, the current proposal to develop is a 45-suite building with parking and with greenspace. I do know that Energy, Mines and Resources is holding on to the lot — lot 511. It was previously called something else, so as not to confuse — that's down in Whistle Bend subdivision — again, to allow the completion of the business and feasibility plan. The lot will have a market value of approximately \$1 million.

The last note on Vimy — they submitted an application under the housing initiative fund 2019 intake. That's an interdepartmental panel that reviewed the submission and noted that the project was not on schedule to be completed within that 18-month time frame. But Vimy has been encouraged to

reapply when their project meets that program criteria — so just an update there.

When it comes to Normandy, \$1.088 million is from CMHC, and other funding is from the Yukon Housing Corporation budget — all to be absorbing this cost and managing the overall budget for this project.

Mr. Chair, 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. 205, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2020-21*, 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 Minister of Community Services that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.