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HANSARD

Monday, November 6, 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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NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
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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Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
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
Monday, November 6, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to please help me in welcoming some guests who are here today for the National Skilled Trade and Technology Week tribute. We first have Jeff Wolosewich, who is a department head for the school of trades at Yukon University; we have Katie Mooney, executive director of Skills Canada Yukon; Jeff Van Zandvoort, industry training consultant with the Yukon apprenticeship office; and Jaydee Carrothers, industrial training consultant with the Yukon apprenticeship office; Abbey Gartner, Skills Yukon program coordinator; Jessica Zinn, Yukon University; and I think that we also have a support dog today — Sasha. Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, we have several guests here today for the tribute to la Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone. Please welcome Lorraine Taillefer, Association franco-yukonnaise. Also from l'AFY, Edith Bélanger, Yannick Klein, Diana Romero, and Marie-Pierre Giroux. From the Yukon Francophone Health Network, we have Sandra St-Laurent; from les Essentielles, Laurence Rivard and Maya Auguste; and from the Direction des services en français, André Bourcier and Nancy Power.

Welcome to all. Bienvenue.

Applause

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming some guests to the gallery. We have with us Cynthia Lyslo, the executive director of Opportunities, as well as Bruno Bourdache, the executive director of the non-profit hub.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Skilled Trade and Technology Week

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government in recognition of National Skilled Trade and Technology Week, which takes place this year from November 5 to 11. This initiative is organized by

Skills Compétences Canada, but it comes to life in the territory through the work and dedication of Yukon people and organizations. I have a strong family connection to skilled trades, having several family members in trades, including my son, who has excelled in a career with trades and technology. Careers here are challenging, in high demand, and can be lucrative. They include such sectors as carpentry, cooking, electrics, hair styling, heavy duty equipment, automotive services and mechanics, plumbing, welding, and beyond.

This week aims to raise awareness of the range of skilled trades and technology careers and the critical role that they play in the Canadian economy and society. I am pleased to be able to celebrate our Yukon tradespeople and their essential skills.

I would also like to draw attention and give a special congratulations to the 15 Yukoners who competed in the 2023 Skills Canada National Competition and those who came home with four medals.

I look forward to Yukon's upcoming 2024 Territorial Skills Competition and to honour and raise our local talent.

The government is dedicated to seeing a steady increase in the number of apprentices enrolled in Yukon's apprenticeship program as well as journey person certificates being issued. The Government of Yukon strives to meet the current and future needs of our labour market by offering significant support for apprenticeship training, and we are working hard with partners to address the needs of the territory.

I would like to thank the many people and organizations who support Yukoners of all ages to explore careers in the skilled trades and technology, including: members of the Yukon apprenticeship advisory board; Skills Canada Yukon; Yukon University; secondary and post-secondary educators; the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate; Yukon Apprentice Advisory Board; Yukon Women in Trades and Technology; association of professional engineers of Yukon; local businesses, organizations, makers, and volunteers; Yukon Education's training and apprenticeship branch; and, of course, the many supportive employers who are investing in apprentices.

To all the Yukoners who promote careers in trades and technology, thank you for your important work. Together, we are building strong communities.

Applause

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize National Skilled Trade and Technology Week, which is taking place now until Saturday. This event, which is sponsored by Skills Canada on a national level and hosted by Skills Canada Yukon here at home, helps to promote the exciting opportunities offered by pursuing a career in a skilled trade or the technology sector.

There are many career paths available to young Yukoners as they define and refine their skill sets through high school and beyond: manufacturing and engineering; transportation maintenance and servicing; construction; information technology; food; and personal services. Every trade has a need and opportunity for apprenticeship and skill development.

A career in the trades can be fulfilling on many levels, especially for those who have a desire to work with their hands and provide specialized services. Opportunities abound for those who choose trades as a career path, as we expect thousands upon thousands of vacancies in the years ahead. There are many organizations, individuals, and businesses here in the Yukon promoting involvement in these exciting careers. From Skills Canada Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology to Yukon University and the First Nation Education Directorate, everyone is playing their part.

I would also like to congratulate all of the participants in the territorial and national skills competitions from earlier this year and congratulate the four Yukoners who won medals in Winnipeg at the nationals.

Jonathan Fillmore in post-secondary carpentry and Terje Kristensen both won bronze — as I mentioned, post-secondary carpentry for Jonathan and secondary welding for Terje. Gold went to Isaiac Tracey in post-secondary sheet metal and gold to Phineas Pearson in mechanical engineering CAD, and he was also the recipient of the RBC Best of Region Award.

Thank you to Skills Canada and Skills Canada Yukon for the work they do in getting youth involved in the trades, for the mentorship and opportunities to develop skills that benefit the entire community.

Applause

Ms. White: On behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus, I stand here as a red seal baker to celebrate National Skilled Trade and Technology Week 2023.

The world as we know it wouldn't exist without those in the trade and technology fields. Skilled trades play an important role in our economy and our society. The trades touch almost every aspect of our lives, from the homes we live in to the cars we drive to the food we eat.

Approximately one in five employed Canadians work in the skilled trades in many sectors of the Canadian economy, including construction, manufacturing service, and automotive. Canada is a thriving tech hub, attracting talent and companies from around the world in software, cyber security, AI, and more. In 2022, Canada had more than 400,000 software developers in this country alone. This week-long event promotes and hosts awareness-raising events around the many career opportunities and skilled trades and technology in Canada.

Yukon has made leaps and bounds in the arena of skilled trades and technology. Organizations like Skills Compétences Canada Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology have sprouted, grown, and expanded. Through their outreach and hands-on approach, they are opening doors for Yukon youth toward exciting careers.

There are associations like TechYukon, which believes that Yukon can be a hub for technology and innovation in the north, attracting and retaining talent, and driving economic growth for the benefit of all Yukoners. We have hands-on skill building through places like Computers for Schools, where they collect, repair, and refurbish donated computers to redistribute them to schools and non-profits.

Yukon University continues to invest and build their trades program for pre-apprenticeship training all the way to red seal credentials. Yukoners can go far really close to home.

Mr. Speaker, in Canada's future economy, the skilled trades and technology-related jobs are going to matter more than ever. It's a good thing in Yukon that, with help from so many different organizations and industry associations, we are well on our way to that future.

Applause

In recognition of National Francophone Immigration Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone.

La Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone a lieu chaque année en novembre. Elle est une occasion de souligner l'importante contribution sociale, culturelle et économique des personnes immigrantes d'expression française au Yukon. Le thème de cette année est « Terre accueillante ». Ce thème se veut un encouragement à valoriser nos différentes cultures et à réfléchir à ce que signifie être une terre accueillante pour tous et toutes. L'édition de cette année est aussi une occasion d'en apprendre davantage sur les peuples autochtones du Canada, et de réfléchir à l'environnement et à l'importance de préserver notre « terre accueillante » pour les générations futures, y compris les personnes immigrantes. Je suis heureux que le Yukon continue d'être un lieu accueillant pour les personnes nouvellement arrivées d'expression française. Notre territoire est l'une des régions les plus attrayantes au Canada pour l'immigration francophone. Le Yukon est aussi la seule administration canadienne où le nombre et la proportion de personnes qui parlent principalement le français à la maison ont augmenté entre 2016 et 2021. Plus de 14 % de la population yukonnaise parle français, ce qui en fait la troisième région la plus bilingue au pays, après le Québec et le Nouveau-Brunswick.

Il y a quelques activités qui se tiendront cette semaine que j'aimerais souligner. Les Essentielles, en partenariat avec l'Association franco-yukonnaise, AFY, lance une série de quatre ateliers sur l'intégration des nouvelles arrivantes dans la communauté franco-yukonnaise. Le premier aura lieu le 8 novembre, de 11 h à 13 h, au Centre de la francophonie, sous le thème « L'intersectionnalité et les femmes immigrantes francophones au Yukon ». Le 10 novembre se tiendra un café-rencontre créole organisé par la Garderie du petit cheval blanc et l'AFY. Il y aura deux services, à 17 h et à 19 h, au Centre de la francophonie. J'invite tout le monde à célébrer cette occasion, et les activités prévues sont d'excellentes façons de le faire.

L'immigration francophone est une priorité pour le Yukon. Nous sommes conscients des possibilités de développement économique, social, culturel et démographique que cette immigration francophone représente pour le territoire. Prenons le temps cette semaine de reconnaître et de célébrer la contribution des nouveaux Yukonnais et des nouvelles Yukonnaises à la diversité de notre territoire et de nos vies.

Bonne Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone!
 Merci, Monsieur le Président.
Applause

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize National Francophone Immigration Week in Canada. This year, we celebrate the contributions of French-speaking immigrants to Canada and to the Yukon. The Yukon has a long and rich history of franco-yukonnaise culture and contributions dating back to the gold rush. This aids in the territory's continued status of being the third most bilingual region in Canada after Québec and New Brunswick. I am proud to see the francophone community here in the Yukon continue to grow with a large number of services offered in French and continued expansion in these services throughout the territory.

Some of these services include French schools, daycare services, employment assistance, workshops and training, and artistic and cultural activities. It is great to see the number of people enrolled in these schools and programs keep growing and expanding. As of this year, there are more than 300 students enrolled in French language schools in the territory. Bilingual English and French students — either French first language or who have learned French through the immersion program — will see benefits throughout their lifetimes in school, in work, and in their own personal experiences. I would like to thank the Association franco-yukonnaise and les Essentielles for the important French services that they provide to their community. These groups and the entire French-speaking community have made great efforts to establish services and facilitate integration of francophone immigrants.

I would also like to thank the French Language Services Directorate staff for their work to help support government with French-language delivery, translation, and learning opportunities. It is great to see the services continually expanding and getting more accessible throughout government.
Applause

MLA Tredger: Je suis heureux de me lever aujourd'hui au nom du Nouveau Parti Démocratique du Yukon pour parler de la Semaine Nationale de l'immigration francophone.

Chaque année, début novembre, cette semaine rassemble des milliers de francophones des quatre coins du pays pour célébrer la richesse de la diversité culturelle et linguistique des communautés francophones au Canada. La francophonie est une partie importante de la culture canadienne. Je suis ravie de la voir si active et si vivante au Yukon.

J'invite tous les francophones, les francophiles et les franco-curieux à participer aux différents événements que la communauté francophone du Yukon organise régulièrement. Entre les cafés de l'amitié, les cours de yoga, des ateliers pour écrire votre testament, ou encore des séries d'exercices et de promenades pour écrire vos propres Haikus, il y en a pour tous les goûts!

J'ai d'ailleurs hâte de lire le recueil collectif de haikus.

En cette semaine d'immigration francophone, un bienvenu tout spécial à celles et ceux qui sont nouvelles et nouveaux au

Canada et au Yukon, que vous soyez francophone, ou de tous milieux linguistiques.

Nous sommes heureux de vous accueillir parmi nous.
 Bonne semaine à toutes et tous!
Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter dated August 2 addressed to the Premier from the chair of the Yukon Nonprofit Advisory Council and the Premier's response dated September 13.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today a letter regarding Takhini River Road.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the *Eleventh Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees*.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House do issue an order for the immediate return of the Yukon government's Public Accounts for the fiscal year 2022-23 which the Minister of Finance was required by law to table in this Legislative Assembly no later than October 31, 2023.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Economic Development to extend the interest-free repayment period on its COVID-19 support loan to September 30, 2024.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement a moratorium on mineral staking and exploration within municipal boundaries and within 10 kilometres of a municipal boundary until the *Placer Mining Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act* are replaced by new legislation.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to introduce legislation that would allow physician assistants to practise in the territory.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

British Columbia Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the honour of attending the British Columbia Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering in Vancouver. This gathering is similar to our own Yukon Forum, which also aims to strengthen government-to-government relationships.

During the gathering, I had the opportunity to share Yukon perspectives and experiences and to highlight some of the incredible reconciliation work happening across the territory. There was a collective recognition among leaders of the importance of being open, collaborative, vulnerable, and comfortable with having challenging conversations. During my remarks, I shared just how significant it has been hosting quarterly Yukon Forums, which provide space for these difficult but important conversations. I also highlighted the development of the Yukon First Nation School Board, which now governs one-third of Yukon schools, as well as the Yukon's missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit+ people strategy and implementation plan.

The last thing I touched on during my presentation was the Yukon's emergency preparedness and climate resilience efforts, emphasizing the significance of our ongoing discussions about connecting to the BC power grid. This is another example of work that will provide significant opportunities for economic reconciliation. It is always a privilege to be able to share our progress and experience with other jurisdictions.

The BC Cabinet and First Nations' Leaders Gathering was also an important opportunity to learn about how reconciliation is being addressed in BC. There were a number of really important discussions on topics such as: implementing the *British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, new decision-making models, implementing a distinction-based approach, emergency management, and addressing anti-Indigenous racism.

The gathering was also an opportunity to learn from government and First Nation leaders there, as well as to share our experiences in the Yukon. The political landscapes between BC and Yukon are quite different, but there is a lot of overlap in ways that are critical to Indigenous peoples in both jurisdictions. There are three First Nations with traditional territories that cross the two jurisdictions — the Tahltan Nation, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, and Dease River First Nation — so it is important for us to understand the issues and policies in BC.

I thank the event organizers for the opportunity to attend and share information about our Yukon ways of doing and being. I look forward to continuing and strengthening our connections to British Columbia.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the update on her meetings. The Yukon Party

agrees that maintaining intergovernmental relationships is important, including with our neighbours, the Government of British Columbia, as well as First Nation governments with traditional territories overlapping in the Yukon. We would suggest that the minister should publicly release her presentation that she referenced from the meetings and that the material may be of interest to Yukoners and Yukon First Nations.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her statement. As this was an opportunity to learn from British Columbia, will her government be working with Yukon First Nations to develop Yukon's own version of BC's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*?

In British Columbia, this important piece of legislation establishes the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. The declaration act aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work that they do together.

There are four key areas to that legislation: Section 3 mandates the government to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN declaration; section 4 requires the province to develop and implement an action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to meet the objectives of the UN declaration; section 5 requires regular reporting to the Legislative Assembly to monitor progress on the alignment of laws and implementation of the action plan, including tabling annual reports by June 30 of each year; and sections 6 and 7 allow for flexibility for the province to enter into agreements with a broader range of Indigenous governments and to exercise statutory decision-making authority together.

The BC government then went one step further by establishing the declarations act secretariat. Announced in their 2022 budget, the secretariat is a central agency within government that was created to guide and assist the province to ensure that provincial laws align with the UN declaration and are developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples.

More and more Yukon First Nations are referencing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and are talking about the importance of consent. As the minister spoke to the importance of reconciliation, when will these important conversations and next steps to legislating the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* be taken in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members opposite for their remarks and questions. As I mentioned before, addressing complex challenges starts with simple conversations. That's really what this gathering is about: creating space for those conversations. While in Vancouver for this important gathering of the BC Cabinet and First Nation leaders, I had a number of really important conversations with

partners. This includes two bilateral discussions, one with the BC Minister of Education, Minister Singh, during which we discussed our government-to-government collaboration and the role of BC's curriculum in Yukon schools, followed by a meeting with the Minister of State for Child Care, Minister Lore, where we explored the long-standing cooperation between our governments in delivering on early learning and childcare services.

I also had the opportunity to advance some conversations regarding a memorandum of understanding with BC to support the implementation of our plan for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people in Yukon. Developing an MOU with neighbouring jurisdictions falls within the strategy under the objective of establishing a network and inter-agency system to support affected families and survivors.

Violence does not respect boundaries or borders. When someone is missing, I would like other jurisdictions to have a process in place for a coordinated approach. As we move forward with our implementation plan, this work will also include discussions with Alaska and the Northwest Territories.

I had the privilege of joining an impactful conversation regarding the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and, in particular, BC's approach to implementation, as well as consent and decision-making models. As part of this discussion, I highlighted some of the ways in which our government has worked with Yukon First Nations to implement initiatives under which First Nations have assumed control over different aspects of education. This was a significant conversation as we look ahead to the connection to the BC energy grid and other opportunities with British Columbia.

These discussions were very meaningful and I think important to Yukoners. The importance of continually learning from others and staying open to collaboration, as well as embracing diverse perspectives, is a value I uphold in my roles that I hold for Yukon government. There were some really in-depth discussions that happened at this gathering.

I had a chance to talk about *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* and the significance of this year being the 50th anniversary and that we take much of our guidance around the application of the United Nations declaration from Yukon First Nations. I really look forward to further discussions. This type of knowledge gathering and idea sharing is crucial to helping to address local issues. I look forward to more discussions with my BC colleagues.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Support for substance use emergency

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, in January 2022, the Yukon government declared a substance use emergency following a drastic increase in overdose-related deaths in the territory. At the time, the minister said — quote: “This declaration is a

commitment to action by our government, and a call to action to all Yukoners.”

It is noticeable that this so-called “call to action” has resulted in very little action from the territorial government. In fact, it took them over 19 months to announce their substance use health emergency action plan in August this year. When they did finally announce their plan, it had no timelines, no implementation plans, and no costing.

Does the Minister of Health and Social Services think that waiting 19 months to come up with a strategy is reflective of the call to action that she issued in January 2022?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to talk about the importance of the substance use health emergency here in the Yukon. Our government is committed to working with community partners, First Nations and other governments, and individuals and organizations to respond to the substance use health emergency. While I think it was closer to 18 months — 19 months — doesn't matter — before the substance use health emergency was completed, it was completed in partnership with all of the individuals and organizations that have come together to result in the declaration of the strategy.

What I can note is that the perception or at least the attempt to have Yukoners believe that nothing was done until the strategy was released would be completely false. The territory-wide challenge has been responded to from the first day that it was declared. It cannot be resolved alone. That's why we continue to work with partners to coordinate our response. We have started initiatives like the Car 867, an overdose outreach team that increased opioid treatment services, access to safer supply — all of which happened long before the strategy was released.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister made the announcement of the substance use health emergency strategy on August 23 — 19 months after she declared an emergency — and the strategy contained no implementation plans, no costing, and no timelines. At the press conference, the minister stated that there were 14 priority actions that would be taken but was completely unable to say what those 14 priority actions were. It wasn't until the next week that the government issued another press release that detailed the 14 so-called “priority actions”. Noticeably absent was any commitment to increasing or expanding addictions treatment.

I would like to ask the minister now: Since the government declared a substance use health emergency, how many new addictions treatment spaces, if any, have been created in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government has actively engaged in collaborative work with the health system and community partners on the development of the substance use health emergency strategy. Along with the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon released the strategy in August 2023. The primary purpose of the strategy is to provide a road map for action on how the Government of Yukon, working with partners, can reduce substance use-related harms in the territory.

The strategy highlights four areas of growth that focus on prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery support, and community safety and well-being.

As a living document, the strategy is designed to evolve over time as it adapts to the changing needs of the communities and incorporates ongoing, valuable feedback from our partners.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, talking about doing something doesn't equal action. Last week, my colleague asked the minister a simple question about a commitment in the confidence and supply agreement to increase bed nights available at detox and to increasing funding available for Yukoners to seek out-of-territory treatment when services are at capacity.

We continue to hear of people being turned away from detox because it is full. A report that government released a few months ago said that almost half the people interviewed had been turned away from addictions treatment, including detox. In the 21 months since declaring a substance use emergency, has the minister created any more addictions treatment spaces, and has any additional funding been provided for Yukoners to access out-of-territory addictions treatment?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As noted in September 2021, we opened the supervised consumption site. In May 2022, we completed renovations to support inhalation as a consumption method. In January 2022, we increased access to opioid treatment services at 405 Alexander by expanding prescriber coverage. We are strengthening the opioid treatment services team with nine new positions. These positions include one registered nurse supervisor, two registered nurses, two licensed practical nurses, one community engagement worker, and one administrative assistant. Some of these positions have been filled and recruitment is underway on others.

In October 2022, we launched Car 867, the mobile crisis unit. That includes RCMP and a psychiatric-trained mental health nurse. We have organized two territory-wide public awareness and education campaigns. In November 2022, we held Youth Roots, a substance use prevention gathering. We continue to gather information from the ongoing ministerial advisory committee. We are working on communications.

At the Project Executive Committee, we hosted two mental wellness summits, all of which required additional funding, all of which has been provided by our government. I hope the members opposite will start voting for our budgets.

Question re: Funding for non-governmental organizations

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, throughout the summer, a number of non-governmental organizations have been raising the alarm about the level of support they received from the Yukon government.

In May of this year, the Yukon Nonprofit Advisory Council wrote to the Premier to express the concerns on behalf of dozens of Yukon NGOs. Since then, this group has been back and forth with the Premier by letter, urging him to take action. They have indicated that the combination of inflation, employee shortages because of stagnant wages compared to the Yukon government growth, and a lack of support from the

Yukon government is threatening the sustainability of the NGO sector as a whole.

In an August 2 letter, they made a clear request for the government to take the sustainability of the NGO sector seriously and requested an urgent meeting with the Premier. The Premier has not met with this group and has continued to brush them off by letter.

Will the Liberal government take the request expressed by these NGOs seriously, meet with them, and come up with a strategy to ensure the financial sustainability of this important sector?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. We certainly have high regard for our not-for-profit organizations in the territory and the work that they do to provide services to Yukoners. I know that we worked very hard with them, particularly during the pandemic. A number of programs were put in place during that time, and I know that our Premier certainly holds up the work of our not-for-profit organizations. I can come back to the House with a little bit more information based on some of the specifics.

I know that our Premier certainly has not shied away from meeting with folks and meeting them where they are at and having the appropriate discussions, which certainly will be the case here.

Again, I will endeavour to bring back further information on the specific questions that were posed today.

Mr. Dixon: Many of the NGOs represented in the August 2 letter deliver services directly on behalf of the Government of Yukon and they make it clear that the Premier's multiple responses throughout the summer ignored the issue. They said — and I quote: "... the Yukon Nonprofit Advisory Council ... does not believe that the provided responses adequately address our three critical requests, as outlined in our initial letter."

So, I would like to give the Deputy Premier a chance to respond specifically to some of their requests today. The Yukon Nonprofit Advisory Council makes the case that a government-wide strategy is needed to effectively support the NGO sector and calls for a commitment to developing such a strategy to ensure the sustainability of the non-profit sector in the Yukon. Will the Deputy Premier agree to this commitment?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government certainly is committed to supporting non-governmental organizations and other partners that provide Yukoners with access to services and supports and timely access to care that might not otherwise be available. We recognize the essential role that non-governmental organizations play in the delivery of health and social services across the territory, which is their primary role in most cases, and our government recognizes that some non-governmental organization partners have identified additional pressures, as we see in every sector of our lives at the moment — our home budgets, our work budgets, our government budgets. Identifying those pressures is resulting from the cost of living and the situation after COVID-19. We remain committed to working together with those partners to address funding needs and program opportunities. We understand the vital role and we support the services that are provided to

Yukoners through the non-governmental organizations. We look forward to our continued work as we begin the budget analysis for 2024-25.

I'll complete this when I have a moment.

Mr. Dixon: Unfortunately, we heard no direct response to the very specific question that was raised by this group. Another issue raised in the letter from NGOs, which was cc'd to all the ministers across the way, relates to funding programs available to the sector. The Premier has highlighted existing programs, such as the community development fund, but in the words of the YNAC — quote: "... these programs are not specifically designed to address the sector's recovery needs from the pandemic, inflation, rising costs, and the growing staffing crisis." Following that, they make a very specific request — quote: "We seek a clear commitment from your government to honor the commitments made in your public statements, specifically regarding the disbursement of the remaining \$2.75 million as part of the Social Recovery Plan."

How does the Liberal government respond to this very specific request?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, again, I will endeavour to bring back very specific information to the House and reiterate, of course, that we hold the work that not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations do for our territory.

Continuing, I would like to just make one comment before going into some specifics around the NGOs that I work with specifically. We continue to explore, of course, additional opportunities to improve reporting requirements for agreements to understand outcomes, including the requirement for logic models and performance measurement frameworks.

In terms of the work that I am doing with women and gender equity, we have recently signed the new *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*; we are providing very specific funding to all of the equality-seeking organizations in the Yukon and working very closely with them to bring folks together to really determine where we can adjust to make sure that we have the most reach of this fund. I am happy to bring back more information.

Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the hospitalist program at Whitehorse General Hospital has done a world of good for family doctors since the program first started in 2020. Before this program existed, any patients admitted to the hospital fell under the care of their family doctors, leaving family doctors to do hospital rounds in-between seeing patients at their clinics. It made for long days and zero work-life balance.

The hospitalist program changed that by creating a roster of dedicated doctors taking charge of patients at Whitehorse General. It has proven to be better for patients, doctors, and hospital staff — everyone agrees that it should continue — but now the program is heading toward collapse in January because this government is proposing what would represent a 10- to 15-percent pay cut to these valuable professionals.

It should be obvious that no government can retain or recruit doctors by offering them less money to do the same

work. Knowing that this is an essential program, why does this government want to cut their pay?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, again, I am always happy to stand to give Yukoners accurate information. Nobody is interested in cutting anyone's pay — certainly not doctors. We are working in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and hospitalist physicians. We have continued to work to support a request to formalize the hospitalist program. What the member opposite is referring to as the doctor-of-the-day program will be formalized into a hospitalist program at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Over the last number of years, inpatient care has been provided by family physicians supporting their own patients and the doctor-of-the-day model that provides inpatient care to patients who are otherwise unattached to a family doctor. That program began in 2008. In 2020, it merged into one physician who undertook the trial as a hospitalist type of model at Whitehorse General Hospital. It has since evolved into a three-person model to support inpatient care as additional family doctors have now handed the care of their own patients over to those hospitalist physicians who are providing hospitalist services. We are working to formalize that program and to make sure that there is care for inpatients at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the hospitalist program will collapse in January unless an agreement can be reached to safely and sustainably staff the program, but instead of making a competitive offer, this government is slashing hospitalist doctors' pay. The minister may think her offer is reasonable, but she doesn't seem to understand that hospitalist doctors have more responsibilities than their southern counterparts. They can't refer patients to specialists as easily, which means that they care for sicker patients with more complex conditions. On top of that, they run the intensive care unit, which is usually not the case down south.

The government is asking doctors to move to the Yukon for more work and less pay, so will this government reconsider the offer that they put to hospitalist doctors?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, an expression of interest will be sent out in the coming week that will seek physicians both inside the Yukon and perhaps from other jurisdictions to fully resource the hospitalist program. The current cost for inpatient physician insured health services is \$1.5 million and the new cost for physicians is expected to be approximately \$2.6 million. Once fully operational, the hospitalist program will continue to contribute to a health care system that values people, is patient-centred, achieves overall wellness goals for Yukoners, and will be driven by the patient experience in that it shall be person- and family-centred, accessible, integrated, and safe.

We look forward to the new integration of the program and the formalization of the doctor of the day.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, for almost a year now, this government has known that the hospitalist program needed to be renewed. We are two months away from January and doctors don't want to sign up to the hospitalist program. This

government has caused this crisis by ignoring a group of dedicated physicians who have created a great program that works better for patients, for doctors, and for the medical community as a whole. Because of this government, doctors will be left with an old system where they had to be both primary care providers at their clinics and acute care providers at Whitehorse General Hospital.

A family doctor and a hospitalist doctor develop a very different set of skills and expertise. They are not interchangeable and, most importantly, neither want to go back to the old days.

Will the minister listen to hospitalists and family doctors instead of trying to force them to either quit or accept a pay cut?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the opportunity to give accurate information to Yukoners about this important integration of this program so that family physicians can concentrate on their family practice and, in the event that one of their patients is in the hospital, the hospitalists employed at the hospital will be able to provide inpatient care to those individuals.

It is our understanding that the medical staff at Whitehorse General have agreed that, come January, should there not be a sufficient number of physicians that we have by then been contracted to provide, the current system will continue short term. I am not sure where the member opposite is getting their information, but we have great hopes that the expression of interest for the hospitalist doctors will be successful in the very near future and that we can transition into a system that has been operating very well and certainly operates Outside.

I met with the Yukon Medical Association on Friday and had a terrific opportunity to speak with many of the doctors there. I met with the president of the Yukon Medical Association last week. We have had many conversations. They have been involved in the development of this program and we look forward to its success.

Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, the hospitalist program allows family doctors to spend more time with their patients at their clinics. If the hospitalist program shuts down, each family doctor will be required to take time away from their clinics to care for patients admitted to hospital. We have heard from family doctors that the loss of the hospitalist program will increase their workloads and make their work less efficient. Some family doctors will retire or even leave the Yukon entirely rather than taking on shifts that they don't feel comfortable doing. Losing the hospitalist program is going to make the Yukon's doctor shortage even worse.

Does this government understand that if we lose the hospitalist program, we will lose family doctors too?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to repeat the information if I wasn't clear earlier. This is not a situation in which we will be losing the hospitalist program.

In fact, we will be integrating it into the care at Whitehorse General Hospital, formalizing the hospitalist program so that three individuals will be employed as doctors who will provide inpatient care at the hospital so that individual family

physicians, who might be attached to a patient who is in the hospital, will not be providing that in-hospital care. They will be providing care at their clinics. If an individual has to be admitted to the hospital, then the hospitalist process will provide inpatient care.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, a hospitalist program is the backbone of a well-functioning primary care system. Without it, family doctors will have less time in clinics and less time at programs like the cancer clinic, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation clinic, the walk-in clinic, the Yukon Sexual Health Clinic, and even for community visits.

All the good work that these programs do — or will do, in the case of the walk-in clinic — will be at risk. Not only will we be at risk of having fewer doctors, but those who stay will have less time for primary care.

There's a real risk that if the hospitalist program collapses, it will mean fewer doctors to sign up for shifts at the walk-in clinic or any other outpatient program.

Does this government understand the potential impacts on the health care system as a whole?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the current hospitalist physicians — which are also known as “doctors of the day” — the Government of Yukon has been working to support a request to formalize the hospitalist program at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Over the last several years, inpatient care has been provided by a family physician if one of their own patients is admitted to the hospital. Additionally, care has been provided by a doctor-of-the-day model to provide inpatient care to patients who are not attached to a family physician. The hospitalist program will be developed and is underway to operate at Whitehorse General Hospital so that the model of care is developed into one that has been operating since 2020 where — first one and now three — physicians provide support for inpatient care, as additional family doctors have now handed over that care of their patients to the physicians. This process has morphed into a situation where a program known as “doctor of the day” is operating as hospitalists. It is going to be formalized.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, this government recently released pay rates for doctors who would work at the walk-in clinic. This pay gives family doctors an hourly rate similar to what they would make at their own clinics but only for the first two shifts they would work each month. After those two shifts, they will receive less pay for their third shift onwards. Doctors without a family practice will also make less pay. This is not an incentive for doctors to come to the Yukon or to attract doctors to work at the walk-in clinic. If this government wants to attract and retain doctors in the Yukon, then they have to offer at least as much as they would make elsewhere in the country.

Will this government use a pay structure that attracts doctors to the Yukon and encourages them to participate at the walk-in clinic?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, this is definitely a new question, but I'm happy to talk about the Whitehorse walk-in clinic. In January 2023, as part of the CASA, we committed to

improving the delivery of access to health care by contemplating a walk-in clinic and developing one. We have been working with our physician community to have walk-in clinic services available to Yukoners in Whitehorse by 2024. Our plan is to launch as soon as possible.

The clinic will be located at 9010 Quartz Road. That will be temporary, as we wish to open as soon as possible. There is some space available there while we complete renovations on another space. I'm happy to provide information to Yukoners about this program. How it will operate, the staff that are needed, the development of the location, and the development of the physical space — it has all been done in collaboration with our physician community and we look forward to providing that service to Yukoners.

Question re: Government support for local media

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, quality local journalism is critical to democracy and local newspapers are one of the most reliable sources of information, especially in rural Yukon. These points have become especially important as the debate about federal Bill C-18 and the importance of supporting local journalism have been a top issue federally.

This summer, representatives of the local media wrote to the Premier to request that the government reconsider the declining level of support that is provided to local newspapers and media outlets. It was pointed out that the Yukon government continues to advertise heavily with large tech giants like Google and Meta, but the amount of investment in local media has declined. According to the general manager of the *Yukon News* — and I quote: “This decline in financial support hampers our ability to provide quality journalism and keep the public informed and engaged.”

Why has the amount that the Yukon government spends with local media declined so much in the past years?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question. I would like to start by stating the importance of media in the Yukon and throughout Canada and the world, especially during these times when we really need to rely on reliable information.

The Government of Yukon, of course, supports informed decision-making through internal media monitoring and transcript services internal to government. I believe that there are some very specific questions that are intended for the minister. I will certainly endeavour to bring information back to the House, but I really want to emphasize the importance of media and ensuring that Yukoners are well-informed. We will endeavour to bring back more information to the House.

Mr. Istchenko: In the summer of 2021, we wrote to the Minister of Highways and Public Works about the change in policy that the Liberal government had made regarding the advertising and procurement opportunities in local newspapers. Previously, there was a significant reliance on the advertising RFPs and other procurement opportunities in local newspapers, including those newspapers that are available throughout rural Yukon. This was good for transparency. It allowed rural Yukoners to be made aware of government work in their communities and it also had the added benefit of providing an

important source of revenue to local newspapers, which are small businesses in their own right.

Unfortunately, the government has changed this policy, and much more of their advertising, as I said earlier, has been spent on the big giants like Google and Meta. Will the minister agree to reverse this policy that takes money out of the local economy and hurts small businesses?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is really interesting to see the Yukon Party interested in public discourse and the media. In the past, they have shown absolutely no regard for public statements or anything else. As a matter of fact, just last week, we offered a ministerial statement on public engagement, and the Yukon Party said: No thanks, we are not going to take that up.

Yes, there is an issue right now in Canada. The federal government is trying to deal with it. I met with the media on this issue just this summer. The local media want us to pull back from our social media. As I said to the media advisors — the media companies — at a time of flash floods and of floods and fires in the territory, any medium to get in touch with our constituents was not going to be ignored and that we really couldn't just pull back from that at that time.

I understand that this is an issue. We have done social media; we have no verification of facts. In our media, we do have a robust editing system that tries to get to the truth of the matter. This is a bridge where society is going to have to make the connection between social media and an established and verifiable media presence, and I know that the team here in the territory is looking at that.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. It was about reversing the policy that takes money out of the local economy and hurts small businesses, and I didn't get an answer. As I said previously, this summer, representatives of the local media have reached out to the Premier directly and requested an urgent meeting, and they have followed up several times but have never had a confirmation of receipt from the Liberal government. These folks have cc'd both the leaders of the Yukon Party and the NDP, and they both responded, but so far, the Premier has not.

Will the minister ask the Premier to respond to this meeting request, and will he agree to consider the policy change asked about in my second question that the government has made to reduce the amount of money spent with local media companies?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of experience in this realm and change is very, very difficult in this realm, of course.

We have the opposition, which has demonstrated a real contempt actually at times for public discourse — for giving the public information, which is one of the reasons why we improved the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. We just recently saw them try to interdict and establish the fact that we cannot give statements to the public anymore. They are meddling in that realm as well, and now we have some sort of desire to see more public discourse. I find it very surprising to hear these questions coming on the part of the Yukon Party.

We know that there is a social media presence in Canada that really has been vital in getting public information to our constituents during floods and fires. We know that Facebook and Google — all of these avenues for public information dissemination are important to the territory. We also know that the local media companies, which I was once a member of, have seen real financial difficulties imposed on them because of the changing world that we live in. We are working with those media industries. That is one of the reasons why I met with them this summer — to try to come up with ways to help them out, and we will continue to do that work in this government.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Chair (Ms. Blake): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Motion re appearance of witnesses Committee of the Whole Motion No. 13

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT, from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 6, 2023, Mike Pemberton, chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Lesley Cabott, chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, Dennis Berry, president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation, and Chris Milner, acting president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operation of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

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

THAT from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 6, 2023, Mike Pemberton, chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Lesley Cabott, chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, Dennis Berry, president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation, and Chris Milner, acting president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operation of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 13 agreed to

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, 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 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

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

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Department of Justice

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to stand today on the first supplementary budget for 2023-24. I just have some very brief comments because there is only one line in this supplementary budget with respect to the Department of Justice. The total sum of increase for 2023-24 included in this budget is \$1.734 million. It is with respect to the wage increase for the Yukon Employees' Union and it is for a three-percent wage increase from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. This increase will be paid for in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

The breakdown for the program area, should these amounts be voted as retroactive payments, are as follows: Within the Department of Justice Corporate Services, \$270,000; Court Services, \$228,000; Legal Services, \$120,000; Regulatory Services, \$197,000; and Community Justice and Public Safety, \$919,000. All are dependent on the number of employees who are eligible for these increases in each of those sections of the Department of Justice.

I have with me Mark Radke, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Justice, and Luda Ayzenberg, the director of finance for the Department of Justice. I thank them for their attendance here today. I will be happy to address any questions that the members opposite may have regarding this supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: Since 2015, according to the statistics on the Statistics Canada and the federal Department of Justice websites — which I will share the links to for Hansard — hate crimes have increased dramatically. In information it released in March of this year, Statistics Canada said that police-reported hate crime grew from 1,362 incidents nationally in 2015 to 3,360 in 2021. Justice Canada says: "Between 2015 and 2021, the total number of victims of violent hate crimes increased by 158%." Statistics Canada reports: "Hate crimes targeting the Black and Jewish populations remained the most common types of hate crimes..." It's also worth noting that

among religious communities, the hate crimes targeting Jewish Canadians are both of a higher number and rate than for any other religion.

In October of last year, my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition gave notice of motion in the Legislative Assembly on October 17 urging the Government of Yukon to endorse and adopt the working definition of “anti-Semitism” as adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and he followed up with a letter on that topic to the Minister of Justice dated May 2, 2023. Can the minister please provide us with an update on this matter? She had at one point given indications that suggested that they might be supportive of that, but it has been quite some time since we have heard any update from the government on this topic.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. I do not want to rely on my memory with respect to this matter. I do recall the matter; I do recall responding to the letter, I believe, in a positive way. I just don’t recall whether or not it was adopted in this Legislative Assembly or tabled here, but I will look into the matter and provide a response.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the indication. I would note that it hasn’t been formally adopted in this Assembly yet, and I would just refer the minister to my colleague’s letter that asked, if government was going to formally adopt it, what way that would be, noting examples of how another provincial government had done so and asking what was associated with the implementation plan and what actions might be taken. Recognizing that she obviously doesn’t have that information at her fingertips at this moment, I would ask her to get back to us with a fulsome response on that matter.

I am going to move on to the topic of policing priorities. The Minister of Justice holds the final pen on the policing priorities, and this year’s letter is notably completely silent on the topic of property crime. This is despite the fact that we know that the business community specifically asked for combatting property crime to be a priority in this year’s policing priorities.

As the minister knows, a number of businesses near the shelter at 405 Alexander have been repeatedly and regularly raising concerns with the Yukon government and the city, often copying us and the Third Party, but so too have many other businesses in the downtown core which have also seen an increase in property crime and in issues such as needles and other paraphernalia often being left on business premises that the owners have to clean up frequently in the morning. All of this has notably gotten worse under the current Liberal government.

This morning, I spoke to a long-time local business owner whose business had been broken into three times in the last three weeks, and that business owner noted that they, as well as some other business owners, are becoming quite frustrated and some are considering whether they even want to continue in business as the downtown core increasingly becomes less safe and more susceptible to property crime.

My first question for the minister is: Why is her letter on policing priorities completely silent on property crime? My second question is: Will she agree to correct that by amending this year’s policing priorities letter? Third, will the minister

agree to our calls for this government to further increase resources to the RCMP to help them to go after illegal drug dealers as well as crack down on property crime that is hurting many long-time Yukon businesses?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am going to deal with the question of policing priorities, and if I have another opportunity, I am happy to talk about police resources as well, but I know that we are limited in the response time.

Each year, the Yukon Police Council works to collect community perspectives and to provide recommendations to the Minister of Justice to inform policing priorities for the Yukon RCMP. This is a process unique in Canada. It is incredibly important that we support the Police Council in doing their work in collecting community perspectives and making sure that those are communicated to me as the minister so that I can speak to them and communicate them to the Yukon RCMP as being the issues that are of concern to Yukoners — and Yukoners who take the time to address the Police Council or to meet with them.

The 2023-24 policing priorities are: strengthening relationships and increasing public trust; enhancing policing targeted at toxic illicit drugs and serious crime; and policing with First Nations. The council’s recommendations are considered when setting police priorities, and as such, they affect the council’s annual engagement process to identify policing needs from the perspective of Yukoners, communities, and First Nations. The policing priorities build on the priorities from the year before. They don’t necessarily have to, but there is an opportunity to make sure that, if they do build on the previous year’s priorities, the RCMP can have a focused approach to allow them to effect substantial and long-term change in supporting Yukon First Nations or visible minorities, vulnerable populations, and Yukoners as a whole.

The most recent statistics that I have show that, between 2021 and 2022, Yukon property crime was reduced by 0.09 percent — not very much of a decrease but, nonetheless, not a marked increase either. The policing priorities note the values and priorities captured by individual meetings with Yukoners and the Police Council engaging with diverse community groups across the Yukon, including stakeholders and the public through in-person discussions and presentations. In order to engage and seek feedback from Yukoners, the council travels to Yukon communities and has a schedule by which they attend those communities. This year, in order to set these priorities, they travelled to Haines Junction and Beaver Creek, and they attended the Kluane First Nation annual harvest camp.

Elements and recurring themes from those engagements as well as feedback from the Department of Justice, individuals, and, I understand, the Chamber of Commerce here in the Yukon was incorporated into those policing priorities.

I should note that the policing priorities generally operate at a high level and don’t speak to specific types of crime, although those types of crime, including property crime, as noted by the member opposite, are included as issues in the umbrella of the policing priorities, including the opportunity for the RCMP to strengthen relationships and increase public trust.

Clearly, property crimes are an issue with respect to increasing public trust.

I can also note that, this year, it was noted through this process that we will see additional challenges as we continue to work collaboratively with our partners to combat the substance use health emergency in the territory. I know that the Yukon Party members opposite are supportive of further enforcement with respect to addressing the substance use health emergency, and they have said so here in the House.

We are working to support community safety planning initiatives and to work to reduce violence and strengthen relationships with Yukon First Nations and municipalities. Furthermore, we are continuing to do the important work that arises from *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy*, which will further support our commitment to reconciliation. These details of the priorities and the priorities of our department and government going forward were all conveyed to the chief superintendent as part of the policing priorities.

Lastly, I can indicate that the underlying issues are noted — property crime, supporting the arrest and processing of drug dealers — the reduction, therefore, in crimes that harm Yukoners and in crimes that harm individuals with respect to drug enforcement, et cetera — and are captured in the policing priorities because they are the underlying issues, as noted and as certainly understood by the community here in the territory.

Mr. Cathers: I have a few questions for the minister about RCMP resources, which, in the interest of time, I will group together. My first question is a simple one, and that is regarding what the next detachment is that is scheduled for replacement and/or major renovations — if the minister could provide us with that information about which community that will be in and when it is scheduled.

Also, in terms of the RCMP's overall resourcing capacity, as I mentioned earlier in this Sitting, the ratio of RCMP members per capita has declined significantly under the current government from where it was in 2016. Adding to this, we have learned that the Trudeau Liberal government is planning to cut resources for the federally funded RCMP positions again. This follows a cut five years ago in 2018, which, according to information provided for the minister earlier this year, involved — quote: "After the federal government announced changes to its policing strategy in 2018, the Yukon lost the service of three federally funded police officers. Earlier this year, the RCMP advised the Government of Yukon to anticipate further reductions in funding for federal RCMP positions."

My question for the minister regarding that is: Can she please tell us what the Trudeau Liberal cuts to the RCMP that are being anticipated will mean here in the Yukon? Could she indicate what steps, if any, she or the Premier have personally made to urge the federal Liberal government to cancel the cuts and increase RCMP resources for the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I thank you for the questions. These are important opportunities for Yukoners to hear about the things that they don't often hear about.

Old Crow will be the next detachment that will be dealt with through the collaboration between the Yukon government and the RCMP, and we continue to work together to ensure that policing infrastructure in the territory meets the operational requirements needed in cycle 2.

Between 2017 and 2022, we funded three major detachment projects: Faro, Carcross, and Ross River. As I have noted, Old Crow will be the next one. In late 2022, the Government of Yukon signed off on a revised budget — what is known as a cycle 3 budget — of \$19.627 million. That is the territorial contribution over the next five years, or since late 2022, for the construction of a new detachment building in Old Crow and life-cycle investments to maintain the Yukon RCMP's entire infrastructure portfolio going forward.

The next question was about federal policing and what changes are contemplated at the federal level. I don't want to speak for the federal government, but I can assure Yukoners that we have been very engaged in making sure that they do not make decisions in Ottawa with respect to the federal policing model that adversely affect Yukoners.

I can note that Canada has invited Yukon to a meeting in Ottawa on November 17, 2023. It will be attended by the deputy minister and by the chief superintendent for the Yukon. The government is extending — we have brought M Division chief superintendent to attend the meeting to discuss, generally, federal policing concerns and the federal policing model. The reallocation of federal policing resources will increase pressure on contract policing jurisdictions, of which the Yukon is one, to fund additional officers through the police service agreements.

It is imperative that the federal government understands the impact that these decisions will have on communities like ours in the north. Rural communities — despite the fact that Yukon is getting regularly more population and becoming a larger and more sophisticated city, we are still a rural-style and rural-populated city in Canada. We rely heavily on our contract policing services here in the territory, and we will be making those representations as noted.

The deputy minister — I guess it is just next week — will be doing that. I will also be meeting with the federal Minister of Justice and hopefully the minister of public safety during the first week of December when a number of us will be attending an intergovernmental forum in Ottawa for the purposes of having these discussions in a general way but in a more specific way with the ministers in a bilateral meeting. I can indicate that this representation on behalf of Yukoners is considered to be urgent from our point of view. We are responsible for setting the yearly policing priorities. As noted, the RCMP here in the territory are well-versed to be able to speak to this situation on what the federal government is contemplating with respect to funding and with respect to the model.

I do have some additional information regarding the funding. Back in January 2019, the RCMP M Division commanding officer informed Members of the Legislative Assembly that the readjusted budget allocated for the federal investigation unit was \$1.791 million, which was a 12-percent decrease from the previous year's budget. We did work

diligently to deal with the federal investigation unit and it resulted in remaining positions not being staffed at the time, and the federal funding has been maintained. As a direct consequence, the RCMP M Division requested further increases to their funding and staffing levels under the TPSA. We have responded to that, and they also worked diligently to make sure that all of the positions here in the territory were filled, and as a result, the conversations will continue. We will also be working with the other northern ministers of Justice, particularly to make sure that we speak collectively on behalf of the territories and the impact that these decisions have and will have should they be maintained in a way that does adversely impact the territory. I am very hopeful that we will be able to convey those messages and be able to move forward together and make sure that the RCMP are properly and appropriately funded.

Mr. Cathers: My next question is regarding an initiative that the minister has liked to refer to a number of times in talking about actions that the government is taking, and that is Car 867. My understanding is that there are two nursing positions established in association with that initiative. One was not filled, and due to the nurse in the other position taking leave, there has been an impact on operations of that car. I also understood that there is a dedicated RCMP member associated with it and that the impact of this has been a significant disruption to its operations that may be as long as four months.

Can the minister provide an update on the current status of Car 867? If indeed there is an interruption to operations, how long will that be and what does the government plan to do about it?

In the interest of time, I'm going to group together other questions too. My next question is a follow-up question on the issue of bail reform. The minister will recall that we debated this previously in the Assembly, including during both Question Period and budget debate. As the minister knows, the changes that the Trudeau Liberal government made with Bill C-75 had a significant negative impact on public safety as a result of effectively putting a reverse onus on prosecutors to prove that an offender shouldn't be released instead of requiring the offender to demonstrate that their release would not create an unacceptable risk to public safety.

This led to all 13 premiers unanimously signing a letter to the Prime Minister that included the sentence that: "The justice system fundamentally needs to keep anyone who poses a threat to public safety off the streets ... And this starts with meaningful changes to the Criminal Code, an area solely within the federal government's jurisdiction."

We have discussed this in the past. I would appreciate it if the minister could update us on what is happening on the federal side and — to the extent that the legislation that they're advancing may not be fixing the problem as suggested by the national police federation in the report that it issued this summer — what efforts she is making, or the Premier is making, to lobby the federal government for additional actions.

Additionally, as the minister will recall, I made reference to the National Police Federation — which, of course, represents RCMP members — president referring to the current

system as "catch-and-release" and calling on the federal government as well as provinces and territories to take action. That position paper that was released this summer in July — all seven action items laid out by the National Police Federation involve some action by the Yukon government. The minister previously was not able to indicate what actions the government would take related to that. I would appreciate it if she would provide me with an update today.

Last but not least on my short list here is a question regarding Bill C-21. That, of course, is federal legislation that is going after firearms owners who have lawfully acquired their firearms, and it includes the so-called firearms buyback as well as a ban on handguns. The program is massively expensive. The National Police Federation has expressed concern with that model diverting resources from where they are most needed. Other police organizations and chiefs have also expressed concern regarding that. I have quoted a number of them in the past, so I won't repeat them today.

My question is regarding what the territorial Liberal government has done on this file that is of great interest to many Yukon firearms owners. Have they urged the federal government to cancel the plan to confiscate firearms under the so-called buyback program?

We know that Yukoners, including the Yukon Fish and Game Association, have recently presented to the Senate committee dealing with Bill C-21 their views on this topic. Has the Yukon government made any presentations or submissions to the Senate regarding Bill C-21? If so, what did they do? If not, will they consider, in fact, providing a statement to the Senate on behalf of Yukoners and specifically reflecting what we hear from a great many Yukoners who feel that this legislation is federal overreach that is going after law-abiding firearms owners who statistics clearly show are not the source of the problem?

Experts including police organizations like the National Police Federation have said very clearly that those lawful firearms owners are not the source of the problem. As I have mentioned a number of times, I think, in this Assembly, the Toronto police department, for example, has consistently found that 85 percent or more of the firearms used in committing crimes in the Toronto area are smuggled in from the United States.

Police are in agreement that licensed firearms owners are not the source of the problem, and Yukon firearms owners and hunters are very concerned about this as well.

What have the minister and her colleagues done on the topic of Bill C-21?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think I can cover these answers with respect to the time allotted.

Back in November 2022 — about a year ago — our government and the RCMP announced the launch of the Car 867, which is a mobile crisis unit. It is a program in partnership with the RCMP, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Social Services to provide RCMP and mental health nursing responses for mental health and wellness-related 911 calls. The impact of these officers and these health care professionals being on the street — on the

calls that are normally referred to a regular watch — is significant. It is staffed with a police officer and registered psychiatric nurse from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services. Its duty is to respond to calls for service related to mental health issues — perhaps suicide risks and other 911-related calls.

They provide a specialized joint response, including on-site mental health assessments and referrals to other appropriate care providers, such as rapid-access counselling, the child and youth and family treatment team, a psychiatric outreach program, or adult protection services, depending on the situation. As well as safety planning and working with the client on issues in real time, they respond in real time to help someone.

Currently, this program is being implemented exclusively in Whitehorse. Between October 2022 and September 2023, the unit has responded to 281 calls. I can note that there are currently two police officers assigned to this service. It is currently a pilot project. They operate from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. At present, the capacity and the service providers and the program respond to 47 percent of incoming mental health-related calls. Additional support will increase Car 867 coverage to seven days per week to help cover critical call periods and evaluation of the expanded program. My note indicates, if I can recall correctly, that we are currently recruiting a second psychiatric nurse for this program so that we can expand the hours.

The additional question with respect to bail reform — I can respond as well to that question. Bill C-48, which is progressing through Parliament, was developed to address the concerns about public safety and increase confidence in the justice system related to repeat violent offending. I can indicate that this came about very quickly after recognition of the need for the previous law to change. The Government of Canada agreed to take action as soon as possible and then did so by bringing amendments to the *Criminal Code* in May 2023, after the ministers met in March 2023. This is a significant opportunity and was a significant response by the federal Department of Justice when territorial and provincial ministers of Justice as well as others such as National Police Services and others brought it. The RCMP brought it to their attention as an urgent matter.

On October 11 to 13, the ministers of Justice and public safety met. The ministers agreed to continue working on enhancements to the bail data, which is incredibly important for this to proceed well. We also agreed to monitor the effectiveness of the impacts of Bill C-48 after it becomes law. Within our own jurisdictions, ministers remain mindful of the potential impacts of these measures on groups that are overrepresented in the justice system, such as Indigenous people, black persons, and other vulnerable groups. That work is important to make sure that there is no adverse impact. We are aware of the National Police Federation's recommendations on bail reform and we are discussing them with M Division — Yukon RCMP. Those recommendations are being considered alongside input that we have received from Yukon First Nations and others informing the work that we are doing to

advance improvements to the bail system in the Yukon. We certainly continue and look forward to continuing our work with other provinces and territories to explore both the legislative and non-legislative tools to better address the issue of repeat violent offenders, being mindful, of course, of judicial independence — who are the decision-makers with respect to how bail decisions are made in a courtroom to determine whether or not someone can be released. The issues of reverse onus with respect to the obligations of the Crown or the obligations of the defence counsel are incredibly important with respect to how those bail hearings play out.

The recommendations and calls to action made by the National Police Federation are all things that we think we can work together on. The first involves data; the second involves technology; the third involves JP legal training for justices of the peace where they have them, and we do have them here in the territory. The fourth one is related to systemic research in Canada and the importance of that opportunity to work together. The fifth is that provinces and territories should commit more resources to the collection of data, and this is important as we go forward to determine what the impact of the new bill is — the impact of the decisions and the recognition of the importance of bail in the process for keeping our streets safe. The sixth one is that government should commit to evidence-informed bail reforms that include alternatives to monetary bail deposits, sureties, et cetera, to modernize the bail system. That's an important aspect here in the territory. The seventh is that government should invest in creating a community bail enforcement monitoring system involving dedicated law enforcement units and cutting-edge technology throughout Canada. It's all forward looking.

Ms. Blake: I thank the officials for being here today. I probably only have time for one question for the department. Over the summer, I have been travelling to numerous communities, and one of the primary concerns that has come up from First Nations or families who have been victimized or who have had offenders in their families related to charges of murder, manslaughter, or sexual assault charges — numerous communities have asked what supports is the government providing before, during, and after court, and this question has come from communities that have had manslaughter or murder charges in the community with citizens. The concern from First Nations is that they don't have the capacity or resources to address the dynamics in the community or the challenges that come after charges have been laid. Communities are wondering what supports they have access to.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am happy to speak further with the member opposite or answer other questions on another occasion when we have more time. I can indicate that the Department of Justice supports funding for the Indigenous courtworker program. I know that there are very skilled individuals who support families and individuals going through the court process — not only individuals who are accused of a crime, but they also reach out with their special knowledge of families and communities.

Our Victim Services branch at the Department of Justice is responsible for supporting victims through this process or any

process in which they are identified as the victim, even if the matter is not going to court. If the matter is going to court, I am aware that, should victims want to have the support of Victim Services, they can request it. If they are working with Victim Services, certainly the kinds of things that Victim Services does support families and individuals who are going through these processes.

I don't really have the time today to acknowledge how incredibly difficult it is. With respect to Victim Services, they also work closely with the mental wellness unit at the Department of Health and Social Services. For instance, when the anniversary of the horrible tragic crime in Faro was coming up, we proactively made sure that there were additional counsellors in the Town of Faro to support individuals who might be having difficulties or want to get support through that horrific situation. It goes on with respect to the charges that have not yet come before the court. We also support Gladue reports and Gladue aftercare by the team of individuals who work on those reports to make sure that a full perspective of an individual's background goes before the court.

There are a number of opportunities, and we are mindful of making sure that we can support victims as they proceed through this process and make sure they have what they need if at all possible. I would encourage, if you are aware of any individual situations, that you reach out to us or to Victim Services directly and help get services and wraparound services for individuals who are experiencing stress going through the court process.

Deputy Chair: The Chair would like to suggest that the member move that the Chair report progress to allow the witnesses time to take their seats before 3:30.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I wasn't sure if you would call order, but I'm happy to move that you report progress today.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Deputy Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 13 adopted earlier today, Committee of the Whole will receive witnesses from Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation.

In order to allow the witnesses to take their places in the Chamber, the Committee will now recess and reconvene at 3:30 p.m.

Recess

Chair (Ms. Blake): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Appearance of witnesses

Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 13 adopted on this day, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation.

I would ask all members to remember to refer their remarks through the Chair when addressing the witnesses, and I would also ask the witnesses to refer their answers through the Chair when they are responding to the members of the Committee.

Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, I believe that you will introduce the witnesses.

Witnesses introduced

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, we have several folks here today — first of all, the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Mr. Mike Pemberton; then we have Dennis Berry, who is the president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation; next to him is Chris Milner, the acting president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation; and then on your left, Madam Chair, their right, is the chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, Lesley Cabott.

I welcome them to the Assembly and am looking forward to questions this afternoon.

Chair: Would the witnesses like to make brief opening remarks?

Mr. Pemberton: I thank the minister and I thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to provide information for the members of the Legislature with respect to the Yukon Development Corporation. I would like you all to join me in recognizing today that we are meeting on the traditional territory of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

The Yukon Development Corporation is charged with continued investment into renewable projects with First Nation and community partners, which includes the Atlin hydro project and many others. Developing new reliable sources of electricity is a fundamental step in meeting the challenges and targets described in the *Our Clean Future* strategy.

Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation continue to work together to ensure that we access reliable, affordable, and renewable energy to meet the needs of the Yukon's growing population and economy. Through the independent power production policy, the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative, and the Arctic energy fund, we encouraged the development of First Nation and community-led renewable energy projects to reduce the use of fossil fuels in generating electricity across the territory. This requires an inclusive, collaborative approach, and YDC is actively working with all levels of government as well as the utilities to identify and support the renewable energy projects that best address the Yukon's unique energy context.

Yukon Development Corporation also continues to monitor impacts on electrical ratepayers, and we are pleased to be able to respond quickly to the recent impacts of inflation on Yukoners by working with the utilities to implement the inflation relief rebate.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on YDC's behalf, and I will turn the floor over to my colleague from Yukon Energy Corporation.

Ms. Cabott: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to be here today to share information with members of the Legislature about ways that Yukon Energy is providing Yukoners with sustainable, reliable, and affordable electricity.

I would first like to start off by celebrating that, on average, over 90 percent of the electricity that we generate comes from renewable sources.

The Yukon is a Canadian leader in renewable electricity generation, which is no easy feat considering we are an isolated grid with small economies of scale. Looking ahead, we know that the Yukon's electricity system is in a state of transformation. This means that demand for electricity is growing and that the way that people use electricity is changing. As a result, significant and ongoing investments are needed in all aspects of the Yukon's electricity system, from generation, transmission, and distribution to storage and end-user programs. This includes significant investment from all levels of government to keep electricity rates affordable. These investments must focus on three key priorities: increasing the supply of winter capacity and energy resources; decreasing winter demand for power; and upgrading our existing electricity system.

Yukon Energy recognizes and expresses our sincerest thanks to First Nation governments in the Yukon for allowing us to own, operate, and connect to critical energy infrastructure on their traditional territories. We also recognize that ongoing collaboration with First Nation governments and development corporations is critical to our energy future. Yukon Energy is committed to advancing meaningful reconciliation with First Nations and embracing new ways of working together.

Our work with First Nation governments and development corporations will continue as we begin to update our long-term resource plan next year. At the same time, we will kick off our short-term energy supply plan that is focused on testing the potential for wind along with firm backup capacity. For now, we know that we will need to continue to rent diesel generators during the winter. Renting diesel generators is the only solution available to us now. That allows us to keep the lights on and homes warm on the coldest and darkest days. As more Yukoners rely on electricity for heat, it is becoming increasingly important that we have these generators.

Chair: Order.

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I will allow the witnesses to complete their opening remarks.

Ms. Cabott: May I continue, Madam Chair? I put my notes away. Okay, I know where I am.

As I was saying, more Yukoners are relying on electricity for heat and it is becoming important that we have these generators while we advance other projects. These other projects include uprates to substations in Dawson and Whitehorse, as well as to the distribution system in Dawson; uprates to hydro units in Whitehorse and Aishihik; the battery project; the Atlin hydro expansion project; the soon-to-be connection of four more independent power producers to the Yukon grid; and last but certainly not least, our latest demand-side management program, peak smart home, which launched last week.

Of course, progress does not come without challenges. Obtaining funding and social licence is key to the success of all our work. It is also why some projects take longer to complete than others. Yukon Energy's dedicated staff and board work hard to overcome these challenges and to build the sustainable electricity future we all want for the Yukon.

Thank you, Madam Chair. That concludes my remarks.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the opening remarks from our witnesses today. I will, of course, welcome everyone to the Legislature, and we will jump right in with questions for our witnesses.

The first thing I would like to ask about is the status of the CEO hiring. I note in the motion today that Mr. Milner has the acting role. Can the board provide us an update as to the hiring of a permanent CEO for the Energy Corporation?

Ms. Cabott: We have been in a recruitment process and we expect that to end very shortly. We have upcoming board meetings and expect to have a recommendation to the board at that time.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that. We will jump into projects and the overall plan. When witnesses were here last year in November 2022, the previous CEO of the Energy Corporation noted that they would be looking at reviewing the 10-year renewable energy plan. Obviously, we are only a few years into it, but a number of things have changed. The previous CEO noted that it was time to look at changes to that plan or renewing that plan.

I would like to ask for an update as to what has been done to look at the 10-year renewable energy plan for the corporation.

Mr. Milner: Madam Chair, resource planning is going to take two forms over the next little while. Basically, the short-term needs will be identified through a supply plan, and we have started that process already. That's looking specifically at what we do between now and 10 years from now, but more importantly perhaps is: What does 10 years beyond and the decades that follow look like? I think that's where you start seeing conversations about large-scale projects that are set to meet generational demands and what the energy future of the Yukon could look like. It's where you start seeing conversations like the grid connection take shape. It's where you start seeing conversations such as emerging technologies that aren't quite market ready that the Yukon doesn't want to be out in front with but show potential for the Yukon in the future.

It's also where you start seeing big projects that take a lot of time, a lot of money, and a lot of social license taking place, so options such as: additional hydro; the pump storage projects that sit in the current renewable energy plan; larger scale grid-connected batteries; and larger scale renewable energy projects, such as wind projects that deliver energy in the winter.

We are actively pursuing this process right now. We have kicked it off in the summer with a strategy meeting with the board itself, we have engaged a contractor to map out the plan with our staff in place, we have two staff people in the office working on this actively, we introduced it to the CYFN conference that was in October, and we should start seeing

progress on the short-term supply plan — the zero- to 10-year options — in the next four to six months. I will say that we know that this will involve rental diesels for at least five years, as it takes that long to build anything.

Mr. Dixon: So, what will the outcome of this planning initiative be? Will there be a new 10-year plan? Will there be a set of revisions made to the previous plan? What can we expect to see as an outcome of this process?

Mr. Milner: The outcome will be two things: One will be a short-term supply plan, mapping out real projects that can be implemented in the near term; and the second thing will be a long-term resource plan. The reason why they are separated is that long-term resource plans take more time to do. We know that we need to update the current activities between zero and 10 years sooner than it takes a long-term resource plan to be completed. Larger projects are more complex. They take more time to determine their feasibility and certainly take more time to implement than the shorter projects in the interim. Those shorter projects would be more addressing the gaps that we know to be true today, which we are currently meeting with rental generators.

Mr. Dixon: What is the current dependable capacity gap?

Mr. Milner: Madam Chair, it is 37 megawatts.

Mr. Dixon: So, in the most recent general rate application, on page 3, the Energy Corporation notes that, with current trends, we're expected to see an increase of our non-industrial peak by 2030 of 36 percent. Does that sound correct to witnesses?

Mr. Milner: That is what we're expected to see: 36 percent between now and 2030. Certainly, we have seen an increase of about 25 or a little bit less in the previous five years.

Mr. Dixon: Yes, the CEO is close. It has been 23 percent in the last five years and it's projected to increase by 36 percent by 2030. Now he's noted that there is a current dependable capacity gap of 37 megawatts. If that increases by 36 percent, we're looking at a dependable capacity gap by 2030 of roughly 50 megawatts — 49 and change.

I think what many Yukoners are looking at understanding is how that gap is going to be filled. The CEO has made it clear that they are undertaking a zero- to 10-year plan — a short-term supply plan. What kind of projects can we expect to see in that short-term supply plan?

Mr. Milner: We're going to have to be really specific in the projects we look at in the short-term supply plan because the options to us are limited. We know that we need projects that emit less GHGs, so we will be aiming at projects that provide winter energy that are non-emitting, such as wind. We are in a really good place to understand that right now. We are the eve of connecting four megawatts of wind up on Haeckel Hill. That will provide inputs and intel that we have not had before — modern turbines connected to an isolated grid and delivering energy will give us a lot of information.

The other piece that we have coming forward is a large-scale grid-connected battery — 20 megawatts for two hours. What that does is two things: It helps with peaks and shaving peaks during times of high-intensity use, but it also

conditions the variable energy that would flow from wind turbines and other sources.

These are the kinds of projects that we can expect to look at in greater detail in the short-term supply plan. That said, we know that, in the background of any system, you need firm capacity. Right now, firm capacity comes to us in the form of diesel rental generators, LNG units that we own, and diesel units that we own. As well, the vast majority of our firm capacity is hydro. So, that system together is something that we will be exploring through the supply plan.

Mr. Dixon: The projects that the CEO just listed were all ones that are currently in the plans. Are there any new projects that we can expect to see in the 10-year plan?

Mr. Milner: Agreed — examples of those projects are in the current plan. The short-term supply plan will look at the scalability of them.

Mr. Dixon: Obviously the bulk of the dependable capacity shortfall is being filled with rental diesels. That has been acknowledged by the CEO already.

Can the witnesses give us a date or a year that we will no longer need rental diesels?

Mr. Milner: It is a difficult question to answer. We will always need dependable capacity, so the options for that dependable capacity will depend on the projects that come to life during that time. There are several projects in play right now that will reduce our reliance on rental generators and those are in play today. Whether they be the battery, the various IPPs that are in place, or the thermal replacement projects happening in Faro, Dawson, and Whitehorse — all of those put downward pressure on the existing number of rental generators. But until we get a larger renewable energy project, we will be relying on thermal in one way or another.

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I am sure that it goes without saying that we will return to rental diesels more, but I will jump into a few other projects that are on the horizon. I will start with the Atlin hydro project. Can the witnesses give us an overview of where we are at today, what the current budget and timelines are for that project, and any other updates that they can provide?

Mr. Berry: The current update on the Atlin project is that the estimate currently on the overall project value is \$360 million. We have a funding gap of \$106 million. We continue to work with the THELP — Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership — and the local Atlin community. What I can say is that Yukon has committed \$50 million to the project. I have currently expended \$2 million on the geotechnical work on the transmission line. This has also leveraged \$6.5 million in federal dollars to look at the generation footprint and undertake the geotechnical work there. This will be critical for us to get finalized engineering and better numbers for actual construction.

In terms of construction timelines, it is a two- to three-year construction window and, of course, that would commence as soon as all funding is in place. That is the current update.

Mr. Dixon: I think I misheard some of that, so I am just going to ask the witness to repeat one part of that: Can he tell us what the current funding gap is?

Mr. Berry: The current funding gap is \$106 million.

Mr. Dixon: That is roughly where it was last year, according to the witnesses last year. However, since the witnesses were here last year, we have seen a few developments. One was that, in May, the Premier travelled to Ottawa and gave an interview to the *Whitehorse Star* where he exclaimed that he had secured a “strong commitment” from the federal government in May in Ottawa. How much additional funding has been secured from Ottawa since the Premier’s trip in May?

Mr. Berry: What I can say is that I continue to meet monthly with Minister Vandal and Minister Wilkinson’s office. That strong commitment is still there. We have been lobbying the federal government as part of this, and I can say that this is still a project that is on their radar and that they are still committed to. In addition, staff through my office meet monthly with other counterparts, like ECCC, CIRNAC, and CanNor on this topic in particular. All indications I have is that the federal government is still highly supportive and we continue to work with them.

Mr. Dixon: Has the federal government being highly supportive provided any additional funding?

Mr. Berry: At this point, we are still working on the commitment and working to nail down the actual funding gap — the project gap. Part of that will be through the geotechnical work that is happening. So, I guess, to answer the question — no, other than the \$6.5 million that we leveraged to do the footprint work around the generation area.

Mr. Dixon: I note that the Premier also recently met with the Premier of British Columbia and referenced this project. Other than the amount contributed previously last year, has the Government of British Columbia indicated any further support financially for this project?

Mr. Berry: I can see that the \$20 million is what the Province of British Columbia has committed to this project. Any other updates regarding those discussions are probably best for the minister to answer.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that. The witness began to explain some of the money that has been expended already by the Yukon on this project; I believe he said it was \$2 million. Can the witness explain with some clarity what money has been advanced to this project? Which funding pot did it come out of? Was it out of general revenue from the Yukon government or was it from YDC and YEC? If so, what was that funding used for?

Mr. Berry: There has been \$2 million committed. It has not been spent yet. That \$2 million is specific for the geotechnical work along the transmission line that will come into Yukon through BC. That work will de-risk the project by actually coming up with the actual engineering for the transmission line itself. Again, the \$2 million leveraged \$6.5 million from the federal government to undertake, at the same time, the geotechnical work on the actual generation footprint, which, again, will allow us to get detailed drawings so we can start to de-risk around overall cost of the project.

We had \$50 million set aside through the Yukon Development Corporation, through the Government of Yukon. Those are our dollars to leverage toward the project. In order to

do that this year, I used a portion of the remainder of ICIP funding to pay for that work. It comes out of the \$50 million that we have set aside for Atlin hydro.

Mr. Dixon: Can I ask the witness to explain further? He said that it is ICIP money that has been expended so far. Can he explain that?

Mr. Berry: I misspoke. Sorry. Not ICIP funding. I will just look through my notes. It was from general revenue. Sorry; I am confusing my programs.

Mr. Dixon: The amount that has been expended so far was out of the \$50 million that has been earmarked by the Yukon government to spend on this project; is that correct?

Mr. Berry: That is correct; \$2 million.

Mr. Dixon: There’s one other piece of clarity that I’m looking for. The witness has said a few different things, Madam Chair. One is that the money was committed and one was that the money was spent, so I would just like some clarity: How much money has actually been spent — not committed, but how much money has actually flowed to the project?

Mr. Berry: So, committed through a transfer agreement with the company. Actually, spent so far — I don’t know if I’ve got the first invoice yet for that work. I could confirm here. It has not been dispersed yet, but we are expecting — the work is being undertaken right now before it frees up, so I’m expecting that first disbursement, but I haven’t received it yet.

Mr. Dixon: It attracted some attention last year when the former CEO of THELP allegedly absconded with some money from this project, and I was wondering if any money from the Yukon was involved in that alleged activity.

Mr. Berry: I can’t speak to what occurred then, but I can say that the Government of Yukon had spent no money with THELP at that time and had transferred no funds.

Mr. Dixon: I’ll move on from that. I would like to talk about Moon Lake now. Can the witnesses give us a sense of the timeline currently for that project? I know that when the 10-year renewable energy plan was first tabled, Moon Lake was forecast to be providing power to Yukon in 2028. Do the witnesses have a sense of when that project will be advanced, what the current budget is for it, and what milestones have been accomplished so far?

Mr. Milner: Moon Lake is in the renewable energy plan. It’s listed as a pump storage project. It could deliver 35 megawatts of energy to this storage during the summer and used during the winter. It’s a project that has a lot of complexities to it. It’s taken a lot of time to get to where we are today. It has been discussed in terms of what it can deliver to the grid from a feasibility perspective, but it has never been discussed as to how the project would be implemented in partnership with First Nations and funders in a successful way, and I believe that’s the stage we’re at right now, just looking at energy planning in the region and how best to work with First Nations on moving projects of that size and nature. Until we can get some clarity around what that looks like, projects like that are going to be slow to move.

Mr. Dixon: The current forecasts on Yukon Energy’s website have that project coming online in 2028. Does that seem realistic to the witnesses?

Mr. Milner: It is not realistic. Also, I am just getting a note here to correct the record on some of the dependable capacity comments that were made in our previous line of questioning. If we can go back to that for a moment just to clarify that dependable capacity comes from a variety of areas. It is basically the firm energy that we can rely on — dispatchable energy — such as hydro, the rental generators themselves, the generators we own, and the LNG units. The comment referenced that the bulk of our dependable capacity comes from rental generators and the bulk of our dependable capacity comes from hydro.

Mr. Dixon: I will return to that one in a moment, Madam Chair, but I will let the witness answer the first question about Moon Lake. When is a reasonable time that we can expect to see Moon Lake come online?

Mr. Milner: We are not able to put a timeline on Moon Lake right now until we can work through the critical partnerships that would be needed to move a project such as that and any large renewable energy project.

Mr. Dixon: I will jump back to the witness' correction of earlier comments. Of the 37-megawatt dependable capacity gap, how much is filled by rental diesels?

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the clarification. The dependable capacity gap during the winter peaks, between December and April each year, would be met by rental generators.

Mr. Dixon: So, just to be clear, the dependable capacity gap of 37 megawatts that will happen in our non-industrial peak will be filled 100 percent by rental diesels?

Mr. Milner: It is met through 22 rental generator units this winter.

Mr. Dixon: My comment that it is largely filled by rental diesels was inaccurate in the sense that it was not — I didn't say "100 percent"; I said that the bulk of it was. I do stand corrected — 100 percent of the dependable capacity gap is filled through rental diesels. I stand corrected.

As that gap grows in the coming years — and according to the YEC's current estimates, it will grow by 36 percent between now and 2030 — other than the battery project and new thermal capacity coming on in Dawson and Faro, are there other short-term projects that will fill the dependable capacity gap between now and 2030?

Mr. Milner: The only other project not mentioned would be Atlin.

Mr. Dixon: So, outside of Atlin coming online in the next few years, is it safe to say that the 36-percent increase that they are forecasting between now and 2030 will be filled 100 percent by rented diesel generators?

Mr. Milner: Our supply plan will help inform that answer in a better way, but for now, we are using rental generators to fill our dependable capacity gap.

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I will move on then to another project that is within the 10-year renewable energy plan, which is the Southern Lakes enhanced storage. Can the witnesses give us an update on this project, what its current status is, how much money has been spent on it so far, and whether or not it's achieving any increased generation?

Mr. Milner: The Southern Lakes enhanced storage is not currently advancing. It is also another project that requires a fairly extensive permitting process like the water licensing process that we're currently going through. We are advancing the water licensing process without that component to it to make that process as efficient as possible.

Really, in the end, a project of that nature would require some level of support from the First Nation whose land it impacts, and we have not achieved that.

Mr. Dixon: Is the Southern Lakes enhanced storage project currently cancelled or is it just paused? What is its current status? If they are not pursuing it, is it safe to say that it is paused or cancelled? What is the current status?

Mr. Milner: The Southern Lakes enhanced storage project is not moving forward. In fact, we have asked to recover the cost through the current general rate application. I was looking for the detailed number on that, but it is in the neighbourhood of \$8 million. I can circle back with the detailed numbered for you.

Mr. Dixon: The amount that has been spent on the Southern Lakes enhanced storage project is being captured in the current GRA that is before the YUB; is that correct? If so, what percentage of the total increase being sought by the YEC at the YUB through the GRA — forgive the acronyms — is made up with the amount spent on the Southern Lakes?

Mr. Milner: Funds spent so far on Southern Lakes enhanced storage is \$8.75 million. I'll have to take away that percentage of the rate increase aspect of that question.

Mr. Dixon: I note the major increase drivers that are included in the GRA. For instance, there is \$6 million spent, which the GRA indicates is 39 percent of the total increase. If it's \$8 million, that would seem to be above 39 percent. That seems like a large amount. I haven't seen it mentioned in this GRA previously.

I would like the witness to just confirm that the \$8.75 million that was spent on the Southern Lakes enhanced storage is in fact contributing to the GRA that's before the YUB currently.

Mr. Milner: I'm going to take that question away. Just because of the way that costs are applied to the GRA, the amortization period matters a great deal. It's not a straight line — this cost was a million dollars, that cost was a million dollars, and therefore that relates to the percentage increase. There's more complexity to that. I would like to get the right number.

Mr. Dixon: I look forward to whatever clarification the witnesses can provide.

I would note that the witness noted that \$8.75 million has been spent so far on that project — and if not all of that is being captured in the current GRA, how much either has been captured in previous GRAs or will be captured in future GRAs? I appreciate that they will come back with that.

I'll move on to the BESS project, the battery project. Can we have a status update on the battery project? What are the current timelines for it coming online? What is the current budget?

Mr. Milner: The battery project is expected to come online in 2024. In terms of the current status of the project itself, it is advancing. We have a contractor on-site right now prepping the electrical connections as well as the site prep. It will sit on screw piles and the battery itself will be inside of sea containers. The sea containers are being shipped to Canada as we speak and the batteries are sitting in a climate-controlled warehouse in Alberta.

Mr. Dixon: And the total budget of the project?

Mr. Milner: It's \$35 million.

Mr. Dixon: Last year, I believe the number was closer to \$33 million or \$34 million. Can the witness explain the increase between last year and this year to \$35 million?

Ms. Miller: I don't have that detail in front of me right now. I will have to bring that back.

Mr. Dixon: Of the \$35 million, what is the breakdown between Canada, Yukon, and ratepayers in terms of the cost?

Mr. Milner: We are receiving \$16.5 million from Yukon, and that leaves \$18.5 million that will go to rate.

Mr. Dixon: My understanding was that this project was funded by the federal government; is that not correct?

Mr. Milner: For clarification, the funding agreement is with Yukon. The funds are from the federal government.

Mr. Dixon: I am just looking for further clarity. How much was going to rate and when would we expect to see that submission go to the Utilities Board?

Mr. Milner: \$18.5 million is going to rate. It will be included in the next GRA.

Mr. Dixon: What is the timing of the next GRA submission?

Mr. Milner: The timing is unknown at this time.

Mr. Dixon: The Yukon government didn't provide any capital funding to this other than the funding that flowed through from Canada; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: The funding is through ICIP.

Mr. Dixon: I understand that the federal funding is from ICIP. My question is whether or not there is any funding from the Yukon government.

Mr. Milner: The only government funding right now is through ICIP, so not from the Yukon government.

Mr. Dixon: That's interesting. I look forward to further discussions about that.

I will turn specifically to the GRA that's before the YUB currently. I would note that the rate increases that are being proposed and that are before the YUB currently would result in a rate increase of 14.11 percent, and, of course, that is specific to the rate itself.

I realize that it is being timed with a number of riders that will be coming off and that the average residential and commercial bill will look different from that. But my question specifically is about the rate itself. Can the witnesses tell us how much the rate itself — first for the average residential bill up to 1,000 kilowatt hours — has increased since 2017 to this GRA that is before the YUB currently?

Mr. Milner: The last GRA was timed also with riders coming off and delivered no impact to bills itself. This current GRA was timed with riders so that it would result in a

three-percent impact in the fall of 2023, which was not accepted by the YUB and was moved to January 2024 and another three percent in August 2024 — so, six percent in total.

Mr. Dixon: My question is not what the average bill is. My question is what the current rate is for residential for the first 1,000 kilowatt hours. That is the rate that people pay for the electricity that they use. My question is: How much has the rate increased since 2017?

Mr. Milner: Madam Chair, I would like to get you a full and complete answer on the rate structure changes during that time. For that, I am going to have to take it away.

Mr. Dixon: I look forward to learning more about the increases in Yukoners' rates since 2017.

One of the major rate increase drivers, according to the GRA, is the diesel rental cost increases. The GRA notes that \$3.3 million is attributable to diesel rental cost increases, which is 21 percent of the total increase being sought through the GRA.

Can the witnesses give us a sense of the breakdown of that \$3.3 million? What is the increase? I know that there are increased units, but I also understand that there is an increased cost to those units. Can I ask for the breakdown of that \$3.3 million that is being sought to add to rate?

Mr. Milner: I can speak to the overall increase in the rental generator program. To break down the financial formula inside of the rate application, I will have to bring you back a different answer on that, because there will be a formula there that would be quite complex to share here at this time. Certainly, we have seen an increase in rental generators in general, in the cost of units, and in the number of units. That would be the primary driver there.

Mr. Dixon: Okay, well, let's talk about these rental units then. We are at 22 currently to meet the 37-megawatt dependable capacity gap that exists currently for our non-industrial peak. The witnesses have acknowledged that we anticipate a 36-percent increase between now and 2030. How many rental diesels will we need by 2030 to fill the dependable capacity gap that is projected by the YEC for 2030?

Mr. Milner: The number of rental generators required in 2030 is dependent on the projects that are in place in 2030.

Mr. Dixon: The projects that will be in place by then, according to the witness so far, are the battery and additional permanent capacity in Dawson and Faro.

Let's start with the battery. How many rental generators will be removed as a result of the battery?

Mr. Milner: The battery reduces our reliance on rental generators by four units.

Mr. Dixon: If Atlin were to go ahead somehow, how many units would that take offline from rentals?

Mr. Milner: Atlin would reduce the reliance on rental generators by four.

Mr. Dixon: That gets us down to 14 as of today, and we anticipate a 36-percent increase in the next seven years. I'm not going to attempt the math now, but it is pretty clear to me that there will be at least several dozen rental generators in place by 2030 in order to accommodate the peak gap. Does that sound correct? Is there something I'm missing? Are there some other

projects that are going to come online that will alleviate that gap that we're not aware of yet?

Mr. Milner: The primary factor that is going to result in the answer there is what happens as a result of the short-term supply plan. The thermal replacement program will also reduce generators in the near term, and it is possible that, between now and 2030, additional projects will come online. We will be working very aggressively to do exactly that to reduce our reliance on rental generators.

Mr. Dixon: But just to be clear, those other projects that the witness referred to at the end haven't been identified yet; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: The project that has been identified is the thermal replacement, which will reduce by nine. Additional projects will be identified through the short-term supply plan, which we should start seeing results on in the next six months.

Mr. Dixon: In the GRA, on page 3, it notes — this is early in the GRA; it's in the introductory component, and it talks about one of the reasons why this GRA is necessary. It notes that there is a growth in winter peak electricity demand. This is page 3 of the GRA — and I will quote: "Meeting these peaks demands for power in the short term requires the rental and operation of diesel generators each winter until new sources of dependable capacity can be built or connected to the Yukon grid." This comment is very much consistent with what the witnesses have told us so far — that we will need rentals to fill the gap until new sources of dependable capacity come online. But since we don't know of any new projects that will come online in the near future, my question is about the term in this GRA: "short term". It says that meeting those peak demands for power in the short term requires the rental and operation of diesel generators and so on. My question is: What do the witnesses consider to be "short term"? It is clear that we are going to need these for at least 10 years, and I would posit that we will need them much longer. What is the witness' view on what is "short term"?

Mr. Milner: For the purposes of planning, we are using the supply plan as short term — zero to 10 years — but "short term" can essentially be defined by the length of time that it takes to bring additional projects online.

Mr. Dixon: It seems to me, then, that we will be relying on rental diesel generators for the foreseeable future, or at least until some large-scale, new renewable energy project comes online that can displace the rental diesels that are filling the dependable energy gap right now.

I have heard the witnesses indicate that some projects that could contribute to that can be found in the potential projects that are before the IPP, so I'll move to the IPP for a moment now. What existing and potential projects are being considered under the IPP? I know that the IPP has a total program capacity. How close are we to the top of that capacity?

Mr. Milner: I'll start with the last question, which is: How close are we to the total capacity? The total capacity is 40-gigawatt hours. There are several projects in the queue to achieve that full capacity. If you add up all of the projects that have started the process, we will be just slightly over the 40-gigawatt hours. The projects that are advancing inside of the

next four months total about half that. Again, half of that would be solar and half of that is the two times 2-megawatt wind energy projects on top of Haeckel Hill.

Mr. Dixon: Once that program is fully subscribed and we're at that 40 gigawatt hours threshold, how much will those IPP projects contribute to filling that dependable capacity gap?

Mr. Milner: The IPP projects largely provide energy. Capacity comes in the form of something that is dispatchable. What we will be doing through the supply plan is looking at firming up renewable energy sources with battery storage and conditioning and, again, firm capacity in the background. If that firm capacity in the short term is diesel or LNG, what the renewable IPP projects do is allow us to bring energy on to the grid that is non-emitting and have the firm capacity in the background but yet using it as little as possible.

Mr. Dixon: Just to be clear then, the projects under the IPP provide no firm capacity; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: The projects in the IPP program are a critical part of a system that involves renewable energy, temporary storage and conditioning through grid-scale batteries, and firm capacity in the background.

Mr. Dixon: Those projects, of course, rely on firm capacity on the grid to be in place in order to be effective and useful, so it's clear then that the IPP won't be the solution to filling the dependable capacity gap — at least that's my understanding from what we have heard today.

I'll move back to the GRA then. The GRA includes a specific section — for the first time that I have seen in a GRA for some time — which is a business case for renting diesels. It's clear from this submission that the board directed the Energy Corporation to develop a business case for rental diesels. What the Energy Corporation has done here is to compare the idea of renting diesels for the next two years with the idea of buying rental units or former rental units and then reselling them. I don't think that is exactly what the YUB had in mind when they directed the board to take a look at the rental diesels.

I will ask: Why did the corporation not compare renting diesels to the construction of permanent thermal when they included their business case for rentals in their GRA?

Mr. Milner: The business case for renting or owning diesels is based on a levelized cost of capacity, which is essentially the cost of obtaining a kilowatt of capacity over a period of time — over a year. The business case would look at the financial metrics associated with that, and previous research into this has shown that the number is very similar.

I'm trying to get the detailed number here; I do have it in this package somewhere.

Essentially, what we need to do to put detail to the GRA submission as being requested is to go through a study, which is exactly what we're doing with Colliers right now, and that will be available early in 2024. We will be happy to share the detailed results at that time. It's going to look at options that look at the levelized cost of renting versus owning over the 40-year lifecycle, because when you build a permanent facility, you look at 40 years. It's going to look at selling that during the lifecycle and it's going to look at ongoing rentals.

Mr. Dixon: Can the witness tell us a little bit more about this work that Colliers is doing? It's the first we have heard of it. I am certainly excited to hear about it. What's the scope of the work that Colliers is doing? When will that report be available? When was it tendered and when was it awarded? What other information can the witnesses tell us about this new project that Colliers is doing for YEC?

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the question. I can tell you that, at a high level, the scope of work that Colliers is doing for us is basically doing that analysis on the financial metrics around renting versus owning over different time periods so that we can be sure that the costs of renting and the costs of owning are known to us when making decisions.

Mr. Dixon: That is a novel concept, indeed, that we would consider that. I think that's very interesting.

I will note, in the GRA that we have done here — and this is obviously absent even Colliers' work — it notes that the LCOC over a 40-year life for the 5-megawatt diesel replacement at Faro is significantly less than the rental diesel costs. So, it's clear that even just at the five-megawatt level — forgetting any economies of scale for going to a larger project — the replacement there proved to be a better price than the rental units.

Can the witnesses tell us a little bit more about the replacement diesels projects that they are doing both in Faro and Dawson? What is the status of those projects? What is the budget for those projects, and what is the timeline for those projects coming online?

Mr. Milner: The question is asking for the status on the thermal replacement program. We have units going to three places — Faro being one of them, Whitehorse being the other, and Dawson being the third. In Faro, we are retiring 5.1 megawatts and adding five megawatts in a new unit. That is forecast to be in service for Q3 of 2024. In Whitehorse, we are doing the same — replacing five megawatts of retired units with five megawatts of new units. It's going to be in place in Q2 of 2025. For Dawson, we have a retirement of a 2.5-megawatt unit and a 3.25-megawatt unit is going in its place. That was the only size available for that particular size and that will also be in place for Q4 of 2024. The total budget for the three projects is \$49 million.

Mr. Dixon: When did all three of those projects have that money expended? When did that \$49 million get spent on those three permanent diesels?

Mr. Milner: The \$49 million will be spent as per the terms of the contract as the projects move through their milestones. The reason why the Faro unit is in the GRA for this year is because it is coming online first.

Mr. Dixon: When would we see the new permanent thermal capacity that is being installed in Dawson come to rate?

Mr. Milner: Madam Chair, it will come to rate in the next rate application.

Mr. Dixon: Do the witnesses have an estimate of what that will result in by way of rate increases?

Mr. Milner: Not at this time.

Mr. Dixon: I would like to hone in on the work being done in Dawson on the thermal replacements. I note that in the

GRA before the YUB right now — on page 3.1-3, which is the appendix dealing with the diesel rental business case — it notes that — and I quote: “Additional new dependable capacity is forecast to be commissioned in 2024 (i.e., the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project, plus 6.5 MW of new diesel at Dawson)...”

My question is: How much of the 6.5 megawatts of new diesel generation in Dawson is new capacity that wasn't there before? It is not simply replacing existing generators, but it is actually new capacity — how much new capacity are we getting?

Mr. Milner: The new capacity, not replacing existing generators, will be another 3.25-megawatt unit.

Mr. Dixon: I had previously been under the impression that the Yukon Energy Corporation — the Yukon government — was unwilling to invest in new permanent thermal capacity, and yet we see more than 3 megawatts coming on through this project. If the corporation is willing to add thermal permanent capacity in this project, why not extend their lens beyond simply Dawson and look at adding thermal capacity throughout other parts of the Yukon?

Mr. Milner: The capacity in Dawson serves a specific function in that Dawson is isolated, needs to operate on its own, and is experiencing some pretty rapid growth.

In terms of the second part of the question — Why not consider that elsewhere? — these are the kind of questions that we are going to have to answer through this analysis in the short-term supply plan.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that.

Given the time, unfortunately, I am going to have to move into some specific questions. I would like to ask about the impacts of the hydro project in Mayo. Owners of a property at Minto bridge between Minto and Elsa have seen increased flooding since Mayo B came online. Can the Energy Corporation give us a sense of what planning is being done to mitigate damage to the property caused by high or fluctuating water levels in Wareham Lake?

Mr. Milner: Yukon Energy has been working with the property owner for a number of years on this question. Several things have happened in the past in terms of mitigations to protect gardens and whatnot. The most recent interaction with the property owner provided an option for applying for grants through the Yukon government, and that is where we have left the conversation so far.

I will say that, as part of the re-licensing project, there is a hydrologist looking at the overall impacts in that area of the hydro facility and the management of water, and that information will be available through the re-licensing process as it evolves.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that response from the witness. We will follow up with questions to the Yukon government at an appropriate time in the future.

I would like to turn now to the capacity available in different Yukon communities. For example, the witness has indicated that they have increased thermal capacity in Dawson because of the growth of that community.

Do communities that are more isolated have sufficient amount of backup capacity in each community in the event that the line goes down? For example, in Haines Junction, if the line goes down between Aishihik and Haines Junction, is there sufficient backup generation capacity in that community to sustain the demand that would be in place, even in the event of a line outage between the main grid and that community?

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the question. Specific to the Haines Junction example, there is ATCO capacity in Haines Junction to support that community while isolated.

Mr. Dixon: Just to be clear, if I understand the witness correctly, there is sufficient capacity in Haines Junction to meet the demand for that community if the line were to be down between that community and the main grid; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: For a fully complete answer there, we will have to go to ATCO.

Mr. Dixon: My time is quickly elapsing, so I will conclude by thanking the witnesses for their time today. Of course, we look forward to seeing you back here in the future. I appreciate the candor and information that they provided today and I look forward to hearing more. I will hand the floor over to my colleague from the NDP.

MLA Tredger: I will start by welcoming the witnesses. Thank you so much for taking the time to be here and bringing your expertise to us.

I want to just start by asking a little bit about the general rate application that is in right now. What is the net revenue that is expected from that rate increase? I would take that answer in either per year over the next few years or the total for the next few years — whatever format is the most convenient.

Mr. Milner: I will answer that question using a regulated rate of return answer, and that is 8.7 percent. In terms of net revenue, that varies according to operational expenses, but an important consideration with Yukon Energy and how they manage net revenue is that it is reinvested in capital to build up a system. In often cases, we require grants on top of that reinvestment in order to do the work that we need to do.

MLA Tredger: I might not have used exactly the right term there. I'm wondering how much money is expected to flow into Yukon Energy as a result of that general rate application and the rate increase.

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the clarification. The revenue target is near \$90 million.

MLA Tredger: How many years is that over, or is that per year?

Mr. Milner: Per year.

MLA Tredger: My understanding of the Yukon Energy budget is that you don't receive any money from the government directly to support operational expenses and that those are entirely covered by the rate; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: That is correct.

MLA Tredger: Is there any reason that it has to come from the rate, or is there the possibility of that coming through grants through YDC through the government?

Mr. Milner: I'll answer with the utility's perspective on this. In terms of operations, the rate does cover that. Where our needs are, moving forward, is really on the capital side of

things. That's where grants really can minimize impacts to ratepayers. Basically, you are buying down the cost of capital projects and passing on less of that to the ratepayer.

MLA Tredger: What I'm moving toward asking is — the decision was made to go to rate to cover the needs of Yukon Energy. I'm wondering if there were conversations or if there was the possibility of some of that coming from government rather than going to ratepayers. Have there been conversations to that effect? Is that a possibility?

Mr. Milner: I'll answer the question with an example of how government has lent support recently, and that's through the battery project. That essentially has a positive impact on rates in that it lowers the rate exposure. Again, it's on the capital side of things and that's where we can have more impact right now.

MLA Tredger: I think it's a good example because, from what I understand from the previous questions, none of the money for the battery project actually came directly from Yukon government but only as flow-through from Canada. Have there been requests to the Yukon government for grants to cover the shortfall for the battery project?

Mr. Milner: Not at this time.

MLA Tredger: Is Yukon Energy considering making any requests to the government for more funding in lieu of putting things to the rate?

Mr. Milner: We know that our capital program will put pressure on rates and that the best way to reduce pressure on rates is to work with government funders and other partners to support capital development. That's a conversation that is starting today and will continue.

MLA Tredger: I was looking through the numbers in the 2022 annual report about the return on equity. Could the witnesses provide the ROE for Yukon Energy for the years since 2016?

Mr. Milner: I will have to get back on the detailed numbers since 2016.

MLA Tredger: I want to go back to the question I was asking before, just so I really understand. Is there anything in the act or the regulatory mechanisms that prevent the government from providing funding for operational expenses of the energy company, or is it just practice that they provide it for capital instead of operational funding?

Mr. Milner: I will answer that question in a high-level format. Really, the importance of maintaining autonomy on the operation side of things is to maintain good status with our general business enterprise, and that's why the practice is typically done that way as a Crown corporation under the Yukon government.

MLA Tredger: What would the consequences be — I believe it is a general business enterprise — if that wasn't the case — if they had less independence and were receiving money for operations from the Yukon government?

Mr. Berry: To answer the question in terms of how the Yukon Development Corporation helps to reduce costs to ratepayers as a result of first capital investment, you can look at the Mayo-McQuesten line, which was a significant

investment — \$38 million — that was negotiated through YDC from the federal government.

In terms of your broader question about where the Energy Corporation is in terms of its operation expenses, it is nested within the Yukon Development Corporation, which is the sole shareholder and, of course, is owned by Yukon government. But I would say that those discussions about the energy company and where the costs come from — those are live discussions perhaps better directed toward the minister in terms of that. What I would say is that YDC staff and YEC staff meet weekly to talk about the cost to ratepayers and how we are finding and sourcing dollars for investment. First and foremost is the reliability of energy and second, of course, is the affordability of that energy. Those discussions happen in real time.

MLA Tredger: I won't ask questions about what should be done by the minister. I will leave those for the minister.

I am trying to understand what the consequences might be of a different way of thinking about doing this. The witness had specifically said that if there is less independence because they are receiving funding through the government for operational expenses, it would affect their status as a general business enterprise — I believe that is what he said, but I might have misheard the exact words. I was hoping for more clarification on that.

Mr. Milner: I am not able to answer that question in a fulsome way today.

MLA Tredger: I will ask about something else for a bit. I am wondering who the contractor is who is responsible for the grid-scale battery project.

Mr. Milner: The contractor's name is SunGrid Solutions.

MLA Tredger: Do they have experience with previous projects that are similar?

Mr. Milner: SunGrid Solutions has a number of battery energy storage solution projects on their resumé, so yes.

MLA Tredger: That's great to hear. Were there other bidders on that project and what were the relative prices of their bids?

Mr. Milner: There were two bidders that met the criteria on that project. SunGrid Solutions was the lower of the two.

MLA Tredger: Was it the highest scored proposal?

Mr. Milner: Yes.

MLA Tredger: I would like to turn and ask a little bit about the effects of the dam on chinook salmon. I am sure that the witnesses saw the CBC article this morning. I have some follow-up questions about that. The article referenced some possible mitigation strategies, because the most recent study found such a high percentage of the salmon were dying in the turbines, and one of those was fish-friendly turbines that were designed to be less fatal to fish. Is that something that the Energy Corporation is familiar with or looking into or is a possibility?

Mr. Milner: The study that was discussed this morning on the radio was aimed at doing a number of things, and it is actually an outcome of a working group that involves the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council,

and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, along with Yukon Energy, and they are tasked with providing a number of recommendations on how to improve fish passage at the hydro facility. They are going to be working together to sort of refine and define those recommendations over the coming months. I know that there are additional studies and additional work that is going to happen next summer, so we look forward to learning more about that.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the witness. I won't try to make any recommendations about what the mitigation strategy should be, but I just want to understand some of the options a little better. When we talk about fish-friendly turbines, is there a sense of how much that would cost? Is that possible to install at this dam? What might the price or the timeline be for that?

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the question. At this time, there has been no detailed research on what that would involve.

MLA Tredger: What about some of the other suggestions? There was talk of a bubble curtain or lights that would help fish to find the fish ladder. Is that something that has been looked into or is possible?

Mr. Milner: These kinds of mitigations are exactly what this technical working group is looking at. The report issued recently gives them some foundational information. From there, there they will start refining more detailed strategies.

MLA Tredger: I am just wondering what those strategies might be and then I will, of course, leave it to them to make recommendations about which would be best. I just want to understand a little bit about what the options are.

Is a bubble curtain or lights something that has been explored at all? Is there a sense of how much that would cost or whether that would be effective in this situation?

Mr. Milner: The study results were issued very recently, so the follow-up work is going to answer all of these questions that are coming in now. Yes, we'll leave it for the detailed work that must follow the study.

MLA Tredger: One of the things that was said in the article was that there have been repeated requests for the fish ladder to be rebuilt to make the entrance more accessible. Have those requests come to Yukon Energy in the past? What has been done with them? Has there been any work to scope out what that would entail?

Mr. Milner: The things that we have been able to do so far are to adjust operations to the fish ladder, so improving flows so that fish can find it easier and use it easier, and that's an important part of safe passage through the facility.

In terms of rebuilding or redoing the fish ladder, that work hasn't been looked at in any detail to date, but it certainly is coming in as a recommendation through the committee work.

Just in addition to that, we keep the gates open at night, so there have been some adjustments to how things operate there — keeping the gates open at night and there are fish grates that go in front of the turbines on the upstream side and redirect fish toward the fish ladder itself — ones swimming upstream.

MLA Tredger: I just want to read the quote from the article. This is a quote from Maria Benoit, and she said — quote: “‘C/TFN wants a total redo of that fish ladder,’ Benoit said, ‘and it needs to be opened up all year-round. We’ve asked

[Yukon Energy] to do that, and have to keep asking them.” That makes me think that this request has come in before. I’m just wondering: Does that mean that there hasn’t been any work done to respond to that request and scope out what that possibility would be and that it’s going to start soon? Or has that been done and decided to be not as useful as adjusting the flows? Could he explain a bit more?

Mr. Milner: The study itself is part of a broader effort in just improving fish passage through the hydro facility. The specific recommendations that are coming through the newspaper article are all part of the scope of this technical working group as they explore options that are both feasible and effective to help improve the situation for fish.

MLA Tredger: I want to turn a little bit to renewable projects. I am particularly thinking about pump storage projects. As discussed, Moon Lake is not on the immediate horizon until things change with Carcross/Tagish First Nation. I am wondering about what kinds of projects the Yukon Energy Corporation or Yukon Development Corporation are looking at outside of Carcross/Tagish First Nation territory. Have they revisited pump storage proposals from other parts of the territory? Could they tell me what their plans are around that?

Mr. Milner: As mentioned earlier with earlier questions, there are two parts to the resource plan that is going on right now. There are the 10 years out and beyond — so, the generational, multi-decade projects that are going to meet larger loads and larger demands. That process has to look at pump storage facilities in other areas. It has to look at whether or not hydro remains feasible in other areas. It has to look at things like the grid-connection intertie to British Columbia and emerging technologies that may be appropriate for the Yukon in the future, once they are market tested and available.

Those are the kinds of things that this resource plan does. How it does that is that it looks at the Yukon in terms of regions and regional needs, because it is different across the Yukon as well. It takes load forecasts and different scenarios. As you can imagine, load forecasts and scenarios can vary pretty widely in the Yukon, depending on your industrial forecast or your population forecast, and it matches what kind of project can meet that need. That process takes a little bit of time. It is going to be largely completed by 2025. Between now and then, we will be looking at the more short-term, urgent needs and that likely will be aiming at testing the feasibility of wind, battery, and firm capacity backup.

MLA Tredger: I know that Yukon Energy works quite closely with the Yukon government on *Our Clean Future* and particularly the energy side of that. How much additional generation capacity is needed in order to support the level of electrification that is planned for *Our Clean Future* between now and 2030?

Mr. Milner: I don’t have an actual number on the amount of capacity needed to do that by 2030. We are starting from a good place, though, with 92-percent renewable energy today — last year. As demand grows, obviously the need for more renewable energy grows. We are starting from a good place.

MLA Tredger: Maybe we could have this discussion a little bit more in generalities than the specific numbers. My impression of the current situation is that we have enough generation capacity but not by a lot. We are looking at a lot of electric cars, a lot of electric heat pumps, and a lot of electric heating coming online in 2030, and that’s so important. We need that. We really, really need that. I am trying to understand how we are going to meet that energy need. I am hoping that the witness can comment on that.

Mr. Milner: I spoke earlier of a 36-percent increase between now and 2030. These are the targets that we will need to address through new projects in order to support electrification. Now, the pace of electrification can change a lot of things, and I think that this is what we are seeing — that the demand on the system is significant and it’s today. We are meeting developable generation with the tools that we have today, and we need to come together on some renewable energy options for tomorrow.

MLA Tredger: I have a question about the grid-scale battery. I am looking to the future. If we were to add an additional grid-scale battery, would that also displace another four diesels, or is there a limit to how much the battery capacity will help the system? Are there diminishing returns on that?

Mr. Milner: That is an excellent question. The answer is complex and related to grid-impact studies that are currently underway. Again, that’s another study that is underway, but we will have that information and a better, clearer picture next summer.

Grid-scale batteries do provide a non-emitting source of energy and are definitely part of the picture moving forward.

MLA Tredger: Something I was really excited to see was the peak smart program coming online again. I know a lot of us were very hopeful that a new provider would be found for those hot water and thermostat controllers, so I am very excited to see that happening.

How much energy does the Yukon Energy Corporation estimate that this program is going to save in the coming years?

Mr. Milner: I am glad the member asked that question, because we missed that in terms of programs and activities that will decrease pressure between now and 2030. The target for DSM by 2030 is a 7-megawatt reduction. We did announce recently the peak smart home with a target of 400 homes to start. We just did this a couple of days ago, and as of noon yesterday, there were several dozen homes already registered, so it’s showing promise. There is a lot of interest. Yukoners clearly care about electricity and how they use electricity. The DSM is definitely a way to reduce winter demand.

MLA Tredger: What sort of work is the Yukon Energy Corporation doing to educate people about that program? I really think that would help with uptake. I have had the opportunity to learn a lot about it and I think that it’s amazing, but if I didn’t know anything and someone said: Well, we’re going to change the heat in your house — I think I would have a lot of questions.

Could the witness tell us about what work is being done to inform people about what the program means so that uptake is driven up?

Mr. Milner: Thank you for the question. We currently have quite a lot of material on our social media avenues. The website is there. We spent the summer at the market in downtown Whitehorse engaging with people. We will be running advertisements throughout the winter. We encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about this program to reach out to any of those places to find our contact information and learn more.

MLA Tredger: The witness mentioned a 7-megawatt reduction by 2030 from, I believe, the entire demand-side management program. What other elements are going to be part of that program other than the peak smart?

Mr. Milner: Just some additional tools that we're using to get the word out: general advertising, as I mentioned; we were at the #ElectrifyYukon Event at present on Sunday — yesterday; there is another event at the Canada Games Centre on November 21 and a lot of other community events; and we will be sending mailouts to homes — that's currently being planned.

The two other elements of DSM that can carry value are peak smart drive, which is related to electric vehicles, and peak smart work, which would be more on the commercial side of things — much like home but at work.

MLA Tredger: That estimate doesn't include any possible reductions if smart metres come online; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: I'm not sure of the answer on that one at this time.

MLA Tredger: I'm going to ask one last question and then I'll pass it back to my colleague to ask some more questions. How much energy did Minto mine specifically use during winter operation before it closed?

Mr. Milner: I don't know the exact number, but it was certainly in the megawatts.

MLA Tredger: I'll conclude my questions today by thanking the witnesses for making the time in their, I'm sure, very busy day to come and talk to us. I appreciate all the information. Thank you.

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to close out today. I'll pick up where my colleague left off on DSM. If I understood correctly, the witness indicated that their hope was to have a target of seven megawatts of DSM by 2030. Can he confirm if that's the case? How much are we getting through DSM currently?

Mr. Milner: I can confirm that the target is seven megawatts for 2030. Having the program just launched, we don't have stats yet on what's currently in play.

Mr. Dixon: What is the estimated budget for the DSM program? How much will it cost?

Mr. Milner: The budget for the DSM program for the year 2024 is \$2.8 million.

Mr. Dixon: So, that is the 2024 budget. Will that amount be captured in a future general rate application?

Mr. Milner: The budget for phase 1 is included in the current rate application.

Mr. Dixon: So, the current budget is \$2.4 million and that is for the next year, but there must be more beyond that to

get us to seven megawatts. What is the budget beyond the current budget for the DSM program?

Mr. Milner: Future phase budgets are currently moving through our internal approval processes and will be before our board shortly.

Mr. Dixon: We would anticipate that a future budget would be in a future GRA beyond 2024; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: Madam Chair, that is correct.

Mr. Dixon: My colleague also asked a question about Minto. Is there anything outstanding by way of money being owed as a result of Minto coming offline?

Mr. Milner: The total amount claimed from Minto coming offline is \$4 million.

Mr. Dixon: What happens with that \$4 million? Is that something that the corporation has to eat? Does YDC make it whole? Does it have to go to rate? What is the story with the \$4 million that is owed by Minto?

Mr. Milner: We are seeking to recover the \$4 million through the court process.

Mr. Dixon: If the corporation is unable to recover the full \$4 million through the court process, what happens with the amount owed?

Mr. Milner: At that time, we would have to decide whether or not to move that through rate.

Mr. Dixon: I would like to move on now to the Southern Lakes transmission project. Can the witnesses give us a sense of where that project is at, what its estimated cost is, and what the timelines are for the project?

Mr. Milner: The Southern Lakes transmission project referenced in the question serves a specific function to connect the Atlin project with the Moon Lake project inside the renewable energy plan; therefore, it is not advancing at this time.

Mr. Dixon: Has any money been expended on this project so far?

Mr. Milner: I will have to bring that answer back.

Mr. Dixon: I have some questions now about the debt instruments indicated in the annual report of YDC. I note on page 61 that the corporation makes reference to accessing lines of credit. In particular, I will quote from page 61 of the annual report: "As of January 1, 2021, the line of credit was \$51.0 million. Effective April 22, 2021, the line of credit was increased temporarily to \$58.0 million. Effective July 1, 2022, the line of credit was increased temporarily to \$80.0 million."

Can the witnesses tell us what that line of credit is used for and what the increase for this year has been? As well, what can we anticipate for next year?

Mr. Milner: The line of credit is used to finance capital projects. As capital projects are completed and moved into rate, then the line of credit is paid down through long-term debt and equity based on the ratio 60/40. The current limit on the line of credit is \$65 million. That allows us to deliver capital programs in play.

Mr. Dixon: If I understand what the witnesses told us, that line of credit is used to balance the expenditure on projects currently between now and when they can go to rate. How

many projects currently have money allocated based on that line of credit?

Mr. Milner: The line of credit supports our entire capital plan, so there are a number of projects inside of that plan.

Mr. Dixon: I will move on to grid connection. We have talked previously about the idea of joining the BC grid. We understand that some talks are underway, but I would like to know what the Energy Corporation's role in this project is — what its status is from their perspective and what work has been done to date.

Mr. Milner: I will start with a general sort of high-level perspective on the overall project, as it will roll eventually into the considerations in their resource plan and then pass it over the Yukon government for the reason that, at this time, the grid-connection conversation is happening between the Yukon government and the BC government, and we will be supporting as necessary when the time comes.

Mr. Dixon: Will the project be encapsulated in the energy planning exercises that you're doing for beyond 10 years from now?

Mr. Milner: Yes.

Mr. Dixon: I would like to return to the Colliers report that we have learned about today. Can the witnesses tell us more about the genesis of this report and the hiring of Colliers? Was the work that they are doing to compare rental diesels with permanent diesels something that was directed by the Yukon government, something that was directed by the board, or some other source for it?

Mr. Milner: The purpose of the report referenced is to update the analysis on the overall costs for rental generators and the overall cost for building new facilities. It is just part of due diligence moving forward.

Mr. Dixon: Was any work like this or similar to this done in 2018 or 2019 when the decision was made not to proceed with a permanent thermal generation facility?

Mr. Milner: Yes, similar work was done and, again, based on the leveled cost of capacity.

Mr. Dixon: Who did the work for the corporation back then?

Mr. Milner: I don't recall. We do have an analyst inside Yukon Energy to help us analyze various options as we move forward as well. It is possible that they did that internally.

Mr. Dixon: I will move back to the battery project. The witness has indicated that the battery project would give us a total dependable capacity of 20 megawatts for two hours. I will stand to be corrected if that's incorrect. Can the witnesses describe the capacity that is achieved by the battery?

Mr. Milner: The grid-scale battery project is 20 megawatts for two hours — 40 megawatt hours.

Mr. Dixon: Perhaps the witnesses can help me understand what that will mean for our grid once it's online. I will give the example of last year's prolonged outages here in Whitehorse. We saw power go out across the capital city for anywhere from six to seven hours, depending on which neighbourhood we're talking about. What role would the battery play in a situation like that? What would we anticipate its contribution to be?

Mr. Milner: The battery, in that situation, would serve the function of a very quick start and return restoration of the system.

Mr. Dixon: But its contribution would only be for two hours; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: It would depend on the number of megawatts that we're asking it to provide.

Mr. Dixon: I presume that they would call upon the full amount — 20 megawatts. If the full amount was required to be drawn on by the battery, it would only last for two hours; is that correct?

Mr. Milner: That is correct.

Mr. Dixon: How many grid-scale batteries would be required to fully provide the necessary dependable capacity gap that we currently have? Obviously, it would be in conjunction with generation that comes from wind and solar and perhaps others, but ultimately, when we think about a grid that has a significant portion of backup provided by grid-scale batteries, how many more batteries would we need to fill the entire grid?

Mr. Milner: That is exactly the kind of question that the resource plan answers, but I will take the opportunity to say that the battery does several things. It allows for the integration of renewables because renewables come in a variable nature. The battery will smooth that out through conditioning. It also helps us with black starts and restoration. It's a very valuable tool for our system and we look forward to having it in place.

Mr. Dixon: I will return with one final question on Atlin, just because I know that our time is almost out.

My understanding is that Atlin hasn't completed the permitting process in British Columbia yet, so even if we were to receive the \$106 million that the witnesses have indicated is the current funding gap, the project wouldn't be able to proceed right away. Can they confirm that and can they tell us, if we were to learn tomorrow that the Prime Minister had allocated \$106 million to this project, when it would begin construction?

Mr. Berry: What I can confirm is that, on the Yukon side, all permits are in place for the work that we are doing currently on the geotechnical work, as well as all the permits for the geotechnical work currently underway in BC. Permitting in BC is currently underway. It is underway. I do not believe they have everything in hand, but it is with the regulator and that work is happening in real time.

Mr. Dixon: I will repeat the second part of my question: If we receive \$106 million from the federal government tomorrow, how soon would the project be able to be under construction?

Mr. Berry: Well, the construction season is two to three years. I would say that the work could probably immediately begin, because we would have to purchase penstock and a whole bunch of related material that would arrive on-site. The geotechnical work will be complete — I am hoping — by the end of this fall. As soon as the money began flowing, they could begin working.

Yukon's commitment, of course, is to come to the table as well, so if the federal government came to the table with the money, I imagine that work could start as early as the spring or whenever we could start getting material to site, but that is a

broader question for the proponent, and right now, I am largely guessing, if you will, professionally.

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, given the time, I will wrap things up and close by thanking the witnesses for joining us today in the Legislature. I appreciate their time and information that they have provided.

Chair: Are there any further questions for the witnesses?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, I will just try to confirm one thing. Earlier, when there were questions from the members opposite asking about the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan funding, that is typically 75-percent federal dollars and 25-percent territorial dollars. I don't know whether the witnesses have this information, but are they able to confirm about the territorial government's dollars in the infrastructure fund which are going toward the battery energy storage project?

Mr. Berry: I can confirm that it would be 25 percent of the overall pie of the project.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: With that clarification, I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing before the Committee today. I appreciate that this was the first time for our two presidents in their roles, so I appreciate them answering all of the questions for the members opposite and thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair: Thank you. The witnesses are now excused.

Witnesses excused

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, 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 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.

Also, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 13 adopted earlier today, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operations of the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation.

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: Mr. Speaker, 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 5:25 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled November 6, 2023:

35-1-127

Eleventh Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees (November 6, 2023) (Clarke, N.)

The following documents were filed November 6, 2023:

35-1-162

Non-profit sector requests, letter re (dated August 2, 2023) from Wendy Morrison, Chair, Yukon Nonprofit Advisory Council, to Hon. Ranj Pillai, Premier (Dixon)

35-1-163

Takhini River Road maintenance, letter re (dated August 28, 2023) from Hon. Nils Clarke, Minister of Highways and Public Works, to Brad Cathers, Member for Lake Laberge (Cathers)