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HANSARD

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2023 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

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

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
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Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
 We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

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

Speaker: Today, I would like to take the opportunity to describe the new artwork in the Assembly, starting in order from the back of the Assembly to my right and moving counter-clockwise.

The first is a piece by Florence Moses called *Arrival of the Dog Team*. It is made of melton material, canvas backing, wool and cotton yarn, silver bells, seed beads, and vintage beads. Florence Moses is a traditional artist who creates wearable art from diverse materials ranging from Czech beads to triangle beads, porcupine quills, fish scales, sweet grass or abalone buttons to commercial fish skin and furs. She is inspired by her Gwich'in, Northern Tutchone and Han nations' ancestry, her research and time spent listening to stories of elders about survival and sustenance in northern environments. This dog blanket is one of a set of 10 created by Yukon artists. The blankets were showcased at the 2017 Yukon Quest where they were worn by a ceremonial dog team that proudly started the 1,000-mile dogsled race. The project was inspired by the tradition of dog teams being dressed in decorated blankets with bells to announce their arrival in communities. These elaborate blankets also showcased the artwork of family matriarchs.

The next piece is a woven hat by Heather Bell Callaghan entitled *Sea to Mountain Trade Route*. It is made of red and yellow cedar, Hawaiian Job's tears, tooth, tusk, and shells, sea otter, abalone, and leaves of the hala tree. Heather Callaghan is a Tlingit artist whose family comes from a long line of spruce-root weavers in the Yukon and Alaska. She finds inspiration in the way that Tlingit artists have used traditional materials in combination with more recent trade items to create artwork reflecting their world and documenting historical and cultural shifts. This hat is part of a woven ensemble that includes a matching robe and was inspired by travels in southeast Alaska, Hawaii, and the Yukon. The title *Sea to Mountain Trade Route* references the legacy of the people who travelled throughout the mountains on trail networks that led them between the ocean and the interior for social ties, trade, and harvesting.

Next, we have a piece by Karen Bien entitled *Electric Mukluks*. It is made of commercial tanned hide, melton cloth, beaver fur, seed beads, artificial shearling, and nylon thread. Karen Bien is a member of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and was born and raised in Whitehorse. Karen has been sewing for nearly 40 years, creating all kinds of pieces. She learned from her mother, Alice Bien, and through teachings of elders and by watching others. She creates from her imagination, often deciding on colours and patterns as she works, and is always

excited to try new techniques and designs. She describes her process of creating through sewing as therapy, through which she finds a sense of peace and calm.

Next, we have a piece from Kimberley Edgar entitled *Trying to Help*. It is a watercolour using gouache and acrylic ink on paper. Kimberly Edgar is a queer settler living on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in territory, Dawson City, Yukon. They are an artist, cartoonist, illustrator, and designer. Their works have been acquired for numerous Canadian public collections nominated multiple times for best comic with the Broken Pencil Zine Award, and in 2019, their comic *The Purpose* won best comic at the Broken Pencil Zine Awards. In this drawing, Kim reflects on their relationship to their own body and the analogies found between body and land. The central figure lays in the rocky landscape of the tailings piles on the outskirts of Dawson City. Native plants growing between the rocks represent resilience in finding a way to flourish in a harsh environment. A caribou approaches the figure with kindness, reflecting relationships and interdependence.

Finally, we have a piece by Cheryl Rivest entitled *Miles Canyon Bracelet*. It is made of sterling silver and Yukon placer gold from Davidson Creek, Mayo. Cheryl Rivest is a northern artist who was raised in Atlin, BC, and has now lived in the Yukon for the past 30 years. She has studied and worked as a goldsmith and silversmith for over 25 years, creating unique wearable art. In her work, Cheryl seeks to evoke the emotional response she feels in her experiences in the natural environment. The *Miles Canyon Bracelet* was inspired by the basalt columns of Miles Canyon. The columns in the bracelet were formed using the chasing and repoussé technique, which involves hammering into the front surface, then hammering into relief from the reverse.

The shapes and surfaces in the piece replicate the experience of viewing the canyon formations from the water, the cracks and angles in the sentinel-like columns suggesting faces and personalities. Yukon placer gold is tucked into the crevices between the columns to honour the many people who have travelled through the canyon on the Yukon River.

We thank the Department of Tourism and Culture for displaying these artworks in the Assembly for all Yukoners to enjoy.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Today, I would like to welcome Devin Bailey, the fire marshal, and Christopher Green, the deputy fire marshal. These two individuals travel the territory all the time, helping to put out fires both real and metaphorical. I really want to thank them for those efforts. Please join me in welcoming them to the House this afternoon.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Clarke: For the Circular Economy Week tribute, we have today in the gallery from Raven ReCentre: Heather Ashthorn, Raven ReCentre's executive director; Steven Parker, the office administrator; and Megan McLeod, the zero waste coordinator. As well, from the Yukon government, we have Bryna Cable, the director of Environmental Protection and Assessment branch. Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: I would ask my colleagues to please help me in welcoming back to the gallery today my husband, Rick McLean, who is accompanied by his sister, Corinna Reimert, and nephew, Andrew Reimert. They are visiting from Alberta. Please help me in welcoming them.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Fire Prevention Week

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise today to talk about fire safety. Fire Prevention Week kicks off on October 8 each year. It draws our attention to the essential steps that each of us must take to protect ourselves and our families from fires that are easily prevented. I want to thank Yukoners who are making fire safety and prevention activities a priority. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is: "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention."

Most home fires start in the kitchen. When cooking, always keep an eye on the stove and keep a fire extinguisher nearby. If you see smoke, turn off the heat and take the pan off the burner. Know how to use your fire extinguisher. Home fire safety also includes preventing fires from starting, having working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and knowing how to get out fast if those alarms sound. Make sure you install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement, and, if you're a tenant, make sure your landlord installs them. It is the law. Test your smoke alarms once a month and replace them after 10 years. Next, create a home escape plan and review it with your family. Make sure everyone in the home understands how to get out of the house from any room. Plan for all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities. Don't forget to include your pets. In the event of a fire, listen for the smoke alarm. Everyone should know that when you hear that alarm, it's time to get out. Leave calmly but quickly. You could have only minutes to escape safely once the fire alarm sounds. Go to your outside meeting place, which should be a safe distance from your house, and once you get out, dial 911.

This fall, the Fire Marshal's Office and partners and municipal and volunteer fire departments will be visiting schools to talk about fire safety and distribute activity packs for households and families. I want to take a moment to commend and thank all of Yukon's firefighters. They work tirelessly to protect our lives and homes from fire. Together, we are building healthy and safe communities across the Yukon. More

information about fire safety and prevention is available online at preparedyukon.ca. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 9 to 14 as national Fire Prevention Week. In elementary schools, fire safety is taught by encouraging children to plan escape routes and emergency responses with their families. However, not every home has a plan and not every family has gone through this important exercise. Fire Prevention Week aims to educate families on ways to quickly and safely deal with fires, escape a house fire, and the steps to take to limit the risk to you and your family.

While Fire Prevention Week is a wonderful opportunity to go over fire safety in the home and on your property, it's important to mention that natural and human-caused fires can happen throughout the summer months. We have seen some beautiful weather this year, but often with the heat and dry conditions, we are at risk for considerable fire activity. Fire etiquette is key: extinguishing campfires, safe burning on your property, following fire bans, and exercising caution with anything that may cause fires, including cigarettes.

I would like to give a special thanks to all those involved with wildland fire suppression and to those who travelled outside of the Yukon to help neighbouring jurisdictions deal with wildfires this year. I would also like to recognize the ongoing work done by the Yukon Fire Marshal's Office and municipal and volunteer fire departments across the territory. These groups work to educate and raise awareness about fires this week in addition to the important work they do throughout the year to protect our homes and communities. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to acknowledge Fire Prevention Week in Canada. Every day, we are grateful for the folks who work and volunteer in fire halls across the territory, but today, we get to tribute these great people here in the Assembly. Whether we talk about the oldest department in the territory celebrating their 125th anniversary this year — congratulations, Dawson City — or to the biggest fire department, the City of Whitehorse, or to one of the 16 community volunteer fire departments, with over 200 volunteers, we know that the staff and volunteers who have taken on the task of keeping their neighbours safe each and every day deserve our thanks. So, thank you to these special people — the firefighters — who run toward danger when most of us run from it, saving both hearts and homes.

Applause

In recognition of Circular Economy Month

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I rise today to recognize the month of October as Circular Economy Month. Building a circular economy is about moving away from the current linear model of production and consumption and moving to a model where products are meant to be reused, refurbished, and properly dismantled. The environmental benefits of a circular economy

include greenhouse gas reduction, cleaner waterways, and increased biodiversity. Diverting plastics from the landfill means fewer plastic goods are exposed to the environment and fewer microplastics are generated. We are fortunate to have local businesses and vendors, including The Yukon Refillery and Riverside Grocery, which promote refill and reuse practices leading to less product packaging waste.

Raven ReCentre and Zero Waste Yukon are currently piloting a reusable takeout container project aimed at reducing single-use packaging by keeping already existing products in circulation. I would also like to recognize P&M Recycling, Whitehorse Blue Bin Recycling, Association of Yukon Communities, and the community depot and free store operators who help make recycling and reuse possible around the territory.

As we embrace sustainable practices to curb single-use and plastic waste, the collective commitment to environmental stewardship paves the way for *Our Clean Future*, reinforcing dedication to the territory's ecological well-being.

Our Clean Future outlines the Government of Yukon's will to address the impacts of climate change while building a green economy, ensuring access to reliable, affordable, and renewable energy for residents.

Our Clean Future includes a goal of moving toward a more circular economy. It commits the Government of Yukon to designing and implementing an extended producer responsibility program by 2025. The EPR is a regulatory framework that places the financial and operational responsibility for end-of-life waste management of products and packaging on the producers of products and packaging. Mr. Speaker, we have already begun the process of bringing EPR forward, and I am pleased about the progress made on this file.

Recycling is a key part of a circular economy, helping to protect our natural resources and to support biodiversity. A circular economy helps increase biodiversity because the more we can reuse, refurbish and not dispose of items means fewer items in the landfill and less need for extraction of new resources from nature.

Local thrift and free stores also contribute to reuse efforts by reducing textiles in the landfill.

This month challenges us to think about resources — not waste — when it comes to the goods around us. I invite Yukoners to learn more about and embrace circular-economy initiatives. Research and review your purchases; support companies that create products designed to consume less raw material and are meant to stand the test of time.

I encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to think about what we can do to reduce waste and how we can support and empower Yukoners to adapt new, sustainable practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to discuss the circular economy. The thinking behind a circular economy is that we should be trying

our best to ensure that materials, products, and services should be kept in circulation for as long as possible.

The intent is to reduce the lifecycle impacts of materials, including climate impacts, reducing the use of harmful materials and, to the greatest extent possible, extending the lifecycle of products that do get purchased and used.

In a place like the Yukon, which is geographically distanced from other areas where so much of the goods we consume are produced, it only makes sense to find ways to ensure that we get the most out of the products that are shipped up here.

For our part, we are certainly supportive of any efforts to make our economy more sustainable and to ensure that we are limiting the waste that is produced by economic activity in the Yukon. Thank you.

Applause

MLA Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the upcoming Circular Economy Week. Shifting from a linear economy to a circular one is not about any one fix. It is about the entire system being redesigned. The hierarchy of zero waste starts with the best-case scenarios: rethinking, redesigning, reducing, and reusing. This could be selling products with minimal or no packaging, designing goods to be easy to repair, or finding new homes for the things we don't need anymore. It includes garage sales and free stores at transfer stations. Businesses contribute as well, to name just a few. We have consignment stores, a thrift shop, a second-hand sporting goods store, and a used book store that all contribute to a circular economy.

Next on the zero-waste hierarchy is recycling — for those products that we haven't been able to avoid consuming and haven't been able to repurpose. Recycling can't just be checking a box to get waste out of sight and out of mind. We need to invest in recycling practices that are safe and sustainable for workers and accomplish the goal of getting materials all the way into new products.

For years, the Yukon has relied on the staff and volunteers of non-profit organizations and businesses to manage recycling in the territory. They have done incredible work, but it is past time for governments to take on that responsibility. We look forward to when the producers of products are responsible for making sure that those products go full circle.

We appreciate all the Yukoners working hard to reduce their waste through little and big actions, and if you're looking for somewhere to start, this month, Raven ReCentre is hosting a "make your own Halloween costume" workshop out of recycled materials at the recycling depot. I actually tried to sign up and discovered that it was meant for children, but I cannot wait to see the creations.

Happy Circular Economy Month, everyone.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. White: Today, I have for tabling a letter addressed to the Premier entitled “Proposed Closure of Silver City Transfer Station” that was signed by 130 residents.

Speaker: Are there any further reports for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 28: *Act to amend the Environment Act (2023)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I move that Bill No. 28, entitled *Act to amend the Environment Act (2023)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by Minister of Environment that Bill No. 28, entitled *Act to amend the Environment Act (2023)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 28 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House condemns Hamas’ horrific attacks on the people of Israel.

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

THAT this House urges all governments in Canada to denounce the unprovoked attacks on Israel and on innocent civilians by the terrorist group Hamas and affirm the right of Israel to respond and defend itself.

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

THAT this House celebrates the second anniversary of the supervised consumption site that has assisted 335 individuals who have used services 6,312 times, demonstrating the pivotal role that this site serves to provide harm reduction and safety in our community.

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

THAT this House:

(1) acknowledges that the Official Opposition has made it known that they do not support the recently negotiated collective agreement; and

(2) urges the Official Opposition to reconsider their position on the collective agreement with the Yukon Employees’ Union by voting in support of the supplementary budget that will provide more than 3,500 public servants with the compensation they deserve.

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

THAT this House supports the Government of Yukon’s community tourism destination development fund that is supporting local businesses, First Nation governments and development corporations, municipalities, and not-for-profit organizations to realize opportunities for increased tourism visitation, encourage new and emerging tourism businesses, and rebuild capacity lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide medically managed alcohol and drug withdrawal support for people living in Yukon communities.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to install lighting at the two pedestrian crosswalks on the Alaska Highway in Porter Creek.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Wildland Fire Management

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are coming to the end of a wildfire season that saw 218 wildfires burn more than 220,000 hectares of land. Today, I am honoured to share more information about our response in this ministerial statement, which will provide insights and serve as a valuable resource for future generations.

Mayo, Old Crow, and the Yukon’s largest gold mine — Eagle Gold mine — were evacuated, and households in the Ibex Valley and the Silver Trail were under evacuation alert. During it all, hard-working Yukon wildfire crews kept communities safe. All wildfire crews — whether they are under the Yukon government, Yukon First Nations Wildfire, or First Nation governments — work shoulder to shoulder through the season as a single and cohesive team under the Wildland Fire Management program. Together they do all they can to manage the effects of wildfires near communities and valuables. They work long hours fighting fires. On top of that, they conduct prescribed burns and other FireSmart treatments that reduce wildfire risk to neighbourhoods and critical infrastructure.

With expert support, overhead and program staff at the six Yukon fire centres, our wildland firefighters protect lives, land, and livelihoods. During this summer that saw so much damage in other parts of the country from wildfire, it is not lost on anyone how fortunate we have been.

The Yukon did not lose any structures or suffer any losses of life. This is an important, poignant point to recognize as climate change alters our world and wildfires become more common. Our crews served beyond our borders to help our neighbours as we always have.

This summer, Yukon crews deployed to the Northwest Territories, Alberta, Québec, and British Columbia. We are proud that Yukon personnel could support our neighbours in

need. Thank you to everyone who participated in these missions.

Likewise, we were fortunate to receive help from Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador during our own period of high fire activity. Across Canada, communities coped with devastating fires, mass evacuations, and wildfire smoke. Tragically, this season has been deadly for wildland firefighters. The community is mourning the loss of eight firefighters and wildfire personnel in Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and British Columbia. In the Yukon, our flags stood at half-mast to recognize and mourn each of these deeply felt losses. It is a reminder of the risks that our wildland firefighters and emergency responders take every day when they go to work.

Thank you to all those involved in the response to the territory's wildfires this season for your courage and commitment. From our homegrown fire crews to the crews who came here from other jurisdictions, Yukoners are truly thankful. Thank you also to all Yukon First Nations and Yukon communities, particularly those that have been impacted by wildfires this year. We are proud to work together to respond to emergencies, keep Yukoners safe and informed, and create wildfire-resistant Yukon communities. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to thank everyone who helped with the wildfire response in the Yukon this year. It was a busy season, and while we are fortunate to have avoided the loss of homes and other buildings seen in other parts of Canada, including our neighbours to the east and south, the threat was there and it came much too close for comfort. Fires in the Ibex Valley and near Mayo and Old Crow put hundreds of homes at direct risk. We are thankful to everyone who worked so hard to protect Yukoners' homes and our communities. This includes crews from Wildland Fire Management, Yukon First Nations Wildfire, and volunteer firefighters. I know that a number of volunteer firefighters from the Ibex Valley, Hootalinqua, Golden Horn, the SHOT team, and Mayo all worked hard as part of the wildfire response, often late at night. I would also like to thank anyone else whom I may have missed listing.

We also thank crews who came from other jurisdictions and staff from the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre and everyone who assisted with evacuations of Mayo and Old Crow. In the case of Mayo, we saw the Canada Games Centre in Whitehorse used as a place for evacuees and, a short time later when Old Crow was evacuated, some of those people also relocated to the CGC. In the case of Old Crow, we thank Air North for juggling their summer schedule to accommodate the airlift of residents from the Yukon's only fly-in community and note that Air North was also called upon to assist the NWT with evacuations.

As we pass along our condolences to the families of firefighters who lost their lives protecting Canadians this year, it is a reminder of the danger that firefighters may face every time they put on their uniforms. What happened in the NWT served as a stark reminder that wildfires are a threat to northern

communities and should serve as another wake-up call to us all. There are steps that the Yukon can take to be better prepared for future fire seasons.

Following the fire in Fort McMurray, we supported calls of local groups, including FireSmart Whitehorse and the Yukon Wood Products Association, for targeted harvesting in and near communities to reduce wildfire risk. We appreciate that the Yukon government did work with other governments on a firebreak project, but much more action is needed. We call on the government to work with First Nations, municipalities, and local advisory councils on a plan to reduce wildfire risk in and near communities, including targeted harvesting.

It is important to have short-term actions taken, while a longer term plan is being worked on, including taking action before the next fire season.

We also encourage Community Services to do a review of communications, procedures, and practices. Much was done well, including updates by staff working very late at night, but there is room for improvement regarding frequency of updates, communications with community leaders, and some of the information shared with residents. There is also an interest in seeing more done to help people understand what they can do to firesmart their own properties and set up home fire-suppression systems.

Again, we want to thank everyone involved for all their hard work, but this is also a time to recognize how close we came to a more serious outcome in Ibex Valley, with Whitehorse and the Hot Springs Road area right next to it, and in Mayo and Old Crow and to take action to be better prepared for future years.

Communities, including Ibex Valley, also want to see an emergency plan in place for their area that reflects their needs and steps taken to better address issues such as livestock being moved if an alert or order is issued.

Ms. White: This year saw an unprecedented wildland fire season in Canada and, sadly, a devastating loss in the wildland fire community with the death of eight firefighters and wildfire personnel, but this is not a tribute; it is a ministerial statement, and the minister has not provided any new information or helped ease the anxieties of those Yukoners who worry that we might be next. If the minister rightly wanted to pay tribute to the work of our wildland firefighters and emergency workers, there is a space for that. So, I have questions and I hope that the minister will be able to provide answers.

Here at home, the communities of Mayo and Old Crow were evacuated and we saw resources in Whitehorse activated with an evacuation centre at the Canada Games Centre and the mechanisms for the rollout of support. A lot of good things were done, but evacuees said that it wasn't without challenges. In 2022, the census said that Old Crow had a population of 236 people and, according to their website, Mayo has an average population of 450 people, and then there were those who nearly had to be evacuated in the Ibex Valley and the Silver Trail. That means that, in Yukon, we evacuated and relocated less than a thousand people, but our neighbours to the east in the

Northwest Territories evacuated 68 percent of their population due to wildland fires — nearly 26,000 people — 20,000 out of Yellowknife and an additional 6,000 from the rest of the territory.

What lessons can we learn from their experiences? What lessons are we learning from their experiences? What would the Yukon do if the entire City of Whitehorse needed to be evacuated? Where would they go? And what about the entire Klondike region? Where would we direct those in Watson Lake to go? When we look at the changing nature of the climate and the increase in both intensity and duration of wildland fires, what direction do we, as the decision-makers of today, make for the future? Is the Yukon government working with the City of Whitehorse to create more large-scale fire breaks? What is the broad-strokes evacuation plan for Whitehorse and other Yukon communities?

We're not talking about the minute details, but people want to know where to look to get an idea of what those steps could look like. I heard a lot of people asking those questions this summer.

Maybe the minister doesn't remember actively campaigning against presumptive cancer coverage for wildland firefighters, but I still have the letters to show that, instead of working to get additional coverage for the individuals who do so much to protect people and property, he chose to leave them behind. He compared the risk to smoke inhalation from sitting next to a campfire. So, I wonder, if the minister spent weeks working tirelessly next to the burning boreal forest, if he might feel differently.

He also told Yukoners that no one else was contemplating this type of coverage for wildland firefighters, but he was wrong. BC, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and soon Manitoba will all provide presumptive insurance coverage for wildland firefighters for heart problems and several cancers.

So, I want to know why the minister actively left wildland firefighters behind when he brought forward presumptive cancer coverage for structural firefighters in 2021 and when he will be introducing amendments to right this wrong.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Our government is prepared for emergencies, and we work closely with our partners to protect the health and welfare of all Yukoners. We have great systems in place with our Incident Command structure through the Emergency Measures Organization so resources know where to go during an emergency. We regularly hold tabletop exercises as part of emergency management training and planning. These can be small-scale, with just a dozen participants, or they can be much larger, like Operation Nanook. Every year, we assess how the season went and how we can do better, taking cues from places like Fort McMurray, Alberta, or, in this year, it would be Yellowknife.

In May, the Premier and I spoke with media at the air tanker base in Whitehorse, flanked by many members of the team at Wildland Fire Management to encourage Yukoners to have 72-hour kits ready, take steps to firesmart their properties, and stay informed ahead of the season.

It was another opportunity to thank the response teams, including duty officers, fire and weather behavioural specialists, administrative staff, warehouse people, and air crew. Throughout the year, they are hard at work tackling mitigations like the impressive south Whitehorse fuel break project, community and wildland fire protection plans, and so much more.

Communities have the responsibility to review their emergency and evacuation plans. This is a municipal or community responsibility. I have been talking to communities about this all summer and will continue to do so over the coming months and years. We work with communities to create and update their community emergency plans and complete a hazard identification and risk assessment.

During emergency incidents, the Emergency Measures Organization is in regular contact with communities, municipal and First Nation governments, and other agencies.

We offer support as required and help where local capacity is insufficient to assist with logistics, communications, or other elements of emergency response. The City of Whitehorse and the Government of Yukon are reviewing their joint emergency response processes, evacuation plans, and incorporating lessons and observations from other jurisdictions. This includes a review of how we communicate with residents before, during, and after an emergency, how we inform people of evacuations, and how we work together through the territory's Emergency Measures Organization. We can never be too prepared for a natural disaster.

Our government knows that being prepared, intervening early, and acting quickly can mitigate emergencies and prevent damages from natural disasters. Our government recognizes the invaluable contribution of every Yukoner who fights fires — whether full time or part time, professionally, or as a volunteer.

A regulation covering presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* came into force on July 1, 2022. We have been studying this, and wildland firefighters are currently excluded from the cancer presumptions in this piece of legislation. Wildland firefighters in the Yukon are not typically exposed to burning manufactured materials that structural firefighters deal with or wildland firefighters deal with in Québec, BC, Manitoba, and other jurisdictions. We have a lot fewer urban wildfire interfaces here in the territory, so there's little evidence of an increased risk of cancer for wildland firefighters working in the Yukon bush.

It is important to note that a new study calls this assertion into question and we will be looking into that. As I committed to during debate on that piece of legislation, we are going to continue to review the legislation in light of new developments in this field. That is responsible decision-making. We are making decisions based on science and documented evidence.

I will end it there, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your time this afternoon.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD**Question re: Affordable housing and land development**

Ms. Clarke: The affordability and availability of housing continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing Yukoners. We also know that the Liberal government has struggled with this file.

Last year, the Auditor General found that the Liberal government was not providing Yukoners with the greatest needs when it came to adequate and affordable housing, so it was surprising that, when the Minister of Finance tabled the supplementary budget last week, it included a \$6-million cut to the capital budget for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Can the Minister of Finance explain why there is a \$6-million cut to the capital budget to the Yukon Housing Corporation during a housing crisis?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I think that, first of all, we are going to have an opportunity to have a further discussion on our supplementary budgets over the next number of weeks. Essentially, what we have been looking at is that some of our projects — our one in Watson Lake, which we're very proud of right now, is our tenplex — which has come in more expensive, which we are seeing across the board on our builds — is underway. We are also, in some cases, waiting for partners to be ready to build their projects, so we are looking at a number of multi-unit builds here. We are still working with Vimy to be able to de-risk their project and with First Nation development corporations. The prudent thing to do at this point in time is to continue to focus on the projects that are going forward within this fiscal year and be able to reallocate funds to appropriate priorities when required.

Ms. Clarke: Well, the supplementary budget is very clear that there is a \$6-million reduction in the capital vote for housing. Last year, the government made an announcement that they were expanding the developer-build loan program to include financing for land and infrastructure development necessary to construct residential housing. In the Spring Sitting, the Minister of Housing said that the \$5 million they had budgeted for this program would — and I quote: "... support community development partnerships that increase housing supply in the territory." However, in the supplementary budget tabled last week, the Liberals cut the funding to this program by 40 percent.

Why are they cutting money for housing during a housing crisis?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The program is undersubscribed, so the prudent thing to do is to move funds to where they should be prioritized. There have been applications that have come in. They still have to be looked at from a risk perspective. Of course, the developer-build program and our other programs continue to be marketed to the public, but it takes a developer to come in the door and want to build to see a project going forward. I want us to use as much funding — and I would love to be coming back with a supplementary budget to increase that program, but, at this particular time, it is undersubscribed.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, in the supplementary budget that was tabled last week, the Liberal government cut

\$6 million from the capital budget for housing. They did this less than a year after the Auditor General found that they were not providing adequate or affordable housing to Yukoners who need it most. The biggest part of the cut they made was to the northern carve-out, which saw its budget cut by \$4 million.

Why did the Liberals cut this money from the capital budget for housing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First, I would like to go back to the developer-build loan. I think that it is important to speak to Yukoners to let them know that, again, this is because it is undersubscribed. It is not being used. We want it to be used. We will continue to look at the program to see if there are ways for us to tweak it, to make it something that is of interest to developers, but, at this particular time, they are going out and finding their financing through normal institutions.

For the last question concerning the northern carve-out, what we have done is that we have shifted the ability to spend that money — the vote of the money. We haven't cut it; we are reallocating it to future projects.

So, again, it is important to be clear to Yukoners. That money is still going to be used for housing, but when you are working with partners, which I think we have done very well — I mean, the developer-build loan alone has supported almost 80 new housing units since 2018, so these programs are working, but again, you have to be walking alongside with your partners. You can see it across the territory — these projects — but we have to be ready to support them when they are ready to build.

Question re: Rural solid-waste transfer stations

Mr. Istchenko: So, Yukoners living in rural communities continue to be frustrated by the Liberal government's plans to cut solid-waste disposal services in rural Yukon. The Minister of Community Services' plan to close four rural solid-waste transfer stations has not gone over very well with anyone. The YESAB page for the closure of the Silver City transfer station, for instance, has been inundated with submissions criticizing the decision and the lack of consultation.

So, my question for the minister is: Why is he charging ahead with this decision to cut services to rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, we are implementing recommendations jointly developed by the Government of Yukon, Association of Yukon Communities, and the City of Whitehorse. The recommendations were informed by discussions with all partners as well as previous work, such as the Association of Yukon Communities solid-waste management vision from 2016 when members opposite were in government.

The committee's recommendations were then handed over to an implementation advisory group, which included the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities plus representatives from four different municipalities.

We are doing this because the territory is creating way too much garbage, and we are working to modernize and improve the way we handle garbage in the territory. It's part of a far-reaching plan that will force everybody in the territory to go to

regional landfills that are monitored, controlled, and managed properly in the best interest of all Yukoners. We're going to continue with that plan.

Mr. Istchenko: The minister may think this is a good idea, but pretty much everyone else in the territory affected by these changes disagrees. Here's what the Kluane First Nation said about this minister's proposal — and I quote: "The proposed changes to Silver City solid waste transfer station and Destruction Bay waste management facility are unacceptable." Here's what the Village of Haines Junction had to say — and I quote: "The Municipality is concerned about the closure of the Silver City and Canyon transfer stations and believes it will negatively impact the residents."

So, my question is this: Is the minister aware of a single user group, stakeholder, or other level of government that actually supports this decision?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once again, I really think it's incumbent upon all members of the House to be getting accurate information into public hands, and the member opposite is absolutely correct that we are looking at stopping and removing a waste bin from the community of Silver City so that residents can then go either to Haines Junction or to the landfill that's between Destruction Bay and Burwash. That landfill is going to continue to exist; as a matter of fact, it's going to be improved and managed properly as a regional landfill.

The member opposite is simply wrong when he starts to foster that people in Burwash or Destruction Bay are going to lose their landfill, because they are not. It's going to be managed properly and will be controlled, just like every other landfill will be in the territory. As for the member opposite saying, "Is there anybody?" Yes. Teslin has signed on to our interim agreement; Mayo has signed on to our interim agreement; Carmacks has signed on to our interim agreement. All of these municipalities are taking charge of their landfills and buying into this plan, which was brought to the Yukon government in 2016 and again in 2017 by the Association of Yukon Municipalities. We are following through with that request from the Association of Yukon Communities.

Mr. Istchenko: Since the minister has made it known that he plans to charge ahead with these changes regardless of what anyone else tells him, he has pointed the finger at the Association of Yukon Communities.

However, even the association has taken issue with the minister's comments and has submitted a letter to YESAB criticizing the government's consultation on this issue. In the letter, the AYC says that the Yukon government's comments about consultation were — and I quote: "... incorrect and misleading statements". The letter says that the AYC believes the Yukon government has mischaracterized the AYC's involvement.

So, Mr. Speaker, why does the minister continue to mischaracterize the role of AYC and try to shift the blame for a decision that he himself has made?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say this afternoon that, as a matter of fact, it was my good colleague the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes who actually started this process at the

request of municipalities, not myself. And I thank you for the credit because I think it's a great initiative, but it was really my good colleague who started these negotiations. I applaud him for it because what he is trying to do is improve the way that the territory manages all the garbage that we produce. It's important that we get there because, as we have heard today with the tribute earlier, we are producing far too much garbage. We have to do better.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned AYC. Well, the president of the Association of Yukon Communities, who is also a Whitehorse city councillor and a former Yukon Party caucus staffer, has gone public and made some assertions about the association that he is president of. Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I encourage all of us to make sure that we make accurate public statements because, in a letter to the editor, the president of the AYC said that they do not represent unincorporated communities and, in fact, they do. So, Mr. Speaker, we all have a responsibility to get information into the public domain that is accurate and I encourage everybody to please be careful when they are speaking in this House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Teacher staffing

Ms. White: School councils are very concerned about this school year. They don't have enough staff allocated to their schools to meet the needs of children. Their most vulnerable students are being shortchanged by the Department of Education. All they are requesting is the supports that the Liberals promised via the confidence and supply agreement signed with the Yukon NDP: additional education assistants, learning assistance teachers, and one wellness counsellor per school. Schools, teachers, and parents deserve to know what the Liberals are doing to meet their obligations to students.

As of today, how many schools are short on the education assistants, learning assistance teachers, and wellness counsellors that they have requested?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I am happy to rise today to speak about education in terms of our recruitment of teachers and education assistants.

I know that the member opposite is aware that there is an ongoing national labour shortage along with other issues arising out of the pandemic. This continues to be an issue across the country.

For the 2023-24 school year, we were able to take many strategic recruitment actions. We posted positions earlier to be more competitive with other jurisdictions. We participated again with online career fairs. We have worked with a number of social media platforms. We have visited Canadian universities. To date, teacher recruitment has attended seven online job fairs.

We are getting to a better place, I think, than we were last year. I think there were more challenges last year. In terms of numbers, I can get into some of the numbers that I have, as of September 26, in the next question.

Ms. White: I am glad that the minister mentioned a labour shortage because we hear over and over again from teachers who have left the profession or the territory because of

burnout. This is concerning on so many levels because without a functioning education system, we put at risk the very future of our territory. One of the main issues is the lack of teachers on call or, as they are known by students, “substitute teachers”. Every year, they need to reapply to the Department of Education. Educators are being denied training that they really need because no one can replace them. Even taking a sick day is tough when no one is there to replace you, but substitute teachers are tired of this government’s dysfunction. They are tired of being asked to reapply for their own jobs every year, and they are tired of having to teach almost full time with little support and half the pay.

Several substitute teachers told us that they just stopped applying because they don’t want to deal with these issues anymore, and there is one quick fix to all of this dysfunction: Will the minister allow teachers on call to stay in the system year after year and show them that their experience is valued?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will continue speaking about the work that we are doing to recruit and to ensure that the positions that we have added — we have added 81 new positions over the next three years. That will include wellness counsellors; it will include education assistants.

We are working hard to really reimagine education in the territory. I believe that the work we are doing is cutting-edge across the country and that our issues around recruitment will begin to subside.

In terms of temporary vacancy management, operational management of schools routinely requires regular adjustments by administrators, and I commend the administration teams with their ability to effectively make adjustments where temporary vacancies have put increased demands on staff resources. Certainly, the Government of Yukon offers a variety of supports to staff to address workplace challenges, including health and safety and well-being resources to assess, protect, and promote psychological safety in the workplace.

Again, a lot of work is going into reimagining education in this territory for Yukoners for the future generations —

Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. White: Unfortunately, we didn’t get an answer to an easy solution about keeping teachers on call registered throughout the years.

So, every day, administrative staff spend time calling around for substitute teachers to fill the gaps in their classrooms. Better solutions exist when it comes to having substitute teachers available to fill in many gaps of our education system. Other places in Canada are using what they call “supply teachers”. They are teachers permanently attached to a school but not to a classroom so they are able to rotate to different classes as needed. It’s a great way to recruit new teachers and show them the ropes of a learning environment. It would be a great way to slow down the burnout epidemic that full-time educators are facing, and it would mean that administrative staff would not need to go through a call list every morning to fill the gaps.

Will the minister commit to creating permanent positions for supply teachers in Yukon schools to ensure that students are not being shortchanged any longer?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will just give a few of the numbers that we have right now in terms of teachers on call. As of September 26, we had registered 159 teachers on call in the Yukon. That is 129 in Whitehorse, 30 in rural communities, with an additional 19 applications pending, 14 being in Whitehorse and five in rural communities. Again, those numbers are up.

I really will point the House’s attention — and I think what is really important to know is that we are working hard to reimagine education overall, but we are working to address the Auditor General’s report of 2019 by the work that we are doing on reimagining inclusive and special education. There are a number of working groups that include Yukoners from across the territory to really dig into each of the areas. This is certainly one of the areas around the recruitment and retention of teachers.

We have a number of initiatives that are underway now. This is something that our Department of Education and administration are looking very deeply into.

Question re: Big Creek bridge replacement

Ms. McLeod: I have some questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works about the Big Creek bridge. In the Spring Sitting, the minister told the Legislature that the original planned completion date was in 2022 but that the contractor had been given a one-year extension to address the deficiencies. That contract ended at the end of September and we have yet to hear anything from the government.

So, can the minister tell us what the plan is for the Big Creek bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The Big Creek bridge is located approximately 65 kilometres west of Watson Lake, as the Member for Watson Lake will know, on the Alaska Highway and is an important part of the Yukon’s transportation network. In 2020, the tender was awarded to Julmac Contracting Limited and the original planned completion was in 2022. However, unfortunately, in 2022, defects within the concrete deck were discovered during inspections of the new bridge.

Due to performance issues, the contract was terminated in May 2023. On August 11, 2023, Julmac Contracting Limited filed a statement of claim with Yukon Supreme Court. That matter is now before the courts. We will not be commenting generally about the litigation. However, the Yukon government is exploring all options available to complete the project. Until the project is ready, we will continue to perform regular maintenance and inspections of the existing bridge to verify that it remains safe for the travelling public.

Ms. McLeod: In the spring, the minister confirmed that there were no additional taxpayer dollars that would be needed for this project. So, can the minister confirm that this is still the case, and what is the new timeline for the bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: To fully answer the member opposite’s question in due time and in order to better understand how these deficiencies that I have indicated in my first response might impact the structure, we are working with the consultant engineer of record for the project to perform a full assessment of the bridge. The assessment will provide

details of what additional work is required to allow the bridge to be open for public use.

Julmac's contract was terminated on the basis of delay and the deficiencies that I also indicated in my first response — of deficient work. As I indicated, the Yukon government will be exploring all options in order to recoup costs of that project and will make best efforts to complete the Big Creek bridge project, certainly conceding that there are unforeseen delays with respect to this project, but all efforts are being made to ensure that the Yukon, international, and national travelling public is able to use the currently existing bridge safely.

Ms. McLeod: Not too many answers there.

Earlier this spring, my colleague asked the minister whether or not all the subcontractors on this job have been paid. It's my understanding that in order to be paid by the Yukon government, the general contractor needs to complete a statutory declaration that they have indeed paid all of the subcontractors involved. Has the contractor on the Big Creek bridge, Julmac, made such a statutory declaration, and how much of the original \$10 million has been paid to Julmac so far?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the member opposite's question in this regard. I will certainly endeavour to get back to the member opposite with respect to those specific questions on contract administration and will do so during the Fall Sitting.

Question re: Resource Gateway project

Mr. Hassard: Six years ago, Prime Minister Trudeau travelled to the Yukon to make a major infrastructure announcement. The Gateway project would see a total investment of \$360 million in highway projects throughout the Yukon. At the time, the Prime Minister said — and I quote: “This is a big announcement and I'm excited about the impacts it's going to have in the coming months and coming years,” Trudeau said, calling the project ‘an investment in Yukon's people.’” Unfortunately, the Yukon Liberal government has been incredibly slow to deliver on this project, with only one project actually seeing shovels in the ground so far.

Can the minister tell us what the revised budget is for the Gateway projects and when they are expected to be completed?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: As the member opposite indicated with respect to the first successful Resource Gateway program, in the spring of 2019, a project agreement for the Carmacks bypass component was signed with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. This project included the construction of a new road and bridge that will allow industrial vehicles to bypass the community of Carmacks, creating a safer flow of traffic for residents. The new road connects the existing Freegold Road with the Klondike Highway. This project will also improve access to mining activities while enabling the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to benefit from contracting, education, and training associated with the project. This project is a key component under the Yukon Resource Gateway program, and this is the first project to be awarded under the program.

The Carmacks bypass project is a collaborative effort between the Yukon government and the Little Salmon

Carmacks First Nation. Pelly Construction was awarded the \$29.6-million contract to construct the new road and bridge on November 3, 2021. This project is now substantially complete, and I can happily report that an opening ceremony for the new bridge and the road is tentatively scheduled to take place in October at the site.

Mr. Hassard: Unfortunately, we didn't get an answer to the question that I asked, so let's try again. One of the roads that was included for these upgrades, of course, is the North Canol. This past summer saw an increased amount of traffic on that road due to mineral exploration activity in that area. The road was in such poor condition that we heard from a number of Yukon companies that severe damage was done to their equipment from travelling on it, resulting in thousands of dollars worth of repairs.

We are now three and a half years since the project agreement for this portion of the project was signed with the Ross River Dena Council; however, the minister told me in an August letter that discussions are ongoing with RRDC to determine the timelines and next steps.

When does the minister expect the work to begin on the North Canol?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I know that, from his experience and from what I did on my summer vacation, he spent a little bit of time driving the North Canol. I had an opportunity on Saturday to spend a bit of time in that area as well.

What is important is to take a look at the original proposal that was submitted by the members opposite. I think that approximately \$100 million was to go into a road in 2016 to a mining project that, under the current circumstance of our country, would never be permitted. So, we would be finishing a \$100-million project in the Selwyn project that would never be permitted because of the ownership model. So, that would be one.

The second thing that it is important for Yukoners to remember is that not one First Nation ever signed off on any of the plans for the road, but yet, in the final days of the Yukon Party, they amended their agreement to say that nothing could be built without a First Nation signing off.

So, yes, we have been working with a number of nations. We are still looking forward to moving some of the projects forward with the Ross River Dena Council, as well as with the Liard First Nation, as well as with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, and I think that has been really good planning. But again, you have to do it with your partners before the money can be deployed.

Mr. Hassard: Unfortunately, we didn't have any more success with the Premier than I had with the minister, but we will persevere.

As mentioned, the North Canol is in very poor condition. We hear complaints from Yukoners and Yukon companies that rely on that road. The Gateway project involves repairs or replacement of 27 bridge structures; however, brushing, grading, and ditching as part of O&M expenditures need to be done as well. Reports are that little or no money was spent on O&M in recent years, so can the minister tell us how much was

allotted to the North Canol in this fiscal year, and has he asked the department to increase that amount for next year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I want to highlight again that, over the weekend, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and I spent time on reviewing the North Canol, taking a look at some of the key areas of infrastructure that need to be done. I also want to commit to the folks who are working there that we are reviewing opportunities, but I also want to thank the team, the leadership, at Highways and Public Works because they have been working on looking at ways to also improve those roadways within their budget.

So, yes, there is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done, but again — the folks opposite can laugh, but you signed an agreement with Canada for, I think, over \$300 million, and then you amended it — the person who is actually speaking out amended it in June 2016, when you were still in government, and said that all the roads would need a project sign-off by First Nations, but then you didn't talk to anybody.

So, yes, there's a lot of work that needs to be done, and you can tell that it's getting under their skin because they know of the mistakes made on this project, and then they planned roads to projects that will never be built, so we have reallocated that. So, yes, we will take the money, we will do the good work, and we will do it in partnership with First Nations because that's how things should be done in the Yukon.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. They are Motion No. 756, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, and Motion No. 759, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek North.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. They are Motion No. 762, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Motion No. 761, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 210: *Fourth Appropriation Act 2022-23* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 210, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 210, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act 2022-23*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 210, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act 2022-23*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief here. I thank all members for their contributions on debate in this bill, those who did speak for recognizing the expediency required to ensure that we have time to prepare the 2022-23 Public Accounts once this debate concludes. Once again, I want to thank the negotiation teams who helped us reach a new collective agreement between the Yukon government and the Yukon Employees' Union.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, as Official Opposition Finance critic, I just would note, as I did earlier in speaking to this budget bill, that we will be voting against this, as we do with all budget bills, because it is a confidence vote, and we don't have confidence in the Liberal government. We will continue our record of voting against the Liberals on each and every confidence vote.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, as indicated previously, we will be voting in favour of this budget, especially as we believe that the public servants deserve the pay that they have been missing since they were in negotiation for the collective agreement.

We look forward to getting on to the rest of the business of the day.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, eight nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 210 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 210 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of the Yukon to grant assent to a bill which has passed this House.

Commissioner Webber 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 a certain bill to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Fourth Appropriation Act 2022-23.*

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

I am really pleased to be here in my new role and I just wanted to say that I look forward to your discussions. I listen carefully to what is happening in the House and I am really pleased with the debate. It is really important, speaking on behalf of Yukoners. I just wanted to say that, today, I am also now heading off to Dawson City, and it is going to be a nice little visit to the community. It is the beginning of my visits to the communities.

Have a good session.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Speaker: It has been moved by the 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 (Ms. Blake): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 211: *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is my pleasure to rise to begin the Committee of the Whole debate on Bill No. 211, which represents the second appropriation act for the 2023-24 fiscal year or the first supplementary estimates for that period.

Before I do, I would like to reintroduce, in the seat to my left here, Jessica Shultz. As Deputy Minister of Finance, Jessica and her whole team work extremely hard to produce the most up-to-date financial documents and statements that are debated in this House. I want to thank her and also the entire Finance department for preparing this material and also for their diligent tracking of hundreds of moving pieces on a daily basis. I would also like to draw attention to the interim fiscal and economic update, which the department has released in coordination with the first supplementary estimates. I will speak to this document and its update outlook a bit later in my remarks. But, suffice to say, this is a regular business that we do now — taking these moments in time out and pairing that with our budget time.

I spoke to the rationale for the supplementary estimates in my second reading speech so, to avoid too much repetition, I will dive right into the contents of this appropriation bill.

At a high level, the first supplementary estimate proposes a \$132.7-million increase in spending. This includes \$132.7 million in proposed O&M spending and no gross increase in capital. The first supplementary estimates also include some changes in recoveries and revenues. This increase includes \$26.8 million in new O&M recoveries and a \$5.8-million reduction in anticipated capital recoveries. Revenues will see an \$18.7-million increase. All of these changes result in a revised fiscal framework resulting in an updated surplus of \$3.6 million as well as a revised net debt of \$423.8 million. The ability to remain in a surplus position is largely owed to the use of the Yukon government's \$50-million contingency fund, which has been exhausted as a result of unanticipated expenses while at the same time maintaining our healthy fiscal position.

I will now go into a little bit further detail about each of these items. I will begin in operation and maintenance, where we see the largest change in proposed spending as part of this bill. As I have mentioned, we will see \$132.7 million in new funding in this area. The largest change impacting O&M spending represents increases related to retroactive payments stemming from the new collective agreement between the Yukon government and the Yukon Employees' Union.

Across all government departments, this represents \$36.9 million in new spending and covers the period from April 1, 2023 to present, as retroactive payments for 2022-23 were included in the third supplementary estimates for that fiscal year.

The next largest change is represented by increases in the Department of Health and Social Services. In total, this department will see \$52.8 million in new funding, with \$17.5 million of this amount made up by the collective bargaining increases that I just spoke about, specific to their department. This will ensure that all EMS, home care, mental health and wellness staff, community nurses, continuing care practitioners, and all other union staff within the department see the retroactive payments and higher wages that they are entitled to.

The remaining amounts cover several important adjustments. We continue to work closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to identify and meet their core funding needs as new and emerging pressures are identified to ensure that Yukoners have access to the services that they require. As part of the first supplementary budget, we are providing an increase of \$14.9 million over the 2023-24 main estimates to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. This additional funding will respond to funding needs identified by the Yukon Hospital Corporation for the 2022-23 fiscal year due to unanticipated costs, partially a result of global shortages of health care providers. This additional funding will also address growth in hospital services and also surgical services this year. Government of Yukon is also addressing growth and increased spending requirements to deliver legislative programs through Insured Health Services. The increase of \$9.8 million will be used to ensure that a healthy and sustainable insured health system contributes to the overall health of the territory's population. This includes additional funding for areas such as hospital claims, physician claims, and pharmacare.

As the Yukon's population continues to age and to grow, we are experiencing increased costs within hospital claims. \$6 million of the \$9.8 million will go toward hospital claims to ensure that Yukoners can access necessary and timely care provided by specialists outside of the territory. This \$9.8 million also includes \$2 million to address costs associated with administering our pharmaceutical programs to provide access to medications for Yukoners.

As part of last year's *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* and as part of budget 2023-24, we have provided additional funding for physician claims to reflect changes negotiated as part of the memorandum of understanding with the Yukon Medical Association.

In this supplementary budget, the overall request for Insured Health Services includes \$1.85 million for physician claims to meet rising growth. We will continue to work with our health system partners to respond to rising costs, ensuring that our health care providers are supported and Yukoners have access to the care that they require to lead healthy and happy lives.

Additionally, these supplementary estimates include \$2.5 million for initiatives under the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. This funding is spread across several departments, as the Women and Gender Equity Directorate makes up \$1.9 million of this increase, which is 100-percent recoverable by the Government of Canada.

Ensuring we address Yukon's substance use health emergency remains a top priority, \$1.3 million in the supplementary estimates will go directly toward work included in the substance use health emergency strategy. This work is also supported by \$645,000 for the supervised consumption site, which will add 3.5 additional FTEs to the roster, which will help extend the opening hours at the site.

Finally, the bill includes proposed increases in the Department of Health and Social Services of \$727,000 for the Cornerstone supported independent living facility, \$200,000 for increases to Yukon seniors income supplement, and \$230,000 for increases to the pioneer utility grant, which assists Yukon seniors with the cost of heating their homes, regardless of whether they own or rent.

Moving on from increases within the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will also see a notable increase in spending. This is largely a result of the \$25 million in increases due to the abandonment of Minto mine. This funding allows the Yukon government to undertake water management and treatment activities at the site as we work closely with the Selkirk First Nation on the planning for early reclamation and closure.

As a regulator, the Yukon government's focus has been on ensuring that the environment is protected at the mine site. The Yukon government currently holds \$75.2 million in financial security for the site. Further work is underway to determine how it will be applied to the expenditures incurred by government. In the meantime, we will continue to work in coordination with the Selkirk First Nation to do what is necessary to ensure environmental protection in the best interest of Yukoners.

A further \$6 million in the department's supplementary budget will go toward transfer payment agreements and contract commitments under various good energy projects — 75 percent or \$4.5 million of this amount is recoverable from the federal government. These projects cover a range of energy-efficiency initiatives and support the government's contributions and commitments under *Our Clean Future*.

Another very visible and required increase as part of these estimates can be found in the Department of Community Services. This department will see a \$19.6-million increase as part of its budget to address direct wildfire costs. This summer has been one of the worst fire seasons on record across the country. In Yukon, while the level of damage and destruction was not as high as in other jurisdictions, we remained on high alert in terms of mitigation, evacuation, and suppression activities to keep residents safe.

We have seen that all levels of government need to be involved to ensure effective responses, which requires adequate funding to implement. With the Yukon's climate continuing to change, we may find that our fire seasons continue to be more severe and require additional resources. In keeping with environmental and climate-related expenses, we are also proposing a \$1.1-million increase to the Department of Highways and Public Works budget for emergency washout and flood relief efforts.

Before I move on to O&M, I want to quickly draw attention to a few other items included in the first supplementary estimates. In the Department of Education, we are proposing a \$763,000 increase for enhanced French first language programming in Dawson City through the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon as well as \$927,000 for other French language programs, which is 100-percent recoverable.

We will also see \$1 million added to the Department of Economic Development's budget to create a temporary assistance program for Yukon landlords to support a stable supply of rental units.

Finally, within the Executive Council Office, we are proposing several smaller but no less important increases. Approximately \$1.4 million will provide funding to support multiple reconciliation commitments with Yukon First Nation governments. This includes \$1 million to support consultation and engagement, bilateral negotiations, and implementation of agreements. It also includes \$330,000 for the Council of Yukon First Nations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*.

With these outlined changes to O&M expenses, there are also several notable changes to recoveries, which I have not yet mentioned.

As with expenses, the most significant changes to O&M recoveries are within the Department of Health and Social Services. \$7.3 million is included as new recoveries as part of an agreement with the federal government that will see funding directed toward the Yukon substance use health emergency strategy and the supervised consumption site.

The Yukon government will also receive \$3.2 million as recoverable funding under the federal proof of vaccination fund for the development of the territory's proof of vaccination credential system.

We also see \$3.3 million in federal recoveries for carry-over amounts from the 2022-23 territorial health investment fund agreement, or THIF for short.

Finally, the Department of Community Services will see \$2.1 million in recoverable funding as part of Wildland Fire Management for the export of staff who were dispatched to help in other jurisdictions.

I am also pleased to say that many of the expenses that I have covered in the last few minutes are able to be absorbed by the Government of Yukon's \$50-million contingency fund. As part of the first supplementary estimates, we are proposing to exhaust the fund to cover unanticipated expenses for the fiscal year. The breakdown of initiatives covered by the fund account for nearly \$50 million, and they are as follows: \$25 million to go toward Faro mine maintenance; \$19.6 million to be used for wildland fire expenses; \$1.2 million will cover costs for evacuees related to wildfires in the territory; \$1.1 million is included in the fund for emergency washouts and flood relief efforts; and \$1.9 million will be directed toward the substance use health emergency response.

I will now speak to changes in capital as part of the bill. We evaluate capital budgets on an ongoing basis to determine if and when and where we can improve the efficiency of capital spending in alignment with the territory's capital infrastructure

needs. These adjustments are reflected periodically in the latest iteration of the five-year capital plan.

The supplementary estimates also provide a chance to respond to new and emerging opportunities. As part of these revisions, on a gross basis, we are not proposing any increases on capital spending; on an individual basis, however, we are making necessary adjustments to several projects. Most notably, we are including \$21.4 million for the Skagway marine service platform. We are currently engaged with the Municipality of Skagway on the construction of an ore export terminal for Yukon mining companies as part of the municipality's port redevelopment project. This is an important project to secure long-term tidewater access for the Yukon's mineral industry. It also helps to promote Yukon's position as a significant jurisdiction contributing to Canada's supply chain security and also green energy targets, critical minerals goals, and so much more.

As a result of this funding opportunity, the Government of Yukon has identified other projects that may be progressing at varying stages of development to accommodate this project without any gross changes to the capital program. The first supplementary estimates include a reduction across several departments that is reflective of uptake to various programs, updated timelines, and progress on various capital projects.

There are also additional full-time-equivalent positions as part of the supplementary estimates; 69.5 FTEs are proposed as part of this bill, which will help meet government's commitments in several areas. Forty FTEs are included as a reflection of a commitment announced in August toward building a strong, resilient future by investing in students' academics, wellness, and cultural needs and beliefs in prioritizing the mental wellness and well-being of school-aged Yukoners across the territory. As part of that commitment and the ongoing work to reimagine inclusive and special education, the Government of Yukon is investing significantly in student well-being and learning. This includes the addition of 81 new full-time student support positions over the next three years. These new positions will include school wellness counsellors, education assistants, and learning assistance teachers who will be hired from 2023 to 2026. In addition, three FTEs are included for enhanced French first language programs in Dawson City.

We are also proposing to increase six FTEs as part of the Yukon substance use health emergency strategy, as well as 3.5 FTEs in assisting in managing the supervised consumption site and two FTEs as part of the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*.

Lastly, 13.7 FTEs will support the implementation of the bilateral *Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement*. The bilateral nature agreement establishes the framework for the protection, conservation, and recovery of biodiversity, habitat, and species at risk in Yukon.

I am pleased to report that these supplementary estimates include an increase in revenues of \$18.7 million, mostly from increases in grants and transfers from the Government of Canada. The jump in revenues includes an increase of \$15 million, which represents the Yukon's share of an

agreement with Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to support affordable housing and related infrastructure in the Yukon.

This is the second instalment of a \$30-million grant announced by the Government of Canada in their 2022 budget. The Government of Yukon received the first \$15 million in 2022-23. It also includes \$2.3 million added to the Canada health transfer to address critical needs in hospitals in the north. Revenues from personal income are also expected to go up by \$3.2 million because of higher wages built into the collective agreement with the Yukon Employees' Union. Finally, taxes from tobacco have decreased by \$1.8 million to reflect decreasing rates of tobacco use.

Finally, Madam Chair, I am proud to say that we have released an interim fiscal and economic update to coincide with the 2023-24 first supplementary estimates. I think it took some people in the media by surprise. I'm not sure why. Overall, it shows that the Yukon's economy remains healthy three-quarters of the way through 2023. Tourists have returned in numbers not seen before the pandemic, and there are also strong opportunities for employment as demand for workers remains strong.

Seeing as I am running out of time, I will leave it at that for now, and I will check through my notes to make sure that if there is any other extremely important information pertinent to this conversation, I will include it in my first response from members opposite.

I want to thank you, Madam Chair, for the time today.

Mr. Cathers: I would note that I will be relatively short in my remarks and questions here in general debate since I have already spoken to this at second reading and due to the fact that, unlike in recent years with the current government, we do see most departments having appropriations in the budget bill, so we will ask questions regarding those departments and corporations at the time when they appear here instead of having to address them in general debate.

I would just note, in response to the Finance minister's comments during his speech, a couple of corrections. One, he made reference to roughly \$20 million in Faro mine maintenance from the contingency fund. I believe he meant to refer to the Minto mine in that situation. The second correction is related to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. I would remind the minister that, although he referred to those costs as — quote: "unanticipated costs". As I noted at second reading, the Minister of Health and Social Services acknowledged, after repeated questions from me during the spring on April 6, that some of the Yukon Hospital Corporation's core budget requests for the 2023-24 fiscal year — quote: "... had not yet been approved by Management Board." That is found in Hansard on page 3493 from April 6 of this year.

Again, as I noted earlier in debate, considering that we knew, as we heard from the CEO of the Hospital Corporation, that their core funding needs for the previous fiscal year were \$103.5 million, as he told this House on November 22, 2022, it was simply not plausible that the hospital would need \$10 million less for the current fiscal year, which, of course, is what is found on page 13-4 of the main estimates for this

current fiscal year, which allocates \$93.6 million for Yukon hospital services.

Again, just a correction for the Finance minister — that request would have come in prior to the start of the current fiscal year and shouldn't be characterized as unanticipated costs, but we are pleased to see that the hospital is receiving that \$14.9 million in necessary core funding as well as amounts to address pension solvency, which, of course, meets the obligations of the federal regulator.

I would note, as well — just to briefly recap my remarks from second reading — that we continue to be concerned about the trajectory of spending with the Liberal government continuing to take the territory further into the red with net debt, as well as to see that the annual surplus for the current fiscal year has declined significantly. The operation and maintenance spending has increased by \$132.7 million. According to the information in the interim fiscal and economic update provided by government, that increase of \$132.7 million brings it to \$1.59 billion in O&M spending for the current fiscal year — quote: "... reflecting a 9.1 per cent increase from Budget 2023-24." So, that is quite a significant increase from the spring, Madam Chair, since it's not just an increase over the previous fiscal year, but again, as stated in the government's own document, it's a 9.1-percent increase from budget 2023-24.

We are concerned by the trajectory in spending. As I noted earlier at second reading, we are also concerned that, while we see some spending on areas that we regard as either wasteful for a very low priority for Yukoners — one of the famous examples being the ripping up and repaving of the parking lot outside this building at a cost of \$2.7 million and the infamous digital signs over the highways that are so unpopular with many Yukoners — we also see other areas that are neglected. That includes the lack of funding for addictions treatment. This government, some 20-plus months after declaring a substance use emergency, is only now finally starting to allocate increased resources for addictions treatment. We see a continued lack of funding for the RCMP. The money has not grown to keep up even with the growth of the Yukon population, not to mention the growth of organized crime and drug dealing connected with the illegal drug trade, which we have heard from the RCMP — in an update that they provided last summer, they indicated that organized crime encompassed at least 250 individuals and five networks, both in and out of the territory. Of course, Madam Chair, that is directly connected to the impact that we see in terms of opioid use and fatalities due to opioid use — where the Yukon sadly has the worst rate of fatalities in the entire country.

As noted on previous occasions, but it does need to be emphasized, we have also heard specific requests from governments in rural Yukon for increased police resources in their communities. That includes the request made both by the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and the Village of Mayo for increased police resources in their area. They have yet to see that increase, Madam Chair, and the request made by the Municipality of Watson Lake for increased resources there, and again, they have yet to see that increase.

We have also seen, unfortunately, a decline in certain areas of highway maintenance as well as the capital maintenance on those roads. That has been both evident in dealing with the delay in responding to snowfall incidents, such as the one we saw recently, and the fact that we continue to hear concerns from Yukoners about the state of Yukon highways, whether it be the Klondike Highway or the Dempster Highway or roads such as Takhini River Road — where, again, I continue to hear from constituents on a regular basis about the state of that road, especially after a heavy precipitation event. I understand that there was an incident last week where a horse trailer spun out on the one large hill that could have resulted in a much worse outcome, and as well, I have just received another photo from constituents of the poor condition of that road, which is home to hundreds of Yukon families — so, again, just a few of the many examples of where there are real needs and priorities of Yukoners that are not being addressed by this Liberal government despite the record spending that they are engaging in.

Of course, my colleague the Member for Kluane brought the issue of the Liberal government's insistence on shutting down garbage transfer stations in rural Yukon to the House again. It is disappointing how consistently, despite repeated calls from rural Yukon to keep those garbage transfer stations open, those pleas fall on deaf ears with this Liberal government, and the Minister of Community Services keeps trying to blame it on the Association of Yukon Communities — or now today, he blamed his predecessor, when there is a much simpler answer, which is simply listening to the requests of Yukoners and keeping those basic services open for rural Yukoners.

And I would be remiss if I didn't note, as well — as I mentioned at second reading — that we have seen within the last year the very serious situation of rural health centres being closed due to lack of staff. By the Minister of Health and Social Services' own admission, the rural nursing vacancies reached almost 50 percent. As I noted at second reading, while we are pleased that the government this year did finally commit to developing a health human resources strategy — for which we had been championing the need for years — it is unfortunate that it is not until rural nursing vacancies reached that crisis level of almost 50-percent vacancy before the government finally saw the need to act and to listen to health professionals and to ourselves on behalf of Yukoners recognizing that need. So, Madam Chair, those are just a few of many areas.

In the interest of time, I will keep the list short for the moment, but I do have some specific questions for the minister related to the budget that I hope he can provide information on. The Minister of Finance has, on previous occasions, often urged us to refer to the Public Accounts for any given year to understand the government's current long-term debt situation as well as borrowing costs. The Public Accounts, though, for those who are not familiar, are released about 19 months after the end of a fiscal year, so they reflect a point in time, and by the point when this Legislative Assembly sees that information, that point in time is over a year and a half past.

Rising interest rates and the spikes from both the Bank of Canada and lending institutions have created serious challenges

for people, for individuals, for businesses, as well as for governments both in Canada and beyond. It is relevant for people to understand what is happening at the current point in time, not just a year and a half ago.

My two questions for the minister relate to, first of all, a previous Sitting where he indicated that the government is regularly engaging in short-term borrowing through departments to cover payroll costs. Can the minister indicate what the current amount of those borrowings has been to date for the fiscal year and what is anticipated for the remainder of the fiscal year, as well as the interest charges associated with that?

Secondly, can the minister indicate what the government's current long-term debt situation is? So, not long-term debt from over a year and a half ago — but what is the current long-term debt position, as well as how much in interest charges is the government expecting to pay for that debt this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the member opposite correcting the record in my reference to Faro. So, sorry to Hansard — I meant to say "Minto". If you heard me say "Faro" anywhere, replace that with "Minto". I appreciate that from the member opposite.

I don't think I misspoke when it comes to the Yukon Hospital Corporation funding. I know that the member opposite has a particular vent on this particular issue and it has been debated by me and also the minister responsible for a long time. Again, in preparing for today, we prepare with all agencies to make sure that what I am saying is accurate. I don't think I misspoke when it came to the Yukon Hospital Corporation — definitely did when I said Faro, though, that's for sure.

I will also point out that, in 2023-24, we are providing \$108.5 million in operation funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation, which is an increase of 20 percent over last year. This funding includes \$93.6 million allocated in the 2023-24 main estimates and an additional \$14.9 million, which I spoke about in this supplementary estimate, to address those emerging pressures in our health care system. This funding increase has supported the hospital core funding needs as well as the development of new programs and services.

Between 2017-18 to now — 2023-24 — operating funding has increased from \$70.6 million to \$108.5 million, which is an increase of 54 percent. We are also providing \$12.26 million in capital funding in 2023-24, as identified in the main estimates, which will help to ensure that the Hospital Corporation has necessary infrastructure in place to care for Yukoners.

A couple more statistics for the members — we are also allocating \$2.3 million to the Hospital Corporation through the supplementary estimates to support the pension solvency payment required under the federal regulations. This funding will promote a smooth transition when the new health authority is established by ensuring that the hospital pensions are adequately funded.

Also, we have a \$2.9-million increase from the mains now to implement the 1Health programming. This is a modernized health information system that will very much improve care across the Yukon by enabling timely and secure access to medical records.

Madam Chair, we have had this conversation before with the member opposite about Public Accounts. Public Accounts are a great encapsulation of the final numbers as they get completely scrutinized — rightfully so — with the Office of the Auditor General. They represent a comprehensive plan when it comes to the spending of what we said we were going to spend to where the final numbers come out. I don't recall the Yukon Party providing spoiler alerts for their Public Accounts, so I will not do that either. I will respect the process that is in place when it comes to the finalization of those numbers.

We talked a bit here about net debt. The 2022-23 main estimates projected \$374.8 million in net debt on a non-consolidated best basis. The *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* forecast revised that to \$423.8 million and the change in that net debt is based upon a few factors — one being the \$105.9-million increase to the net O&M spending, which we are debating on the floor of the Legislative Assembly and through the departments as they appear here in Committee of the Whole, a \$5.8-million increase in net capital spending, and a \$6-million increase related to accounting adjustments. These impacts were partially offset by an \$18.7-million increase in revenues and the use of the \$50-million contingency fund.

Net debt — I feel obligated to explain — is measured by a government's ability to pay all its liabilities if they were due immediately. This is why it's considered a debt — a ratio — because that is something that is not going to happen. The majority of the net debt is for long-term liabilities that will not materialize all at once — for example, severance entitlements. When we are looking at Yukon's net-debt-to-GDP ratio — you know, this anchor — the territory is among the lowest in the country. The higher the ratio, the longer it will take for a government to return to a net financial asset position.

In Yukon, our forecast net-debt-to-GDP ratio for the 2022-23 fiscal year is 7.7 percent, and for 2023-24, it is 9.6 percent. The 2023-24 forecast is up from the budget figures of 8.5 percent, with an increase due to higher than anticipated net debt for 2023-24 and also a downward revision of the forecast in nominal GDP for 2023. I mentioned that a bit in my opening comments and that was related to the closure of Minto mine in May.

Even with the increase in the current net-debt-to-GDP ratio for 2023-24, it still compares extremely favourably, compared to our peers right across the country, and is significantly — significantly — lower than many jurisdictions. We will continue to actively monitor and review our financial position, as it relates to the management of government operations, and will do that in a timely fashion. This allows us to plan ahead and to ensure sustainable and effective capital spending to make sure that we are meeting our infrastructure needs, as we did during the pandemic. You know, that was an extremely important time for government to take care — working with the community, working with the business partners, and making sure that we stayed open as much as possible, but knowing full well that a business that is being asked to be open at 50 percent needs some financial help from its government — and the taxpayer dollars that we are on the till of.

I still have some more things to say about borrowing and a little bit more on the investments that we have done in the Yukon — spending on roads, bridges, schools, health facilities — to grow our economy and to provide the vital public services, but I will leave it at that for now, and then we can switch over to the second part of that conversation — borrowing — when I get to respond to the member opposite again.

Mr. Cathers: Again, I do have to correct the Minister of Finance regarding the issue of hospital funding. As I noted in the spring, it simply is not plausible that the hospital's core O&M funding needs were going to drop by \$10 million compared to the last fiscal year, and the chronic underfunding by the Liberal government during its time in office of our hospital's needs continues to be a concern for me, and they can be assured that I will continue to raise it until I don't need to raise that issue.

I would also remind the Minister of Finance, in citing some of the numbers regarding funding to the Hospital Corporation, that, at times, he was mixing O&M and capital, and in going back a number of years in time, he glossed over the fact that the new emergency department opened after that point in time that he referred to. There were very large O&M costs associated with opening that new facility, but I won't spend a lot more time on that here today. We have covered it in detail in previous Sittings, and we will return to it as necessary.

I am pleased that the \$14.9 million in funding that the hospital had requested for their core funding has been provided and look forward to having the opportunity to ask witnesses in the Hospital Corporation about their current needs when they next appear in this Assembly, which I hope will be this fall.

With regard to the issue of the Public Accounts and long-term debt and borrowing costs, what the Finance minister is dancing away from is the fact that the situation has changed dramatically in Canada, compared to previous decades. We are dealing with the highest interest rates that we have faced in many decades here in this country, and, therefore, the costs associated with both short-term borrowing and long-term debt directly become an increasingly relevant budget consideration that, if — the government has the legal ability to share that information with members, based on its most current understanding, at any point in time, Madam Chair. They can legally get away with not providing us a more recent update than one from over a year and a half ago, but that is not in keeping with transparency for the public.

I would urge the Minister of Finance to talk to the Premier and his colleagues about this. I am sure I am not going to get a different answer this afternoon, but I would urge the government to provide it, as quickly as possible, because it is very relevant information from a budgeting perspective on what the short-term borrowing is looking like for the current fiscal year, as well as the interest costs that are expected to be associated with short-term borrowing to cover payroll and other matters, and secondly, what the current long-term debt is — not the long-term debt from over a year and a half ago — and how much the interest charges on that are expected to cost this fiscal year.

I am guessing that I am not going to get a different answer from the Minister of Finance here this afternoon on that, but I would encourage him to talk to his colleagues and to come back with that information, instead of choosing not to share it with Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, I will just agree to disagree with the member opposite as far as openness and transparency, as the member opposite sits out of government, asking us to do something that they would never contemplate and then saying that it is us being less transparent. It's an interesting way of presenting today, but I am just not going to take that bait. I'm going to go back into the concepts.

We still hear from the member opposite a blending-in here of net debt compared to debt borrowing, or debt, and there should be no confusion between the two. Our current borrowing limit — if we were to borrow — is \$800 million. That is set by regulations under the *Yukon Act*, which is federal legislation. The limit was increased by the Government of Canada in September 2020 from \$400 million to \$800 million. At that time, the member opposite was very concerned about that increase, yet their government increased it several times in the past.

The bulk of the current total external debt is \$216.4 million, as reported in the 2021-22 Public Accounts, and that's held by — these should not be any surprise to the member opposite, because almost every one of these debts are from the Yukon Party borrowing back in the past before our government — the Yukon Development Corporation, \$143.4 million; Yukon Hospital Corporation, \$22.6 million; Yukon Housing Corporation, \$1.3 million; and also, the university of \$1 million. Current borrowing of \$216.4 million — which is just over 27 percent of the limit — leaves \$583.6 million of the available borrowing limit authorized by the federal government, which demonstrates adequate borrowing room for the near future.

Again, we do recognize that, if there was an opportunity to invest certain monies for certain projects working on energy futures, working on a lot of different files, as we modernize the government and come into compliance and continue to create a modern government, there will be times in the future where we will have to consider a long-term debt, but to alleviate some of those concerns, you are not going to see any of those right now. We would be debating them in this budget if we had any of those considerations currently.

We do borrow periodically; that is for sure, and most of the debt that we have on our books right now is from the Yukon Party. We do have financial instruments that provide lines of credit, for example, and I don't mind getting into some of those conversations with the member opposite. We can talk about that, but, again, the member opposite continues, for all these debates, to push an agenda or push a theme that might not necessarily be completely accurate, including starting with, when the borrowing limit went up to \$800 million, that right away, we were going to rush to increasing that debt, which did not come to fruition.

I think I will just leave it at that unless the member opposite has any specific questions. We could go back and forth about

our differences of opinion on certain things, which is fine, but I will keep it specifically to some of the questions asked and will get back to the member opposite with any other information that I missed today, if it is information that is in the public domain already.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*?

Seeing none, we will proceed to departmental debate.

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, I would like to begin by welcoming Deputy Minister Lauren Haney — this is her first time in the Assembly — and also Assistant Deputy Minister Patricia Randell from Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships. It is not her first time in the Assembly, but it is her first time here with Energy, Mines and Resources. So, welcome to them.

Just a few opening remarks on the budget and then looking forward to getting into questions and answers. Overall, there is an increase of just over \$33 million to the operation and maintenance budget, bringing 2023-24 budget from \$82 million to \$115.4 million for Energy, Mines and Resources. This increase is primarily due to the changes in our Mineral Resources and Geoscience Services division, and really, this is all about Minto mine — roughly \$25 million for reclamation and closure of Minto mine.

Under our main divisions, all of them have had increases due to the collective agreement. I won't list those off, but I will mention a couple of other things. Under Mineral Resources, I said \$25 million for Minto. There are also increases due to the collective agreement. Under our Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, there is an increase of about \$6.5 million and this is largely due to the — I am still going to call it the "low carbon fund", but it is a low carbon economy leadership fund, and the \$6 million that is in here is 75-percent recoverable from Canada.

There is no change to our capital budget, but overall, I just want to say that there is a significant role that the department continues to take in leading actions under *Our Clean Future* and ensuring ongoing health, safety, and environmental protection at the Minto mine.

I just want to give a shout out to the teams of various branches at Energy, Mines and Resources: Assessment and Abandoned Mines, Compliance Monitoring and Inspections, our Energy branch, forestry branch, geothermal, the Land Management branch, planning, our minerals group, Yukon Geological Survey, and the small and mighty corporate group which includes IT, communications, Human Resources, policy, and finance. Overall, the department has been doing great work over the summer. I commend them for their work, and I look forward to answering questions of the members opposite.

Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, I would like to welcome the officials here today and thank them for the briefing they provided on Friday to my colleague the Member for Lake Laberge and staff from our office. I was out of the territory for personal reasons and unable to attend, but I did receive the notes and the notes that were taken. We will be touching on some of the issues with respect to the supplementary budget, as well as looking for updates on other topics as we move throughout debate on Energy, Mines and Resources.

I just wanted to ask the minister about a couple of constituency-specific questions — one for myself and one for the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. I will ask the one for my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin first, and that is with respect to the Lone Tree development area regulation. There was an OIC made effective on September 7, 2023. This is a subdivision near the community of Teslin, on the lake side of the Alaska Highway. I am just curious if the minister is able to, at this time, give us an update on timelines. I know that the roadwork and I believe the survey has been completed on those lots. I am just curious about the timelines for those lots going out to some sort of public process and what price has been set for those lots.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We did work in partnership with the Teslin Tlingit Council to create zoning for the Lone Tree residential development near Teslin. It is to provide, I think, roughly 40 new residential lots. I am just checking in with the department on the timeline. The price is generally set. I think we are bound by either the market price or the price of development, so I will check to see which one of those it is. We still have to do the subdivision next. I am just getting a note that we think it will be early next year for the lot sales, so the subdivision is the next step in that process.

Mr. Kent: If my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin has any further questions, I will follow up with the minister or have him follow up directly with the minister on the timelines and hopefully we will be able to get a response as to whether the price is to be set at market or development costs or some sort of a mixture, if that's possible.

I just have one other quick constituency question. This one is from my constituency of Copperbelt South as well as the minister's constituency of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. This is with respect to the Golden Horn area development regulations. The minister will recall that, in a previous Sitting, we brought forward a petition from a number of residents with respect to the minimum lot size. I know that there was a favourable response from the minister. The department hosted an open house at the Golden Horn fire hall and presented some of the information around it. I was able to attend. I appreciated

that, and the officials did a great job at that open house, but I am just curious if the minister could give us a status update of where this is at. I know that there is some affected First Nation engagement that has to take place — or perhaps has already taken place — so I am just looking for a status update from the minister on that particular file.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We did go out and talk with the folks at Golden Horn. This was about checking in with them about their local area plan because, under it, the subdivisions are only supposed to get as small as, I believe, three hectares. There was a question about whether they should go to a two-hectare model. We went out and had a public meeting. We also did a survey and it came back exactly split, so half of the respondents said to keep it at three and half of the respondents said to make the change. I think we are going to reach out again because we felt it didn't give us a clear direction. I actually just had a meeting this morning, talking it over. I will make sure to include the member opposite, but I think the general plan will be to just have a community meeting, let them know that this is exactly what we heard, and then come with a game plan about how we should proceed. We might look to check back in again with folks and just get our survey down to one simple question and just see whether or not we can get clarity because it was exactly 50/50. That left us in a position that we didn't yet want to proceed without checking in further with the neighbours.

Mr. Kent: On that specific consultation, normally there is a "what we heard" document produced. Has that been produced in this specific case?

Then there's a committee. Obviously, the committee did a lot of the leg work or all of the leg work in getting the petition signed and has been doing the back-and-forth with the officials in the department. I am just curious if there have been any communications with members of the committee that advanced this proposal on behalf of residents there.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I saw a draft of the "what we heard" document. I saw that the results were split completely. I reached back to the department and said that we would need to come up with a strategy to follow up with the folks who brought forward the petition and the residents. I have not reached back out to people yet. We were just in the process of releasing the document — and we will get it out to people — but I asked the department to come up with a strategy about how to follow up given that there was such a split in it. I will check in to see whether there has been conversation with the residents and the committee about whether they had gotten a peek at what those numbers were. But this may be coming as news to the committee members, and we are just developing how to respond and get that information into everybody's hands. I want to say thanks to everybody that provided their feedback, but because it was so divided, I asked that we find another ability to check in with the neighbours.

Mr. Kent: I, too, will share our exchange here this afternoon with members of the committee and I am sure that they will reach out to their department contacts going forward. It's my understanding that there hasn't been very much communication back and forth since that public meeting and the minister explained the circumstances around it here today.

I did want to dig in on some mining-related issues now as well. I am able to find the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board annual report for 2021 online. Can the minister let us know if that is the most recent annual report, or is there a 2022 annual report that perhaps I am looking for in the wrong spot or can't find online?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just check in with the member opposite to be sure that I'm getting this right. The last one that I think I tabled here in the Assembly — or that was published, anyway — was 2021-22. I do have a draft of the 2022-23 report. We were lining up our tabling for this session, so I had anticipated tabling it at some point during the session here. I will just check to make sure that this is the report that he is asking about.

Mr. Kent: Yes, the most recent one that I can find is the 2021 annual report. It looks like it's largely based on the recommendations of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. There were about 10 recommendations on there, so I guess I have a question for the minister as well. Previously, the practice was to table the report in the Spring Sitting for the previous year. His predecessor went away from that normal practice, so I'm curious if the minister is contemplating getting it back to that sort of a schedule where the previous year's report is tabled in the Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly. So, that would mean that in this past spring, we would have seen the 2022 report tabled then.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will have to look back to see when the Minerals Advisory Board got me the draft of their report. When I get the report, I will do my best to table it. My recollection is that this spring we were focusing as a board on the situation around Minto. That took a lot of the board's time, in terms of providing advice, so I will check on what the timing is of it, but I think that — I am happy to try to table reports as they are ready. If the fault is with me, I will make sure to correct it.

Mr. Kent: Yes, I look forward to — I think that the minister committed to letting us know when he received that 2022 report from the Minerals Advisory Board, and then, if there is an opportunity, as well — perhaps he doesn't know here today, but we would be interested to see why his predecessor abandoned that previous practice, if there was some sort of a reason, or if YMAB was just late getting the reports in. Again, they were normally tabled in the Legislature in the Spring Sitting of the Assembly. I will look forward to getting those responses from the minister.

I just have a couple of quick questions now with respect to Gladiator Metals. The minister would be aware of the company that is currently conducting class 1 exploration work on their Cowley Park property, which I believe is located in the minister's riding and is in close proximity to constituents of mine, as well, particularly in Mary Lake and Cowley Creek. I know that I sent the minister a letter with respect to this, and he did respond to me, so I thank him for that, but I just wanted to get some of those issues on the record here in the Assembly today.

I am just curious if the minister can tell Yukoners on the floor of the Assembly here today, with respect to inspection

reports for class 1 activity — there was a specific inspection report for Gladiator on their Cowley Park that went public through social media. That sort of prompted me to write the minister to see if there was an opportunity for him to publish class 1 inspection reports, so perhaps I will give him an opportunity to answer that question. Is that an option, that class 1 inspection reports and schedules be published online — similar, I guess, to what the Water Board does with their *Waterline*?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This will be for all Yukoners but in particular for the Member for Copperbelt South's constituents. We wrote back — I'm trying to recall whether I shared with others who wrote to me — but class 1 inspection reports are available from the mining recorder's office upon request. In this case, it would be the Whitehorse mining recorder's office.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Kent: I guess, in the media and obviously in reports with respect to Gladiator Metals, there were some charges filed, and a fine was levied against the company. The company has paid it, but since that time, they have undertaken class 1 activities on their Cowley Park claims.

So, I am just curious if the minister can tell us or share with us if there have been any further inspections done since the class 1 activity has restarted on those Cowley Park claims — and the results of those inspections, if he is able to share them.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am informed that we have inspectors going out more than once a week and taking a look. They write up a report roughly once a month based on that, but they also will flag into the department if there are concerns that have been identified. I have not received any reports of those concerns to this date. Basically, there is nothing in front of me that gives me any indication of ongoing concerns or further concerns, and I am also advised that there is one mining inspector who has been tasked with taking the lead on this file so that there is some consistency across those inspections.

Mr. Kent: Again, last week, while I was away on personal business, I know that the NDP gave notice of a motion with respect to creating an act around notification on class 1 activities. I am just curious if the minister can answer: Is that something that would be covered, in this case, in the *Quartz Mining Act* or in the *Placer Mining Act* review, or would that be something that would require a stand-alone act?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We are currently redoing the entirety of the quartz and placer acts from the ground up, and the public will know about this because we have been out there engaging with them, but, in particular, it was agreed to under the devolution transfer agreement to rewrite successor legislation, which is all of our resource legislation, so we started with forestry. We are currently working on the quartz and placer acts and also have a table going on the lands legislation. All of this is looking to work in partnership with First Nation governments to develop a Yukon-made approach to mining in the territory. It will include, for example, classes of licences. It

will include how we make decisions, how we do compliance, how we plan security — all of that is part of it.

Mr. Kent: My understanding is that those types of issues identified in the NDP motion for a stand-alone act would be captured in the ongoing review of the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*. Obviously, I will have a few questions about the status of those reviews, but just to close the loop on the Gladiator Metals issue, it was last fall, I believe, that the Yukon government undertook a consultation on mining in the municipalities. It closed, I believe, in October of last year. A “what we heard” document was due to be produced. I was unable to find it prior to the Sitting online. I am just curious if the minister could give us an update on the status of that “what we heard” document or the status of the work with respect to mining in municipalities.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am just asking the department to check on the “what we heard” document and to track that down. I am not sure. I will have to look into that.

The next step that I think we are coming to is a framework on best practices for mining activities in our communities. I was expecting that framework to come in front of me sometime later this fall or early winter. I think we will have that framework ready by the end of 2023 and that will give us direction for mining activities within our Yukon communities.

Mr. Kent: So, I guess, you know, obviously, we are a year past the close of consultation, so I’m hoping that we can see some sort of “what we heard” document and plan for proceeding with respect to this work. The minister will have access to it as well on engageyukon.ca, which is where I found the information and, of course, I followed the consultation piece when it was underway as well.

I do want to ask some questions now about the Minto mine and the government’s role in reclamation and closure. Some of these questions will have been covered at the briefing, but I wanted to get the minister on the record here with respect to what’s happening.

The surety bond, which is held by Zurich — can the minister give us a sense of when we can expect the reimbursements to start on that? Obviously, there has already been an expenditure from the Government of Yukon on — sort of site care and maintenance. But I’m curious when the first reimbursement is expected from the surety bond with respect to the Minto property.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The \$75 million or so in security — roughly \$3 million of that was cash and \$72 million was a surety bond held by Zurich Capstone. We have been working with them to issue invoices. We issued our first invoice several weeks ago. I think the timing on that invoice was roughly a month, so we have a week or so left until that invoice is due. We are anticipating now that this is starting to flow that we will be invoicing more regularly — on a monthly basis is what is anticipated — and all of that is for work that we are doing toward reclamation and closure.

Mr. Kent: Can the minister tell us how much has been spent so far on the care and maintenance aspects? Obviously, water treatment is a big aspect of the work that has been underway so far, so I am just curious how much has been spent

so far. And will that amount for this care and maintenance be coming from the \$75 million in bonding that the company has?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The last numbers that I have for the total costs spent to date are \$8.8 million. Those numbers change daily, so I want to be a little bit careful. We are spending money. Just a reminder that we stepped in right away with the mine to make sure that we were protecting the environment the right way. We did quite a bit of work, considering how things had happened with Wolverine and where we wanted to get to differently with Minto.

Those first steps, as you come in — I think that the team was up and running within 24 hours or had some of the previous contractors back up and running within 24 hours — were really about making sure that we were doing water treatment and that we were going to make it through freshet well, which happened, so that is very good news.

Those initial steps, which some people would refer to as “care and maintenance”, are all also the same initial steps that you would take as part of your reclamation and closure plan. We have been very clear that, all along, we are using the security that is there to deal with reclamation and closure. That is the path that we are on at the moment. I will have to check, but you can say that the lion’s share of all costs to date have been around reclamation and closure and they are part of what went in on our first invoice. Of course, it went in not quite a month ago, and it was for a period of time prior to that, so I think it was for \$5.7 million — or in and around that number — for the first invoice.

The money spent to date, by and large, is on reclamation and closure, and it has really been doing several things: protecting the environment; making sure that we are reducing the liability of the mine site itself to drop the risk, and that’s really about water treatment primarily; supporting the Selkirk First Nation and their position, and I could talk about that if there are questions about that; and finally, trying to make sure that we are supportive of the ability for the mine to be sold. Again, that is working with the Selkirk First Nation on that front. At all times, our actions are consistent with the approved reclamation and closure plan.

Pardon me, Deputy Chair; I will just correct myself. I said “\$5.7 million” earlier. The number is \$5.46 million.

Mr. Kent: When the current owners left the property, as the minister mentioned, there was a quick response from the government. They put in place a contract with JDS Energy and Mining at the time. I know that the contract has now expired and there is a new contract in place with a different contractor. I am just wondering: Was that an invitational contract or was it a direct award?

I can’t find either the JDS or the new contract on the contract registry, so that’s why I’m asking the minister now. What are the terms of the new contract — how long is it for, and what is the value of that contract?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just going back for a moment to the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board, we received the print version of that in July of this year.

With respect to the contracts, we have been using direct award under the emergency provision of the procurement

policy, which is really about trying to make sure that the environment is protected. That is what we have been doing, so contracts to support this work include JDS Energy and Mining for interim water management of \$6.9 million. That contract, as the member opposite noted, is now completed. We have Boreal Engineering, which is contracted from September of this year through to post freshet. I think that the closing date is July. I will have to check on that date, but that's for \$11.6 million. We also have a contract for BQE Water for water treatment that is a little over \$1.9 million and Ensero Solutions for water monitoring at just under \$1.3 million. Those are the four contracts that I have information on right now.

Pardon me, Deputy Chair; the contract for Boreal goes to the end of May 2024.

Mr. Kent: The minister had mentioned \$72 million in a surety bond and \$3 million in cash, so that is \$75 million in total, but I know that was less than what was required. The company was short on reclamation. Can the minister just confirm the amount that they were short on the reclamation bond in place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When we first issued the new call for security for Minto, I think that the shortfall was \$18 million. However, as we worked with them during that period of time — so they were under a different level of inspection as we worked with them, because they didn't have the \$18 million at the time, but they worked to bring on more water treatment. So, what was happening was that they took steps — rather than furnishing dollars — to reduce the risk around closure and thus were bringing it down that way.

They also were paying in over time. So, I will have to ask the department to give me some analysis about where they thought the shortfall ended up, but it certainly was not \$18 million. I know that much. I know it was much, much less than that, but I will work to try to get some assessment of where it left off at the point when Minto closed.

Also, I should indicate to the House that, under the \$75 million that we have for the reclamation and closure, we have a reclamation plan in place, and we have been working to execute, based on that plan — sorry — the finances that we have against the plan that we have in place. There is still some uncertainty with it, but we have been taking significant steps toward that, and it is working to do the reclamation and closure with the dollars at hand. You know, there is still uncertainty out there, so I'm not able to say today that we know that is enough funds, but I do know that the team at EMR and the contractors working on it are looking to execute based on the resources that we have to reclaim.

Mr. Kent: That would have been my next question, with respect to what we were told at the briefing last week, which was the project execution plan, which I think the minister was just referring to. At the time, it said it was in process and it would lead to reclamation. I'm just wondering if the minister can give us an idea of when that project execution plan will be completed.

Then, we were also told at the briefing that the plan may be modified if there is a new owner. That is understandable, of course. I'm just curious if the minister can give us any update

on the receivership proceedings that are underway. Is there any sort of imminent deadlines that we should know about with respect to the receivership, or is that something that — or are there none that are pending with respect to the potential sale of the asset to a new owner?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There were a few questions in there. I will try to give as much information as I can, and if I have missed anything, the member could maybe just check in with me again.

First of all, with respect to PricewaterhouseCoopers, which is the receiver signed by the court for the Minto mine, there is a deadline of October 31 for binding bids to the receiver, so that's coming up at the end of the month.

With respect to the reclamation and closure plan, we are due to have our high-level plan to Zurich Capstone, the security bonding company, by November 30, and then we are to follow after that with a more detailed execution plan, which is about how the procurement will unfold, and that should be after that. I think it's early in 2024. I'm not exactly sure on the timing of that as of yet, but it will follow the high-level plan by November 30.

Mr. Kent: Just a final question about Minto — and obviously, we will be following some of the proceedings with respect to the sale and continue to ask questions about the bonding and the execution plan.

I am just curious about licences. Is there a water licence in place currently for the work that is being undertaken at Minto, and was that transferred from the company to the Yukon government when the Yukon government assumed control? What was the process with respect to the water licence for the Minto project?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, there is a water licence, and currently that water licence will have transferred to the receiver — that is my understanding — in this case, PricewaterhouseCoopers. When the government stepped in, we used the emergency provisions under the *Waters Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act* in order to operate the water treatment that way.

That's the authority that we are using to do this work to make sure we protect the environment.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify then with the minister — use the emergency procedures clause in the *Waters Act* for the water treatment when the Yukon government took over, but was there a water licence in place for that when the company was doing the water treatment? That is where I am just kind of trying to get a sense of where we are at — so I'm sorry if I misheard the minister when he was on his feet.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, when Minto was operating, they were operating under a water licence, which they had. For us, it was the emergency provisions — that is what I'm being told — under the *Waters Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act*.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify one more thing, Minto had a water licence in place, but when the government took over responsibility for the site, they needed to use emergency provisions. The water licence was not transferable from the company to the government.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That is correct.

Mr. Kent: Just while we are on the topic of licences, licensing, and permits — and this is with respect to the quartz mining and the hardrock properties — I just wanted to make sure that all necessary licences and permits were in place for all the operating hardrock mines in the territory at this time. If the minister is able to let me know, that would be great. Otherwise, I would accept that in a legislative return or he can come back with it.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As far as I am aware, the department has indicated to me that all quartz mining operations have valid licences — water licences and quartz mining licences.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that from the minister.

Just a quick question — and I know that the board is a federal board and it may or may not be the minister's responsibility, but the YESA board has a number of vacancies and individuals whose appointments are expiring. I know that the industry is concerned — industry people whom I have talked to are concerned about this. Currently, there is an acting chair in place. One of the executive committee members — their appointment is expiring soon. There is another vacancy, I think, just for the regular board members and another expiration coming. I am just wondering if the minister has any indication from the federal government on when they will be filling those YESA board appointments because, as far as I can tell, sort of by later on in this final quarter of the calendar year, they may not have quorum on the board for their operation. I am just curious if the minister is following this file and if he can give us any update from the federal government on when those appointments will be made.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The lead on the file for YESAA is the Premier and the Executive Council Office. That is where most of our conversations happen with the federal government about appointments. I, of course, have talked with the Chamber of Mines. They have talked to me about the issue and its importance. I, of course, have relayed that on to the Premier and I know that the Premier is in dialogue with Canada to find out. I don't have any updates for the House today regarding the vacancies, but I know that we are aware of them and working to support the federal government in reaching a decision.

Mr. Kent: I do have some other questions for the minister. The mining intensity targets — can the minister give us an update on where the process is at with establishing the mining intensity targets for greenhouse gas emissions for mining companies — if he is able to give us an update on where that work is at and when we can expect to see it completed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, the target is 45 percent by 2035. I just got some draft letters that are going out to the mining companies to make it formal, but we have been talking with them — and not just them, but to environmental groups — about this target for some time. That is still there and we will get those formal letters out.

The department is working on the next steps around that, which I think are threefold: Number 1 is getting the intensity baselines entrenched; number 2 is the programs and policies, which will assist mines in reducing their emissions; and number 3, working to put it under our *Clean Energy Act* as one of the

targets that we legislate so that we all work together toward this target over time.

Mr. Kent: I just wanted the minister to explain to us and to those who are interested: That 45 percent by 2035 is a reduction below what levels, and how is that going to be calculated as an intensity target for the mining industry?

I guess I just wanted to make sure that was across both hardrock and placer mines, or is that strictly for hardrock miners? As we know, many of the placer mines don't have a —

That said, I will just leave it to the minister to explain. Can he explain what that 45-percent number means and what that is going to mean — especially for the newer mines? Victoria Gold is our latest operating mine, using very new technology. Obviously, there is BMC, and perhaps Newmont's Coffee Project will come online and use the most recent and new technology. I am just curious exactly what — if the minister can just explain to us what that means — that 45-percent number — and how it will be calculated and where the baseline year is for that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, it is for both placer and hardrock. It's for mining.

An intensity target doesn't use a baseline year. What it uses is a unit of production. We look at mines in recent years to see the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that they use in order to produce a certain amount of ore. Then you use that as the baseline. That's the unit of production.

I think that there are things that the mines have done recently to reduce their emissions in the same way that they are trying to move off fossil fuels. Those are things that we can acknowledge and I think should make a difference in that move to reduce emissions.

So, even though, in *Our Clean Future*, we use 2010 as a baseline year, the way we can think of it is, if you had a mine that was operating going forward or, in the case of placer, you just group all of the mines together and you say that here is their fossil fuel use and this is the production that they have, and that gives you a ratio of production to fossil fuel use, and we are going to get that ratio down so that all mines — the sector — reduces its emissions by 45 percent.

Now, there are a couple of things that I will always say whenever we are talking about this. Because there are people who are concerned about intensity-based targets — and I acknowledge that. The first thing is that our other target is 2050, and that target is zero. It doesn't matter whether you are intensity-based or whether you are an absolute target, we are heading toward zero. What that means is that our goal is to transition off fossil fuels by 2050 or have our emissions go to zero by 2050 across all of the Yukon.

The other thing that we need to understand is that, twice in our past, I have seen when the Yukon has used a slowdown in mines to indicate that we have had a reduction in emissions. In neither case do I think it was actually correct. The first instance was that, originally under the Kyoto Protocol, the baseline year for Canada and the provinces and territories was 1990. In between 1990 and when we started signing on to the Kyoto Protocol — I think in 2006, maybe, when the Yukon signed the Montréal declaration — the Faro mine had closed, and I heard

our government of the day say that we met our emissions reductions targets, and I said, “Oh, no, we haven’t; really what has happened is that a mine has closed.” That is where you want to be careful in a place where mining can be — I remember stories of when the Faro mine would fire up and the territory would go on a brownout. When you have an industry that can, at times, have not much in emissions and at other times have a huge amount in emissions, you need a way to treat it so that you can deal with that swing. That’s why we use intensity based.

The other time that I saw when mining reductions led to a reduction in emissions, it wasn’t because of any action that we had. It wasn’t about shifting from fossil fuels. It was when we had the economic slowdown in 2015-16 and mining activity dropped, and then the government of the day suggested that it was a reduction in emissions, but I knew, as a climate scientist, that this was not the case. That is why we are using intensity-based targets.

If mining activity increases, say, for example, toward critical minerals, then we are able to establish that we have to, over time, reduce the amount of emissions per the amount of ore produced. The reason we have gone for 2035 is just to give some runway to get there with the industry. If mining slows down and we have less activity, it doesn’t count as though the Yukon has reduced emissions because of a mining slowdown. That is the reason you go for intensity-based targets.

I am happy to answer further questions, but the principle is pretty simple: It is the amount of emissions per amount of ore or product created.

Mr. Kent: Just a quick question for the minister: Can he just tell us what exactly the unit of production is? I am just trying to wrap my head around what that unit of production would be. I am assuming it will differ from placer to hardrock, and probably from project to project, but I just wanted a definition of that, if I could.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As I indicated a couple of responses ago, we are developing the baselines, but in principle, the basis of unit production for placer would be gold. For Victoria Gold, it would be gold, although their baseline may be different because of the type of mining being different. It will be the basic minerals that the mine is trying to create.

In the case of, let’s say, Minto, it could have been a copper concentrate ore, or you could also just work backward and get straight to the copper. Even though there are tonnes of ore produced, you could also know the grade of that ore and so that is the other way that you can do it. Again, the baselines are being worked out now by the department, working in conjunction with data from the mines, to get at that unit of production, but it will be minerals that will be the unit of production.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify, when you look at Victoria Gold’s Eagle Mine, the unit of production will be an ounce of gold, and that would be the same for the placer industry. I think that the minister mentioned that he was grouping the entire industry together on the placer side — so that unit of production for them is also an ounce of gold. Again, I am just looking for clarification.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is — just in the basic example that was given for placer, it would be ounces of gold across the placer industry on an annual basis or over some period of time so that there is a measure for how much gold is produced. If placer were twice as much, that would go up with the gold. If it was half as much, it would go down. Similar for Victoria Gold, it would be ounces of gold.

Again, the baselines can be different, because the “business as usual” starting place could be different. I’m not saying that they would be the same baselines — those things have to be worked out, based on the data from the sector or the mines — but that you use a unit of production. For mines, it’s typically the ore that they are mining.

Mr. Kent: I’m curious if the minister has any idea when the baseline work that he has been talking about will be completed. He also referenced earlier — when we just started our exchange on this particular topic — that there are going to be some letters going out soon. When can the companies and the individual placer miners expect those letters to arrive? I guess — he also mentioned that this would be legislated, so I’m curious, with the legislation, how will it — or what sort of enforcement, I guess, is the minister contemplating in the legislation? Will that be done through licensing or permitting, or will it be done through the environmental assessor? I’m just sort of trying to get a sense for what that is going to look like for everyone. I guess, sort of the final question — I do want to turn the floor over to my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King. I have, obviously, a number of other questions, but I will have to get back to them when EMR comes back to the floor.

The final question is: With respect to the 45-percent reduction — I understand, sort of, being able to apply that to one company, as they are in control, but how does that apply to the entire placer mining industry, when you have such a different scale of operators, from very small, you know, mom-and-pop operations to larger companies that have quite a bit of equipment? I’m just kind of curious how that will apply to the industry as a whole at that same level of 45 percent that they are going to apply to a single operator at a hardrock mine.

I will let the minister respond, but I thank the officials for coming, and then turn the floor over to my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Several things — first of all, the target that we are talking about is an industry-wide target. It is not about one specific mine or another. It is about working with the whole of the industry to get there, and just like every other thing under *Our Clean Future*, where we are working to reduce our emissions and transition off fossil fuels, we don’t have that one business is penalized if they don’t make this transition. We have been using other tools to assist us in this transition, and it is us — it is not just the mining industry; it is not just tourism and culture; it is not just an individual hotel — it is all of us. We are working to transition off fossil fuels, and it is not an easy thing to do, and we need all sectors to transition off fossil fuels, and so, that is why targets are so important.

Why do we legislate them? We legislate them so that we mandate future governments to honour these commitments that we are making today, because this is a serious thing. It is about

making sure that there is a law in place — the *Clean Energy Act*. I know that the members of the Yukon Party voted against it — I get that — but it is about having a target that we are obligated to work to achieve, and that is us and future governments. If a future government were here and said, “No, you know what, I don’t want to make that transition off fossil fuels; I am going to change that law,” they would be forced to come to the Legislative Assembly to do that. That is the stick. It is not toward the mining industry; it is toward us as a government, or this Assembly, that you would have to publicly stand up and say, “No, I don’t wish to try to achieve that target, and so, I am just going to try to change the law,” and it would force it into this Assembly.

This is not a new act — the *Clean Energy Act*. There is one in BC, there is one in Denmark, and there are several around the world, but it is a way of ensuring that government works hard to get there.

Now, there will be programs that we put in place that will incent mines to make this transition. The way that works is that those mines that make that effort will help to bring the emissions down for the sector and thus all of us as Yukoners, and, at the same time, they will get the advantage of that program and that support that we put out there. We have asked that mines report information to us and have made that part of their licensing requirements so that we can make sure we are able to share information across the board as we aggregate.

When I talk with the mining industry, I say to them that we need to make this transition off fossil fuels. How are we going to do this together? What I will say is that, in my short time as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — I guess, two and a half years in this role — I have seen the industry moving. There are mining companies that I talk to now that just have it as part of their strategic plan about how they are transitioning off fossil fuels. This is where we are trying to head as a country, and in my experience working with the industry, they know that we are making that transition together. In fact, as I will often state, there are certain minerals — not gold but copper, for example — that we will need in order to make this transition away from fossil fuels. That is why there are critical minerals that the Yukon has in many deposits.

The last question that I recall from the member opposite — and I thank him for all of his questions — was around timing. We have been talking to the industry for about 10 months now about this target. We certainly were talking about the target fairly clearly at Roundup. I think it has been well-communicated to our industry partners. The letters are sitting with me and will go out shortly. The baseline work is now underway, and I expect it some time next year — I hope early next year. I will always report back on how that’s happening. I think that was the question, but I always welcome the member opposite — if there are other questions that I’ve missed, I’m happy to try to answer them the next time I’m up.

Ms. White: Just to echo some of the thoughts of my colleague, it is great to have officials here. I do thank him for sharing his time. That hasn’t always been the way, and I really do appreciate it.

I am just going to jump right in. That’s the preamble.

I did actually table a motion last week. My colleague was right in asking about it, because it did talk about introducing a new bill that would (1) allow municipalities to ban mineral staking and exploration within their boundaries, and (2) require consultation with residents living within three kilometres prior to issuing any class of exploration permit. The minister did just talk about how the minerals legislation is currently being worked on. That, of course, really goes back to the successor resource legislation that was committed to more than three decades ago that no one really wanted to get into. Confidence and supply agreement — here we are — working on minerals legislation, which is really fantastic.

The minister might have a different idea of how we got there, but anyway, that’s my take on it.

When we talk about the minerals legislation and we talk about the motion I put in — the reason why the motion was put in, very clearly, is currently what is happening with Gladiator Metals right now. It’s also important to note that we have seen mining in municipalities in Dawson City with the Slinky project. Raven’s Ridge, actually — all the subsurface area has actually been staked. I know that sometimes they don’t know that residents know that they are on top of mining claims. When we talk about mining in municipalities, it really does affect people. We are seeing, right now, with my colleague’s neighbours out in the Mary Lake and Cowley Lake areas that they are being affected by an industrial process that’s happening really near to them. That is why that motion was put forward.

Can the minister just share with us a bit on what conversations may be happening toward the development of that legislation as to whether or not we’re looking at mining in municipalities and how that notification and such things will look?

The challenge is that is a process that is happening. The public has been included in some of those conversations, but we really don’t know where it’s going. I would say that Gladiator Metals is a really good example of how things can change for people when you can start to see it so much closer to home.

I am just looking for an update on where we are in that process.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, on the broader question about our mining legislation, it is being rewritten and I am happy to see us get there and, yes, it’s a long time coming. It’s important work.

But knowing that this work is underway, we also had already been doing work on mining in municipalities. Our next step on that is to develop a framework on best practices. It would be ahead of — or while that legislative work happens, we still want to address the issue within our communities. Zoning tools are the types of tools that we would want to use — which we already have legislation for. As I indicated earlier when I was responding to questions from the Member for Copperbelt South, the timeline for that is this calendar year. Looking for that to move forward somewhere in the next couple months is what EMR is letting me know.

Ms. White: I do thank the minister for that. In some cases when having conversations and listening to people's experiences near the Gladiator project, it was the shock of not knowing that this was going to happen — of going into the woods and walking along and, all of a sudden, you see what looks like a very industrial development.

Again, no consultation, no letting the neighbours know, no notification — unless, of course, you spend a lot of time on the YESAB website, but not everyone does. One of the things that was included in the motion was the very point that there would be required consultation with residents within three kilometres prior to issuing any class of exploration permit — right? So, we know that class 1 has certain requirements, and as we go up, different classes of exploration will require different things.

The reason why I'm asking is that is, as we are working on developing the minerals legislation, we still have this stuff happening. I will point out that if folks haven't had a chance to look at the Gladiator Metals website, the maps are really interesting, because there is one that has a mark of the City of Whitehorse, but it really doesn't acknowledge what those boundaries are. It doesn't really look like there — you know, there is just a little black square, to be honest, and then it has all the mineral claims around it, and it doesn't really show what the reality is: that we live here and there are people nearby these claims. It literally just shows it as an investment tool: Look at all the things we're doing; we have these claims.

You know, it's nearby. I mean, it's probably pretty attractive because it's near a highway. It does actually have the picture of having a rail access when, you know, we haven't used that railway in a while. But it's still here and it's part of the selling. It's part of — invest in our company so we can go forward. But it doesn't really talk about the reality of what it looks like to be here and to live nearby in that situation.

For a long time, prior to this minister being elected, we were having conversations in this Assembly about Slinky mine in a residential neighbourhood in Dawson City and what that was doing to people — houses that shook all the time due to mining that was happening right nearby them. The reason why I'm bringing it up again is that I appreciate we're looking at best practices in municipalities. The minister has said that it's going to be out by the end of the year, and I just hope that we take in the actual reality — how it affects people and how that kind of industrialization affects them — because it's important, because the answer is that it doesn't do good things for people. It doesn't help them sleep; it doesn't remove their stress; it doesn't make them feel good. It does have adverse effects, which is why I wanted to bring it up.

I'm going to bring up another thing that also goes around to minerals legislation. My understanding is that within the development of the new minerals legislation — can the minister let me know as to whether or not the *Miners Lien Act* is being entertained in this part of the conversation?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, we are rewriting the mining legislation in the territory and that work is ongoing. The deputy minister and I met last week with the chiefs committee on mining to talk about the work as it is unfolding with the steering committee on new mineral legislation. All of these

questions that are raised are important questions. Gladiator Metals and other issues that we have had around mining are definitely learning experiences for the type of legislation that we want to create in the Yukon.

I thank the member opposite for the motion, although I want to keep pretty focused on that successor legislation piece. I want to be careful that, if I am doing other legislation, it is with the direction of that engagement with First Nations because we agreed as governments to work together on successor legislation. If I got that clear direction at the table, then certainly we would be happy to entertain working on a specific project, but right now, we are working on the broad project.

There were two other questions that were raised about this type of disruption, and it is amazing to me that when I have seen places where people have been accustomed to a certain level of connection with nature and the world around them and then something happens to disrupt that, it is really disruptive — I agree. I have seen other instances — I have lived in a working harbour before and you get all sorts of noise all the time, but you came there expecting it. It was a different set up. It was right next to Granville Island, which is a classic example of industry and homes and commercial all thrown in together, but it was planned that way.

When I met and spoke with Gladiator Metals as this stuff was starting to unfold, what I said to them — and I think that the deputy minister was at that meeting — was the same thing that I've said to almost every mining company that I've talked to. My first question to them is: Have you reached out to the First Nation? Are you talking to that other level of government? If they are in a municipality, I say: Have you talked with the municipal government? My next comment is: Are you talking with the neighbours around wherever your work is? I agree with this principle that is being discussed where we should have open communication and engagement with people who will be affected by the work. If the mining companies want to see their mine or activity move on to something longer lasting, they need that relationship. That is why I always encourage this as a first thing.

The last question that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King asked about was the *Miners Lien Act*. I will have to check. I will just ask her to tell me whether she was referring to successor legislation or new mineral legislation, in which case, we are looking at all of it. If she was asking about the work on mining in municipalities, we haven't got to the granular level of specific acts. It has been more on the higher policy level of that, but I would have to check specifically on what has been happening with respect to the *Miners Lien Act* if the question was with respect to mining in municipalities.

Ms. White: I appreciate that from the minister. Based on the briefings and the public meetings, my understanding is that the *Miners Lien Act* is not part of the new minerals legislation that is being looked at. It's separate.

The reason I am bringing it forward is that I sat in meetings when Yukon businesses were told they were going to get pennies on the dollar when Wolverine shut — watching people have that realization that they were going to get \$3,000 as the

maximum out of the sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars that they were owed by a mine. The reason why I am bringing it up is that I have talked about the *Miners Lien Act* a lot in the time since then and how it doesn't actually protect Yukon businesses. It actually puts them at the bottom. The reason why that is relevant now is that Minto mine is closed, and I wanted to know: How many liens have been put against that company now and how many of those are Yukon businesses?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will have to work to get the numbers about how many liens there are, how many are from Yukon companies, et cetera, but I know that there are many — I will just use that language. When it comes to the *Miners Lien Act*, I will follow up directly with the member opposite to try to ask about where that information was shared.

From our perspective, we are starting with the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*. We are rewriting them from the ground up. We anticipate that there will be consequential amendments to other pieces of legislation. This will be done, again, in partnership with First Nations as we agreed to — government to government — under the devolution transfer agreement. I have not been informed that the *Miners Lien Act* is off the table. The way it has been framed for me — and the way in which we went out and engaged with Yukoners — is that the core steering committee took apart the legislation and built it up into these various elements. As we build it up, I think we will look for where there are consequential amendments to take place. I can say that I think that we are at a stage in the new minerals legislation where we want to ensure that there is reasonable protection of local businesses as part of that legislation.

I think this is a question that we will be looking at. I can't say that we have specifically detailed yet: Okay, here it is, this is what we are going to do — because we are just at that stage of trying to form the framework of the new legislation. I call it the “backbone” of the new legislation and that is what we are working hard at the table to do, but I certainly will carry the concerns that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is relaying and make sure that they are expressed to the steering committee.

Ms. White: I appreciate that and I have more questions about it, to be honest, but there is this one — and I am just going to put this on the paper because then we are going to have to move to report progress. The minister was just talking about the difference between, for example, choosing to live in Vancouver in a more industrial area where there are businesses, homes, and industrialization, and then people living out in quieter areas, which means that this is the perfect time to tell you that the next time we're here, I would like to talk about the proposed wood-processing facility in Mount Lorne on the Kookatsoon gravel pit, because people there — included in their residential secluded area was the expectation that they wouldn't be living next to an industrial project and what that means for them and what their lifestyle will be. So, I will leave that there and I look forward to further conversations about it.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King 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 the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes 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

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*, 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 Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following document was filed October 10, 2023:

35-1-154

Proposed closure of Silver City transfer station, letter re (dated September 14, 2023) from residents of Silver City to Hon. Ranj Pillai, Premier (White)