



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Thursday, October 17, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2024 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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

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
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 17, 2024 — 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

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Visitors introduced

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14(3) and notwithstanding Standing Order 11(6), I request the unanimous consent of the House for tributes to exceed 20 minutes.

Unanimous consent for Tributes to exceed 20 minutes

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14(3) and notwithstanding Standing Order 11(6), requested the unanimous consent of the House for the time allotted for the rubric Tributes today to exceed 20 minutes.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

In recognition of Persons Day

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to mark Persons Day, celebrated on October 18 every year.

Tomorrow marks the day in 1929 when the historic court decision was made to include women in the legal definition of “persons”. During this Women’s History Month and on this municipal election day, it is essential that we remember the courageous and groundbreaking vision of the Famous Five.

The Famous Five were activists and community leaders from Alberta who challenged the Supreme Court of Canada’s interpretation that women were not persons and therefore could not be appointed senators. This, of course, seemed absurd to Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby — each a true leader in her own right.

One was the first female magistrate in the British Empire. One was the first female Cabinet minister in Alberta. One was the founder of the National Council of Women of Canada. One helped start the Victorian Order of Nurses. One was the first president of United Farm Women of Alberta. Three were elected to Alberta’s Legislative Assembly and worked to create

legislation for the protection of women’s rights and property — all before they were even fully defined as “persons”.

They were undaunted and petitioned the Privy Council, Canada’s highest court at the time, to rule on the matter. The Privy Council said that, yes, women were indeed persons and could become senators. Lord Sankey took things one step further, saying — quote: the “... exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours...”

While the Persons case was the beginning, it was not the end. It was but one step in the right direction and a milestone in a fight for equality that continues almost 100 years later.

The Persons case did not impact laws that were discriminatory toward Indigenous, black, or people of colour. It took decades more for women of all diversity to gain the right to vote, and inexplicably, federal laws excluded First Nation women from being able to vote until 1960.

On Persons Day, we honour the bravery and determination of the Famous Five whose landmark case helped pave the way for women to participate equally in all aspects of life in Canada.

We also honour all those whose work over the years has expanded and strengthened those rights and worked to entrench them in our law and society.

Persons Day serves as a dual role of celebrating early successes and reminds us that we must be vigilant in the face of those who would see those rights restrained or removed.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the women leaders from across our territory and those who were able to join us here today as we recognize and celebrate the vision that allowed each and every one of them to achieve their own goals and serve their communities.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 18 as Persons Day in Canada. Emily Murphy, Nelly McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, and Henrietta Muir Edwards — the names of these five formidable women — the Famous Five, as we know them today — have been spoken over the last 95 years since the day that they took their case to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, Canada’s highest Court of Appeal at that time, in 1929.

Their case was straightforward: to include women as persons in the *British North America Act* of 1867. Until that time, it was widely interpreted that only a man could be a person and, as such, only men could participate fully in politics and affairs of the state.

Over the past 95 years, Canadian women have achieved remarkable progress across multiple spheres, from politics and law to science and culture. The first woman appointed to the Senate of Canada was in 1930. Another woman became Canada’s first female Cabinet minister in 1957. The first female Prime Minister was elected in 1993. Indigenous women like Jody Wilson-Raybould and Rosemarie Kuptana have held significant roles in Canadian politics, law, and advocacy, especially concerning Indigenous rights and governance.

While none of the Famous Five were appointed to the Senate after the Persons case ruling, their legal victory paved

the way for future women in politics and public life. Indeed, we stand on the shoulders of these five Canadian women who challenged the interpretation of the word “persons”. The courage and perseverance of these women offer inspiration for future generations. Their success shows the power of collective action, resilience, and legal advocacy in challenging unjust systems.

While significant progress has been made, challenges such as the gender pay gap, violence against women, and underrepresentation in leadership roles persist. Persons Day encourages reflection on how far we have come and how much further we need to go.

Salamat po.

Applause

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Persons Day. We are grateful for the hard-won fight by the Famous Five, who challenged the status quo and fought for women’s rights to participate fully in public life, including the Senate. The persons case argued to include women in the definition of “person” in legislation. After two years and the highest level of court appeal, the case won. Their courage and persistence paved the way for future generations of women to rise, thrive, and have their voices heard.

This work only benefited some Canadian women. It was not until 1960 that all Indigenous women had the right to vote in Canada. It’s a stark reminder that the experience of being a woman is not universal and that we must consider all women in our activism.

As I look around this room, I see many amazing women whose positions of leadership were made possible by these historic wins. I think of the former MLAs from my own community who inspired me. I am profoundly grateful for them and their work.

Persons Day is not only a celebration of the past but also a call to continue the fight for equality and justice. It’s a reminder that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and we must carry forward their legacy by supporting the rights of all marginalized communities.

In the spirit of Persons Day, we honour the strength, resilience, and determination of all women who fought and continue to fight for a world where everyone is recognized as a full and equal person.

Mahsi’ cho.

Applause

In recognition of International Archaeology Day

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I dig International Archeology Day. Every year on the third Saturday in October, we celebrate International Archaeology Day. Today, we take a moment to recognize the importance of archaeology and how it tells our human story.

Archaeology is more than just the study of material remains or, for lay folks like me, archaeology is more than just bones. Archaeology offers profound insights into our human history, our culture, and gives us a deeper understanding of our shared experience through time. It links communities to their

cultures, people to their ancestors, and tells incredible stories of our connections with the landscapes around us. This is definitely something worth celebrating.

I wanted to let Yukoners know that this Saturday, to mark International Archaeology Day, there will be a big celebration at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre.

This free event will take place on Saturday, October 19 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. At 1:00 p.m., archaeologists from the Government of Yukon will share updates about this past summer’s field season and their exciting new discoveries. I am told that there will be themed cupcakes and flint knapping demonstrations from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. — “knapping”, Mr. Speaker, meaning the technique of shaping tools out of stones, not sleeping lightly.

This event is made possible through a collaboration between the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre and Long Ago Yukon. Long Ago Yukon is a local organization that hosts lectures on a variety of topics related to anthropology, archaeology, and palaeontology. Throughout the winter, lectures are presented both online and in person at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre and, every year, International Archaeology Day serves as the official launch of their lecture series. I look forward to seeing what exciting topics they cover this year.

Thanks to archaeologists for getting their hands dirty, for dusting away the cobwebs, for helping young minds to distinguish the difference between chickens and dinosaurs, to distinguish the difference between archaeology and palaeontology, and for showing us where we as people have come from. I encourage all Yukoners to participate in the International Archaeology Day festivities this weekend.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to International Archaeology Day. Archaeology gives us information about our human history and culture. With the modern science techniques, we can ascertain many facts when artifacts, architecture, and so much more are found. We can piece together a picture and a story of how these items came to be, where they were found, how the group lived, worked and traded, and perhaps what they believed in by studying these finds. The finds could be bones, weapons, clay pots, or structures. The list goes on.

Knowing a few archaeologists, they are fanatical about a find. One local boy studied and came home to find our history — a boy I’ve known for years and who said he always wanted to be a digger. So, he digs. He screens and shifts dirt, he suffers the heat and cold and long hours in the field, and then, should he find something, he has to share. How lucky are we that archaeologists do share or we would not be aware of the past as it unfolded through time. So, thank you, Chris Thomas.

From the past to modern day, we are continuously creating moments in time and, from our earliest ancestors to the 20th century buildings, they study it all. An archaeology magazine showcases and prints the latest goings-on — articles such as “Study of Cave Conditions Offers Clues to Early Modern

Humans in Southeast Asia” or “Site of Rebellious Ancient City Excavated in Italy.”

In Yukon, we are known for having the earliest accepted occupation by humans in the Americas at the Bluefish Caves near Old Crow, Yukon, dating back approximately 24,000 years. Many items have been found in various locations throughout our territory — through the goldfields — and towns like Fort Selkirk and Forty Mile and various First Nation camps have been studied.

As the decades pass, nature — wind, water, sun, and sliding land — changes our landscape. I know that the archaeologists will be digging and continuing to explore humans and weave our stories together so that we understand the magnitude of human chain.

We wish you all the best on your future exploration and finds.

Applause

MLA Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to International Archaeology Day.

When I think of archaeologists, I think of curiosity — the drive to learn and discover and a passion for the world around them. I would like to share a story from last summer that I believe captures that spirit perfectly. It started with a post on the Yukon Helpers Network. Someone wrote that her children had dug a big hole and were beyond excited to have discovered a bone. They asked her to notify the authorities so that further excavation could start. They knew that they were on to something. Their mother was a little less sure and had a hunch that they might have found a chicken bone, but she wanted to encourage her children’s passion for discovery, so she posted on the Yukon Helpers Network: Was there someone who could come and take a look at the bone, maybe tell them the scientific name for chicken and make them feel encouraged in their explorations?

Enter Grant Zazula, Elizabeth Hall, Susan Hewitson, Susan Moorhead Mooney, and Claire Przekop, a real-life professional archaeology team who dropped what they were doing to come and encourage the kids and their sense of wonder. They came and visited the big hole that the children had dug. They brought their archaeology equipment and they began excavating. They showed the kids the tools and helped them sift through dirt to find treasures such as — in Grant’s words — a “historic zip tie” and identified the bone as belonging not to a humble chicken but to a mighty bird of prey.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of anything that better captures the spirit of archaeology and the joy of living in a place like the Yukon. Knowing that there are kids who are excited to discover and archaeologists excited to help them — well, that makes me optimistic about the world and the future.

I want to thank that archaeology team for making time in their busy days to encourage the wonder of children and that mother for taking her children’s dreams seriously and reaching out to connect them with people who also think that the joy and discovery of childhood matters, because that is how we get archaeologists for the future.

Good luck to those kids with all their future discoveries, and happy International Archaeology Day.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon artist relief fund’s Art Anonymous fundraiser

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to this Saturday’s Art Anonymous fundraiser event organized by the Yukon artist relief fund. Launched in 2009 by a group of compassionate artists and art lovers, the Yukon artist relief fund was founded with the simple yet profound mission of helping artists in need. Whether it’s covering some medical expenses, providing emergency funds for housing, or helping an artist through an unexpected personal crisis, the fund has provided critical and timely assistance to many artists over the last 15 years.

In recent years as the world faced challenges like the global pandemic, the fund became even more vital. The fund not only helped individuals through these challenging times but also contributed to sustaining a strong and cohesive artistic community. This collective spirit is embodied in the YARF’s much-loved Art Anonymous events, which have become a highlight of the territory’s cultural calendar.

Art Anonymous is an innovative fundraising initiative where artists donate their works anonymously, and art lovers can purchase these pieces without knowing who created them. This fun twist adds an element of surprise and excitement, as participants might walk away with a masterpiece by a well-known artist or discover a hidden gem from an emerging talent.

The fifth Art Anonymous event is taking place this Saturday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Fire Hall on Front Street in Whitehorse. There will be 50 pieces of original art up for grabs. Attendees’ names are chosen by way of a draw, with the first name drawn given first choice of the 50 works, the second name choosing from the remaining 49 pieces, and so on until the last name is drawn, and only then, when the last work has been claimed, are the names of the artists revealed.

I can advise that my spouse and I have attended at least one of these events, and the piece that we acquired — and we were much closer to 50 than to number 1 in the pecking order — we have had many years of amazing enjoyment of that piece.

If your Saturday night is still free, you can still participate in this night of fun, food, and music while supporting a very worthy cause. The Yukon artist relief fund is a testament to the power of community and the belief that art is an integral part of the Yukon. It is an acknowledgement that artists are essential to the territory’s identity and that, by supporting them in times of need, we are preserving and enriching the cultural legacy of the Yukon. As the fund grows and supports more artists, it remains a shining example of what can be accomplished when a community comes together to lift each other up.

In the words of many artists, the Yukon artist relief fund is more than just a financial resource; it is a source of hope, solidarity, and the shared belief that, no matter the challenge, creativity will always find a way to flourish.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party to pay tribute to the Yukon artist relief fund. The Yukon artist relief fund is a registered charity established in 2009 by a group of artists and art lovers. They provide short-term financial assistance to professional visual artists living in the Yukon who are in acute need because of serious health or family issues.

They have helped artists with the cost of travelling to Vancouver for chemo; they have flown an artist family member to visit during palliative care; they have helped artists who suffered from severe shingles and heart attacks; they have helped with funds for depression therapy; and they have supported artists' families devastated by a death. They support artists when they need the help the most.

All of their funds are raised from personal donations and through their signature event, Art Anonymous. They have never requested government funding; they have always trusted in the community spirit and support of Yukoners who have purchased tickets and given support. They only hold their Art Anonymous event when their coffers are low and, lucky for us, now is the time.

Like we heard, this Saturday, October 19, they invite Yukoners to not only support their efforts but to enjoy a great evening. Art Anonymous is an evening of chance and fun from where you could take home a piece of fine art. Picture 50-plus artworks displayed anonymously, with the names of the artists revealed later. Enjoy a glass of bubbly and canapés while you tour the art, and the names will be drawn from a hat. You could be the first to select a piece of art that you would like to take home or you could be the last. There will be music and an auction to add to your night out.

Art Anonymous is at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 at the Old Fire Hall. Tickets are still available on their website; just Google "Yukon artist relief" and you will find a charitable receipt for the eligible portion of your ticket.

Mr. Speaker, we all benefit from a society full of art and artists. The Yukon is particularly lucky to have more than its fair share of creative, passionate people who dedicate themselves to creating art. We are so grateful to the volunteers and donors of the artist relief fund for supporting those incredible people.

So, thank you and good luck with the upcoming Art Anonymous.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling the five-year review report of the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*, pursuant to section 4 of the act.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today, pursuant to section 53(3) of the *Yukon University Act*, the Yukon University 2023-24 annual report and the Yukon

University year in review and consolidated financial statements.

I also have for tabling a legislative return on school drinking water quality and related appendix, which breaks down the timeline of work completed as of October 17, 2024.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today a legislative return in response to questions posed by the Member for Copperbelt South in Committee of the Whole on October 15.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 25 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 25 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Porter Creek Centre on October 16, 2024. The petition presented by the Member for Porter Creek Centre meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 25 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation. Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 25 shall be provided on or before October 31, 2024.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports the ongoing implementation of the *People Plan Strategic Plan 2024-2034*, a comprehensive corporate strategy aimed at enhancing recruitment and retention efforts within the Government of Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to fix the current damage to the surface of Takhini River Road in a timely manner and announce the date for a much-anticipated public meeting to discuss the planned Takhini River Road upgrade project.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to abandon its plans to use facial recognition software in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide nurse practitioners with their own pay scale that recognizes their skills and responsibility.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding with a ministerial statement today, the Chair would like to make a brief statement.

Standing Order 11(3.2) says: "Copies of the Ministerial Statement to be delivered that day shall be provided to the Speaker and the House Leader of each party in opposition to the government at least two hours before the opening of the sitting."

Today, the minister's office sent the ministerial statement by e-mail to the Speaker and House Leaders at 10:59 a.m. The statement was not received by the Speaker and the House Leaders until 11:02 a.m. — two minutes after the deadline.

It is my opinion that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources made an effort to comply with the Standing Orders, even if the effort was not successful. In the interest of the members who have prepared for this ministerial statement, I will allow it to proceed today despite the small delay in the copies being provided. But be warned, it is the responsibility of the minister to ensure that the Standing Orders are followed and members should not expect similar leniency in the future. Leaving things to the last minute is never a wise plan.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Victoria Gold Eagle Gold mine heap leach failure

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the situation at the Eagle Gold mine site, focusing today more on water quality and the downstream environment. On-site, the berm is now 30-percent complete. The pit pond extension is now complete, bringing the total to 216,000 cubic metres built since the receiver has been on-site.

Groundwater samples from Dublin Gulch below the slide continue to reveal high levels of cyanide. We also see metals like cobalt, copper, mercury, nickel, silver, and selenium in the groundwater below the slide. Recent tests in Haggart Creek by the mine have now found levels of mercury that exceed aquatic health guidelines. Fortunately, the form of mercury present is less likely to accumulate in fish and wildlife tissues; however, these results reinforce the need for the planned groundwater interception wells below the safety berm. So far, work on three of the groundwater interception wells has begun as the safety berm is going in. In the meantime, several sumps have been installed to intercept and capture shallow groundwater. We'll continue monitoring both the surface and groundwater to determine if the measures that we have directed are effective or if further actions are needed to protect the environment.

We understand that the heap leach failure continues to raise concerns among local residents, especially about the safety of hunting, fishing, and other cultural activities. Hearing about mercury and cyanide in the water can be troubling, and we share those concerns. At this time, based on the data and professional expertise we have, the levels of mercury and other heavy metals in Haggart Creek do not pose a heightened risk to the health of residents or to those using the land and water downstream of the mine. Health officials are in regular communication with staff from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to discuss findings.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and keep Yukoners informed if the risks change significantly.

The chief medical officer of health and the chief veterinary officer conclude that locally harvested animals like moose and caribou remain safe to eat. To ensure that we maintain this level of safety, the Department of Environment's Animal Health Unit and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun are asking hunters who harvest moose and caribou north of Mayo to collect and submit samples from the liver, kidney, muscle, and teeth of these animals. This testing will help establish baseline data and, over time with this data, we'll be able to monitor if levels of heavy metals in the animals' tissues change. We expect preliminary results from this study to be available by early 2025.

This summer, the Government of Yukon, in collaboration with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, also conducted a fisheries monitoring program.

Currently, we are in the process of analyzing and reporting the data, and we will share the results as soon as they are available. In addition, we are working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to get a better understanding of how much winter habitat is available for fish in the area, as this is still not well understood.

I look forward to hearing the opposition members' responses and look forward to continuing to inform Yukoners regarding the progress of the remediation work and environmental monitoring at the Eagle Gold heap leach failure.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this statement today. This is the second ministerial statement in about a week on this issue, and we also had a very lengthy discussion on this topic earlier this week during Energy, Mines and Resources debate at Committee. I look forward to reviewing the legislative return that the minister tabled here earlier today.

Perhaps I will take the time to ask the questions that I didn't get to or need to follow up on from that debate. Can the minister tell us if water treatment has started yet on-site, and if not, when does he expect that to begin? Did the Liberal Cabinet seek any advice from an independent party on the best course of action on whether to pursue receivership or allow the company to apply to restructure itself under CCAA? If they did, who provided that service to them?

I asked the minister about when they retained PricewaterhouseCoopers, or PwC, and about an invoice that PwC sent to the Yukon government for professional services

rendered with respect to the receivership of Victoria Gold prior to August 13. We were advised by a whistle-blower that this was the case, but the minister told us in debate that PwC didn't start working on this until the court date in mid-August. So, I'm hoping the minister can clarify that for us today, as we understand that invoice was for an amount of almost \$83,000.

I'm also hoping for an update on why the Liberal receivership order included not paying for things like severance and vacation pay for employees who were terminated by the receiver. Does the minister know how much is owed to these employees?

We also understand that the principal for PwC is paid \$925 per hour, although the minister wouldn't confirm or deny that figure. To put that in perspective, that individual would make more in two weeks than most Yukoners make in a year, and I'm wondering why the minister won't provide Yukoners with that information, given that a significant amount of taxpayers' dollars are being used to pay for it.

EMR officials told us during a briefing that there are plans in place for an independent review of the Yukon government's role in the heap leach failure. Can the minister provide us with a schedule for when that might occur and when the terms of reference will be available?

We heard from a First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizen this morning regarding contracting at the site. There was a comprehensive benefits agreement, or CBA, in place before the failure, which includes first right of refusal for this company within the FNNND traditional territory.

With equipment on-site both before and after the slide, this company contends that they should have been one of the contractors inherited by the receivership to continue working at the mine; however, according to the company, the ongoing exclusion, despite the existence of this agreement, contradicts the principles of reconciliation and their first right of refusal. Can the minister tell us if the cancellation of the CBA was a term of his government's receivership application, or was that decision made by PricewaterhouseCoopers?

Finally, I am wondering if the minister is concerned about the receivership with respect to banks financing future projects in the Yukon. Has he had any discussions with them to talk about this issue?

Thank you, and I hope that the minister can answer these questions today; if not, perhaps he can commit to another legislative return.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that there is now additional water storage on-site. We have questions: How much water is being treated each day, and how much is being discharged? These are important questions to ensure that we're not just storing more and more contaminated water on-site but that the water is being treated and discharged in a timely way.

The most recent update from the Government of Yukon on the Eagle Gold mine site stated that the mercury levels of the water exceeded the water quality objective. The news article suggested that we would learn more about that next week, which is now this week. I am wondering if the minister can provide a little more detail on that for the record. What are the

water objectives for mercury, and what are the levels being recorded?

The minister said that the mercury and cyanide levels are above the guidelines but that they do not pose risk to humans, wildlife, or land. Can he elaborate on that? What is the purpose of guidelines or reporting elevated levels if the minister says that they pose no risk?

I would also like to ask the minister about the CBA that was signed between Victoria Gold and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. The minister has often suggested that mines have a responsibility to the nations on whose land the mine sits. Does the minister believe that the receiver has that same responsibility to a First Nation where remediation work is taking place?

I have been talking to business owners in Mayo who feel that the receiver is not honouring that existing agreement. Na-Cho Nyäk Dun business owners who invested heavily in their companies to scale up in order to get work at the mine site are now being sidelined in favour of larger companies from elsewhere. The minister has been clear that Victoria Gold still exists and that PwC is simply managing the company while it remediates the failure. What role does Yukon government play to ensure that the receiver lives up to those obligations? Has the minister provided any direction to ensure that the CBA is being followed during the remediation as well?

Some of these companies stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars due to unpaid invoices to Victoria Gold. The least the government and the receiver should be doing is respecting the CBA and ensuring that Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizens and companies get a fair share of the work going forward.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When I was preparing today's ministerial statement, I said to myself that I was going to try to not get into the political back-and-forth here today. I'll do my best to do that, because what I want to do is communicate with Yukoners. One of the things that grabs me here is that the Yukon Party hired PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Wolverine mine when it went into receivership, so it's as if there's some sort of problem with the receivership now.

I understand clearly that the Yukon Party would leave Victoria Gold in place, and I respectfully disagree with that. I also understand from the Yukon NDP that they would suggest that mining should be shut down — at the very least, in Na-Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territory — and I will respectfully disagree with that.

I'll get to some of these answers. It is a little bit frustrating to hear about how this is the second ministerial statement in a week. There's no discussion for the other seven ministerial statements that were disregarded — about Whistle Bend or about telecommunications for Yukoners and all those issues, including health care.

And then to say: Why don't you give me a legislative return? The Yukon Party, in its — I don't know how many years it was — 14 years in office issued one legislative return. Well, we doubled them today.

Of course, we sought the advice from many professionals on many facets. In fact, I referenced some of them today in the ministerial statement.

Just to clear up a couple of things, there are not levels of cyanide that are exceeding environmental thresholds in the creek — what I said was “mercury” and the reason that the professionals told us that this was not of concern is because of the specific type of mercury that it is — I would have to get that technical response — but that is us providing that information today.

In this instance, what we need to do is to get that berm in place in order to get the groundwater interception wells in below that. They’re starting to go in right now. So, as the berm moves across the Dublin Gulch, they’re starting to put those interception wells in. At the same time, they are working on water treatment. It is not ready, and the last time it’s ready — you know what? I’ll table it for the members opposite. So, when Victoria Gold started to put water out through their water treatment, cyanide levels just shot up in the creek and that’s when we got all the fish deaths.

So, no, we will direct the receiver to continue to get water treatment placed and make sure that it is done safely for the environment. As the regulator, we will continue to do that work regardless of who is in the role of management at that site. We will continue to protect the Yukon’s environment for all Yukoners.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Fire Marshal’s Office

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, early this week, Yukon fire chiefs sounded the alarm about the government’s lack of support for the Fire Marshal’s Office. According to the president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs, the FMO has been critically underfunded for years under this Liberal government.

Here’s what he said earlier this week: “From our point of view they’ve been critically underfunded for years and that has a trickle down effect ... Whether it’s our equipment being maintained, or replaced in a timely manner or training being provided, you know the lack of funding does make that challenging.”

So, Mr. Speaker, why is the Liberal government underfunding the Fire Marshal’s Office?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I’m going to start right out of the gate by disagreeing with the member opposite and the hypothesis that he’s putting forward.

Time and again, we’re hearing from the Yukon Party a lot of narratives that really stretch credulity. The Fire Marshal’s Office provides oversight, training, honoraria, and equipment for community fire departments and programs. Fire departments and programs rely on a core of volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to train and be available.

The Fire Marshal’s Office works hard to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters throughout the Yukon. Their efforts include hosting community meetings as well as working with

the Yukon First Nations and local governments. They’ve developed a level-of-service model. This model — one person in the community can build fire resilience through prevention and education as a fire safety champion, four can support a scene safety response unit program, and eight can support a fire department.

Now, these emergency responders perform such a valuable service. Just recently, we increased the honoraria to all of the volunteer firefighters outside and in rural departments. We did that because we recognized that there was a gap in the funding they got for all the work that they do on a regular basis and we’re going to continue to support our Fire Marshal’s Office and the volunteer firefighters.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I’ll remind the minister that I was quoting the president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs.

Yukon fire chiefs have been clear about this issue. While they appreciate the increase to the honorarium that the minister recently announced, they are worried that it will come at the expense of other aspects of the Fire Marshal’s Office. One fire chief who reached out to us said that he was worried that the increase in honoraria might mean that the already cash-strapped Fire Marshal’s Office would have fewer resources to handle upkeep of equipment, halls, and personal protective equipment and to meet important national standards.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Community Services assure firefighters that the increase in honoraria that he recently announced will actually be new money that will be added on top of the FMO’s current budget and will not come at the expense of the already under-resourced Fire Marshal’s Office?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I too received the letter that the member opposite is referencing today. I got it yesterday afternoon at about 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon. I was in the House actually talking to your colleague the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin.

Mr. Speaker, I will respond to that fire chief. I have no problem sitting down and talking to them. I have no intention of cutting the fire service. What we are doing is enhancing services to firefighters. That is what we are doing. We are looking at a whole host of things all the time. As a matter of fact, we did a rural fire services progress — an independent review of fire services in rural Yukon — and it was released in 2021. The Fire Marshal’s Office is making good progress on implementing those recommendations to ensure safe and sustainable fire service across the territory.

We undertook that study, Mr. Speaker. It had been woefully neglected for a long time. We came in and worked on this. We are working to make sure that our fire services are responsive, that the people who are working for us on a volunteer basis, who are doing this very valuable service for rural Yukon, are compensated appropriately, and we want to make sure that they have the tools they need to do the jobs they are doing.

We have always had that commitment. That is one of the reasons why we undertook the rural fire services review. We have made good progress on this. I commend the Fire

Marshal's Office and I look forward to having more questions in a few minutes.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, lack of support for the Fire Marshal's Office from this Liberal government is not a new issue.

Earlier this year, CBC Yukon reported that Yukon — quote: "Fire chiefs say paper work and equipment repairs are massively delayed as a result of staff shortages..." in the FMO. According to the president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs at that time, lack of support for the FMO meant that there was a backlog of older, broken-down equipment in Yukon fire halls. That fire chief warned: "... it puts all Yukoners at risk."

Our fire chiefs have raised very legitimate and serious concerns, including emphasizing that adequate funding for the FMO is even more important than what firefighters are paid personally.

So, what steps has the minister taken since fire chiefs raised the alarm about the lack of support for the Fire Marshal's Office?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Listen, I understand that the member opposite is doing his job. He got a letter — really good. He is asking me questions about it. I am going to respond to the individual myself; I will do that. I have a good relationship with our rural fire chiefs. I have met with them and I will continue to meet with them.

We undertook a review of the fire services in rural Yukon. The Fire Marshal's Office has acted on this feedback by developing a levels-of-service response model, formalizing mutual aid agreements, and implementing a fire safety champion program that focuses on fire prevention and education across the territory. We have training programs that we are putting in place. The Fire Marshal's Office has visited every unincorporated community to discuss the different levels of service that can be established. Many of these visits have resulted in a scene safety response unit in previously unserved areas. This includes working with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to support scene safety response, which became active in July 2024.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with our Fire Marshal's Office and with our fire chiefs across rural Yukon. We are listening, and we hear these concerns, but right now, that is all they are — sort of speculation. We are working with our rural fire chiefs to give them the resources they need to do the job that we are asking them to do. The first step that we took was to increase their honorarium. That is how we are supporting our firefighters.

Question re: Psychology profession regulations

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, on October 5 last year, the minister told the Legislature that psychology regulations would be completed by the spring of 2024. So far, we have not seen these regulations come into force.

Can the minister tell us why these regulations have been delayed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, I'm really happy to talk about all of the good work that we are doing in actually regulating a profession that hasn't been regulated for decades. Before we

undertook this process, Mr. Speaker, we had psychologists who could come from anywhere in the country, declare themselves a psychologist, hang a shingle on their door, and start treating people without any oversight. It was untenable. So, we have taken steps to develop a regulation. We are working forward to make sure that this profession and many of our health professions are better regulated and that the rules are clearer and better understood.

That is the work that this government has undertaken. It should have been done a decade ago, but it wasn't, so here we are doing the hard work to make our health professions better and make them safer and meet the needs of the modern era. We are going to continue that work.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the minister was very clear that this was a priority, and he told the Legislature last year that these regulations would be in place by this spring. There is now snow on the ground, and many health providers are starting to wonder why the minister is dragging his feet. When can we expect these regulations to be in place?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what we're doing. We're actually doing the work to regulate psychologists under the *Health Professions Act*. All individuals providing psychology services and wanting to use the title "psychologist" can reach out to the Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs branch for information about this regulation.

I want to thank all the professional psychologists who are working so closely with us to develop this regulation. We really appreciate their willingness to work with us and their ongoing support as we develop this new regulation. We are working; we know that it's a priority for psychologists. It's also actually a priority for the clients in psychology. We're working very hard to get this regulation done, and we'll have more to say on this in the near future.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the practice of psychology is an incredibly important component of mental health services in the Yukon, and at present, this practice is completely unregulated. Psychologists in the territory have been calling for regulations for years now, and while the minister has said the right things about moving forward, we just haven't seen actions to back up his words.

The regulations for the practice of psychology in the Yukon are very important, and it's important to get them right. So, before the minister adopts the regulations into force, will he agree to share the draft regulations with those who are most impacted by them: the society of Yukon psychologists?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, again, this is one of many improvements that we have undertaken in the health field, and I know that my good colleague the minister of health can talk in greater depth about all the work that we're doing to improve the health system in the territory. This is one part of it. We're fast-tracking this. This is sort of a priority in the near future, but we're actually looking at all the health professions and there's a larger act review going on.

Local psychologists were engaged in July 2024 for more feedback on the standards of practice. We are working with our psychologists on this regulation. We're going to continue to

uss out their feedback, make sure that this regulation fits their needs, and when it's ready, we will bring it forward.

But we're not going to rush it; we're going to work with our psychologists to make sure that this regulation meets their needs. We're going to do it right; we're going to make sure that it's done. I would love to have it in place, of course, right now, but we're working with our psychologists, and we're working with our team in Justice and with CS to make sure we have the best regulation for Yukoners — one that has been sorely needed for a very long time.

Question re: Yukon Association of Education Professionals collective agreement bargaining

Ms. White: Earlier this week, the Premier talked about negotiations with the Prime Minister and said — and I quote: “The federal decision to not get to the table, I think, is something that is disrespectful. We should be back at the table.” I agree. The feds not going back to the table was disrespectful. Closer to home, what was also disrespectful was the Public Service Commission issuing a statement on the Yukon Association of Education Professionals collective bargaining calling teachers “not fiscally responsible” and then sending that same statement to all Yukon parents and guardians.

Since the Premier seems to understand how unprofessional it is when a negotiating partner doesn't respect the process, I am wondering why his government has refused to go back to the negotiating table with teachers.

Will the Premier commit to going back to the table with Yukon teachers?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I think that part of the question here was about messaging that was sent through our SchoolMessenger system. The health and safety of students and staff is our first priority. Timely communication with students, families, and school staff is always critical. The SchoolMessenger platform is our most effective timely communication tool to reach families of students and school staff. Messenger is used for many different forms of communication, including safety, reporting, absenteeism, communicating upcoming events, and providing families with general education-related information. Messages sent by SchoolMessenger often include staff so that they are aware of the communication, as they are typically the first point of contact for parents and guardians of Yukon students.

On October 7, the Department of Education shared with the school community, including parents, guardians, and staff, the statement from the Minister of the Public Service Commission regarding collective bargaining and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals. This was information that was timely. It needed to clarify some questions that students and school communities had.

Speaker: Order.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for a great example of disrespect shown to Yukon educators.

The truth of the matter is that the Yukon desperately needs teachers. It needs to retain the teachers it has and to recruit new teachers. The school year started with 50 vacant teaching positions. We know that the struggle to recruit impacts rural

Yukon the hardest. As of this week, the school in Pelly Crossing was short five teachers and two education assistants, and the school in Old Crow has been operating with half the required staff for over two years. This is unacceptable, but there is a solution to this problem, and that is to offer wages to attract and retain educators, wages that are reflective of the cost of living in the north and the unique challenges of living in remote and rural communities.

So, given the need to recruit, retain, and value our teachers, does the minister think it's respectful to offer Yukon teachers an 8.5-percent increase over four years — an amount that is lower than what was offered to Yukon government employees?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We recognize, as a government, and we respect the work of the teachers and the dedication that they put to their profession, and we are very much committed to securing a renewed collective agreement that is both fair, balanced, and fiscally responsible, while supporting the ongoing efforts to attract and retain teachers to our communities.

Ms. White: So, there is no response there to whether it was respectful to offer Yukon teachers an 8.5-percent increase over four years, an amount that is lower than what was offered to Yukon government employees.

So, last week on World Teachers' Day, the Minister of Education said — and I quote: “We remain dedicated to listening to educators and lifting them up, individually and collectively.”

And then this government issued a press release, sent to all Yukon parents and guardians of children in Yukon schools, that said that teachers are not — and I quote: “fiscally responsible”.

So, this is frankly insulting to teachers, and it could appear to be intimidation and negotiating in bad faith. This government likes to point out how different it is from a Yukon Party-led government, but to be honest, Yukoners are having a hard time telling the difference.

So, if this government is dedicated to listening to educators, will they agree to get back to the table and set bargaining dates for October and November with Yukon teachers?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, the timing of the collective bargaining is all in place right now, and I'll leave that to the negotiators and to the process.

Also, the member opposite was very fast and loose with the information being provided today, and I won't comment on any of that, but I will say it's a good opportunity for us to reiterate that neither YG nor YAEP has made a final offer on monetary issues and that YG and YAEP mutually agreed that further bargaining at this time would not be proactive because of the wide gap that exists between the two.

Again, we are very hopeful to get to a decision very soon to make sure that we continue to fund the teachers of Yukon at the highest rates in Canada.

Question re: Motor Vehicles Act amendments

Mr. Hassard: So, despite spending many years on the development of a new act to replace the *Motor Vehicles Act*,

there seems to be some issues with the bill that's before the Legislature right now.

One aspect that has the eye of many Yukoners is the provision of the new act that allows broad powers for the Yukon government to use facial recognition software here in the Yukon.

This is a controversial issue and is deeply concerning to many Yukoners who are worried about the government's handling of personal information and the fact that there are no national standards for this controversial new technology. In fact, there are many experts calling for a moratorium to this technology.

So, why is the government trying to grant itself broad powers to use facial recognition software?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the use of facial recognition technology by Motor Vehicles would be an important measure to protect against identify fraud. At my department's last check, nine jurisdictions — the Northwest Territories and all provinces except Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador — use facial recognition technology to verify identity and to prevent fraud.

The source of this authority is sometimes found in their traffic safety legislation, such as in Saskatchewan's *Traffic Safety Act* and the new *Traffic Safety Act* in Nova Scotia, which is not yet in force, or it may be found in other laws relating to identification cards, such as in Manitoba's *Drivers and Vehicles Act*.

In the proposed *Traffic Safety Act*, the use of facial recognition technology is limited in scope and can only be used for the purposes of identify verification and the prevention of identify theft. For example, when someone applies for a driver's licence, a high-resolution camera takes the photo and the facial recognition software verifies the image and ensures that the person's photo does not appear anywhere else in the database under another name.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, while the government likes to say that it has consulted widely on this bill, it has become clear in debate that they didn't actually consult on any of the specific issues. Their controversial plans for using facial recognition software is just one example, but it's a concerning one.

Even the Information and Privacy Commissioner has weighed in with their concerns. According to the IPC — and I quote: "I would like to clarify that my office was not informed or consulted about the contemplated authorization for use of facial recognition technology as part of Bill 44." So, will the Liberal government agree to pause Bill No. 44 and go back and actually consult with Yukoners, or will they attempt to just ram through this new controversial provision?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of safeguarding personal information and the services and responsibilities of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We provided clauses on collection and disclosure of personal information to the OIPC in March 2024. The clauses related to the collection of personal information, which encompass biometrics and facial recognition technology.

We agree that biometric information is personal information. The limitation for the use of information is limited only for the purposes defined under the proposed *Traffic Safety Act*. Our interpretation is that the use of personal information is for the purposes for which it is collected, which is the administration and enforcement of the *Traffic Safety Act* and regulations, which, in our view, is consistent with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, sections 19 and 20, subsections (a) and (b).

Similar to other aspects of the *Traffic Safety Act*, we plan to develop regulations that govern the specifics of how facial recognition technology is implemented operationally. As part of the work, we plan to update the privacy impact assessments that were developed as part of this project, which include the privacy impact assessment related to facial recognition technology.

We appreciate the important role that the OIPC has in maintaining and upholding the use of personal information gathered by government and commit to engaging with the OIPC in the updates to the privacy impact assessments plan.

Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the Liberals will attempt to ram it through. However, facial recognition isn't the only aspect of this bill that has caused issues. We have also heard from the cyclist community that has concerns with the bill and they would like changes made. It's clear at this point that there are significant concerns with the bill as a whole.

Again, will the government agree to put this bill on the shelf, go back, and actually consult Yukoners about this new piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, there are 247 clauses in this act. There have been seven or eight years of dedicated work by Highways and Public Works officials in consultation and engagement with many stakeholders, which we put on the record during the course of Committee of the Whole debate last week — approximately six or seven hours — which the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin was here for.

I have a good relationship with the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition. I have met with them over the course of the last three and a half years, I would say, approximately four times. When I received the concerns raised, I met with the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition immediately and have spoken to them with respect to try to accommodate or try to address the concerns that they have raised. I certainly applaud the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition for their advocacy with respect to ongoing active transportation projects in Whitehorse and across the Yukon. I am certainly generally aligned with their advocacy.

Question re: *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)* consultations

Mr. Dixon: In the Minister of Community Services' second reading speech on Bill No. 43, *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)*, he stated the following — quote: "... stakeholders with a direct interest in this bill include Yukon corporations and their lawyers, directors, officers, shareholders, and beneficial owners."

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is simple: If he has acknowledged that all of these Yukon stakeholders are directly impacted by this bill, why didn't he consult with any of them? Why didn't the minister consult with chambers of commerce, the business community, or the legal community about these proposed changes?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once again, we are here talking about improvements that we are making to Yukon laws in the territory. One of them came out of the Finance ministers' meeting several years ago. This legislation has been adopted across the country. The intent, as I said in my second reading speech, was to ferret out and prevent a lot of illegal acts. This is something that came out of a pan-Canadian approach. We know that there is money laundering happening. We know that, after the release of the Panama Papers, there are a lot of people who are abusing corporations. This is an effort made by all jurisdictions across the country to tighten the country, make sure it's more law-abiding, and that these legal — these criminals lose an avenue to launder money and do other illegal acts.

This is an important piece of legislation. We are going to be talking about it in a few minutes this afternoon. I look forward to further questions from the member opposite.

Mr. Dixon: Well, what Yukoners didn't hear in the minister's response was any idea of why he didn't consult on this, because if he had consulted, he would have heard directly from Yukoners.

In the short days that we have had since the bill was tabled, we have reached out to Yukoners affected by this bill, Mr. Speaker, and we have heard some serious concerns that have been raised. In particular, there are concerns about how this bill will impact First Nation development corporations. According to the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, they were absolutely not consulted about this bill and have flagged serious concerns that have been raised by their lawyers. Unsurprisingly, they have questions that need to be answered before this bill passes.

Will the minister agree to halt the progress of the bill and go back and consult with stakeholders, like the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, before pushing this bill through Committee later today?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Leader of the Official Opposition raised this question this afternoon. I look forward to addressing the concerns this afternoon when we get into debate on the bill. I don't have specifics, but I will certainly look forward to his questioning this afternoon. We will certainly iron these things out.

Mr. Dixon: Well, the minister would have specifics about what Yukoners thought about this bill if he had bothered to consult those directly affected.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has admitted that there was zero consultation with this bill. He said that none was needed because they were just copying what was done federally, but what they forgot is that there are local considerations that make the Yukon unique, and what works for the rest of Canada doesn't always work here in the Yukon.

In this particular case, the bill does not contemplate that there is the case of First Nation development corporations, and there are no individual persons ultimately in control of those corporations because of the situation that is created by the land claim and self-government agreements. So, it is clear that more consultation is needed with First Nation development corporations to determine what this will mean for them.

So, my question for the minister is very simple: Will the government agree to pause progress on this bill and go back to consult with Yukoners affected, including the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, before ramming this bill through?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, we are, as the member opposite just alluded to, going to be talking about this in just a few short minutes. Any concerns that he has heard about, I am sure that he can bring them before the officials, and we will address them. That is what this whole Chamber is about: bringing legislation, hashing it out, hearing what we have to say, hearing what the opposition has heard and has to say. We will certainly take that into consideration; we are doing this.

But the bottom line is that, across the country, we are trying to tighten up the laws to reduce criminality in the country. That is an important goal, and I think that is something that we have to keep front and centre in this discussion. This is not legislation that is unique to our jurisdiction. It is something that has been done across the country, and I look forward to the member opposite's incisive questions this afternoon.

Question re: Health care services

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, Canada's public health care system is a cherished part of our national identity. Yet it is no secret that health care in this country is in crisis. Right-wing governments across Canada are increasingly using this crisis to turn to privatization rather than investing in our public system. Carving off parts of our public health care system to the private sector makes health care more expensive and less accessible to those who need it. We have already seen this Liberal government chip away at the public system with its reliance on agency nurses. One long-time Yukon doctor said — and I quote: "Part of the problem with ... staffing policies ... 'seems to be a reluctance to hire permanent staff versus casual and agency nurses, and now even army personnel. This has destroyed morale...'"

So, does the minister have any further plans for privatization of our health care system?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I thank the member opposite for the question. I'm always pleased to be able to stand to speak to Yukoners about the facts here in the territory with respect to the transformation of our health care system and the work that we are doing to respond to the needs and requests of Yukoners. Canadians and Yukoners consistently cite health care as one of their primary concerns. They care about the access to health care and improvements to health care.

Despite the quotation from the member opposite, I think that it's important to remind Yukoners of the work that is being done here by this government to support and improve health care here in the territory. I can list many things, not the least of

which are: the operation of the Centre de Santé Constellation Health Centre; the appointment of a Queer Yukon health navigator position; work to open the Whitehorse walk-in clinic; work to support local physicians — primary care physicians — by supporting their private clinics with allied health care professionals; and many, many other examples of support that this government has given to Yukoners and working to improve our health care system.

Ms. White: The first step of privatization is to defund the public system and let it fall into disrepair so that people are compelled to seek private care. It's not hard to argue that is happening here in the Yukon when despite the health care crisis, this government is spending less per capita on health care than it did just last year. They also budgeted for fewer surgeries. The result is that Yukoners are seeking private health care for hip and knee replacements because the wait times are simply too long and people can't live with the pain and suffering.

A recent request for proposals went out from her department with the title "Long-term Health System Development Plan", which specifically requests looking at privatization models like P3s, also known as public/private partnerships. Can the minister tell Yukoners why she is looking to privatize our health care system through the use of P3s?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it is important to speak to Yukoners directly about the collaboration that we have instigated between Health and Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation for recruitment and retention of nurses. That work is ongoing. Both groups have attended multiple recruitment events across the country. In addition to that, Community Nursing currently has a 19-percent vacancy rate for primary health care nurse positions — employees of the Yukon government, as of August 2024 — and that has been reduced from as high as 39 percent, as reported in December 2022.

Between January of 2023 and August of 2024, the Department of Health and Social Services has completed 230 nursing staff actions. These include transitions between positions from casual to auxiliary to term and permanent and are new hires as well. These staffing actions also reflect internal movements and are a commitment by this government to fully employ nurse practitioners, nurses, RNs, and licensed practical nurses to support health care for all Yukoners here in the territory.

Ms. White: Again, the long-term health system development plan that the minister is looking at is specifically requesting looking at privatization models, like P3s. P3s are a controversial model for government service delivery. They privatize the profits, while the risk remains with the public government. Study after study has shown this to be an inefficient and costly method of providing services and that it's simply cheaper and more effective for governments to go it alone.

Doctors have recently been very public about the need for expanded health care facilities in the territory. From new surgical wards to long-term care beds and more, we truly do need a long-term capital plan, but any plan that includes further private investment is one that makes health care more expensive and less accessible for Yukoners.

Will the minister rule out the use of public/private partnerships in Yukon health care?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It is important to highlight through the three questions that we received from the Leader of the NDP today that — first, I want to commend the minister and the department of health and the Hospital Corporation for all of the nurses who have been hired over the last 14 months. When we see the ability for the team to turn and hire hundreds of nurses, it's incredible, especially when you're sitting at the table with other premiers who are having incredible challenges.

We have all committed, across the country, to ensure that we reduce reliance on agency nurses. I just want to commend the folks in the Yukon, because actually here, that work is getting accomplished, which is not the case in many other provinces. I do want to share with the Leader of the NDP that, when you look at infrastructure going forward, we know that there needs to be expansion of hospitals, expansion of infrastructure for OR services and surgeries, as well as integrating opportunities within working with First Nation governments.

If you look at Yellowknife, we have heard it number of times here across the Yukon that Yellowknife has this incredible hospital and we should have a hospital just like that, which is, of course, a P3.

I think it's important to understand that, if you are going to bring First Nation development corporations to the table and if you are going to look at innovative ways to build infrastructure, you should have a look at all the options that are being used across the country, while you still continue to increase your investment from the government into health care here in the Yukon.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 39: *Act to amend the Forest Resources Act (2024)* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 39, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to amend the Forest Resources Act (2024)*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to amend the Forest Resources Act (2024)*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and introduce this legislation for the Assembly's consideration.

In January of 2011, the *Forest Resources Act* came into force and became the territory's first piece of comprehensive resource legislation resulting from the 2003 devolution transfer agreement. After over a decade of implementing the *Forest Resources Act*, we are bringing forward amendments to clarify

and improve effectiveness of the act. These amendments strengthen the territory's ability to manage and govern forest resources responsibly in a way that benefits Yukoners.

One of the purposes of these amendments to the *Forest Resources Act* is to streamline and modernize licensing, permitting, and enforcement and to continue to allow for responsible use of forest resources here in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and thank the *Forest Resources Act* review working group for their instrumental work to review the act and regulation. Their expertise, thoughtful engagement, and collaborative spirit have been critical to the process. The working group was established as part of a review process legislated under section 95 of the *Forest Resources Act*. Members consist of representatives from the Government of Yukon, Teslin Tlingit Council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Acho Dene Koe First Nation.

Between 2019 and 2020, the working group developed draft recommended changes to the legislation. These were based on lessons learned in the first decade of implementation and through comprehensive engagement with First Nations, renewable resources councils, industry, and conservation groups.

The working group's draft recommendations were used for the spring 2023 public engagement and First Nation consultation. We sent letters to Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups, and renewable resources councils inviting them to participate in this consultation and engagement process. The opportunity for the public, industry, and other stakeholders to submit feedback took place in the spring of 2023.

We sent correspondence to conservation groups and the Yukon Wood Products Association inviting them to take part in the process. Some First Nations requested that we extend the consultation period and we did extend the time for these groups and renewable resources councils for an additional two weeks, to the end of April 2023. After this, the working group reconvened to review and consider the feedback provided. The working group was able to come to agreement on many of the recommendations, and while the working group made excellent progress, I recognize that we were not able to resolve all issues.

We are streamlining tenure and administration to support harvesters — strengthening enforcement provisions to address unauthorized harvesting and wilful damage to timber. We are streamlining tenure and administration of licences in these amendments by combining the existing fuelwood licence and the timber resource licence into the new timber licence. The new timber licence will be assignable, available for up to 10 years, and voluntarily cancellable by request from the licensees. Having one licence that captures all wood types streamlines reporting and permitting for harvesters and the Government of Yukon, as many operators hold dual licences in the same area.

We are further streamlining tenure administration to support harvesters by expanding the forest resources permit. The changes include increasing the term to five years, enabling the director to renew for an additional term, and allowing for timber harvested under a Yukon act to be sold, traded, or

distributed. These changes provide up to 10 years of assurance for harvesters and allow for better utilization of timber harvested incidentally, including fuel abatement activities that help to protect our communities and important land development projects.

Another important area of amendments is strengthening our enforcement provisions. These amendments help us to address unauthorized harvesting and respond to wilful damage to timber. We are also establishing a new compliance order that forest officers can issue if a person or an activity under that person's control is not in compliance with the act, regulations, or authorizations.

Mr. Speaker, this suite of amendments reflects the Yukon government's commitment to a viable forest industry, wood supply, and sustainable management of the resource. We have learned a lot over a decade of implementation, and these amendments help to ensure that the legislation remains modern and reflects the Yukon context.

It is a pleasure to present the *Act to amend the Forest Resources Act (2024)* for the Legislature's consideration, and I look forward to our discussion on this with members of the Assembly.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his remarks at second reading on this bill. I would also like to thank the officials for the excellent briefing that they provided on the legislation earlier in this Sitting.

I have reached out to a number of individuals in the forestry industry and I have had very little feedback, which, for the minister, is probably a good thing. I do have a number of questions when we get into Committee of the Whole on this legislation, especially around the expanded definition of "forest resources" to include sap and fungi and what impact that will have on some of the commercial operators currently engaged in those harvests.

With that, we will be supporting this bill here today at second reading, and I will turn it over to other colleagues to hear from them.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I echo my thanks to the minister for his opening remarks and my colleague's points as well.

I did really appreciate the forest resources briefing, because it was helpful. I think that one of the big takeaways for me is that timber is sawlogs and fuelwood is heating wood. The reason that is relevant for me is that it makes a big difference in Yukon forests — whether we are talking about heating or sawlogs — so I found that very helpful.

I'm looking forward to the questions in Committee of the Whole, because there is a lot to dig into when we talk about licences and how lengthening of those licences — what that means — so whether through the YESAA process, whether it's five years or 10 years, and the cost, of course, of those licences.

I do think that there is an interesting opportunity when we talk about the proposed act changes, when we talk about things on the forest floor — so whether we talk about things like fungi or berries or even chaga — because for commercial purposes,

that would now be captured, which means that there would be a process. Initially, there wasn't so much a process. For example, we all recognize the boom we have in more pickers after forest fires, and this will help that process — to make sure that people know what rules they need to follow.

I look forward to conversations with the minister during Committee of the Whole.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would like to thank the members opposite for their comments highlighting some areas that we might get to in Committee of the Whole. I will make sure to pass that information across to the team. I have been with the forest branch several times in public meetings. They have a great understanding of the system and I look forward to having them here.

I will also say that this is part of the important piece of devolution — that our resource-based acts would be co-developed with First Nations. I think that, having worked on that in other areas, I see how important it is. I am happy that we continue to progress these acts and improve them. I also think that this is an ongoing exercise over time.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 39 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 43, entitled *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 43: Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 43, entitled *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill No. 43, *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)*, which will adopt beneficial ownership transparency.

These amendments will affect about 3,400 privately held corporations incorporated in the Yukon and their lawyers, directors, shareholders, and beneficial owners.

The bill will safeguard against the misuse of corporations for money laundering and tax evasion, enhance corporate governance, and protect market integrity in the Yukon — all of which are important for sustainable economic growth.

Our government's key objectives for Bill No. 43 are the following: We want to ensure that investigative bodies have efficient access to beneficial ownership information to strengthen enforcement against money laundering, tax evasion, and other illegal conduct. We want to eliminate the use of share certificates and share purchase options in bearer form, since they are incompatible with ownership transparency. We want to enable Yukon corporations, directors, and shareholders to know who the beneficial owners are, to enhance corporate governance, and we want to coordinate with federal anti-money laundering legislation and standards set by the Financial Action Task Force, a body mandated to lead global efforts against money laundering.

The 2016 Panama Papers and other offshore leaks highlighted how criminals were hiding behind opaque corporate structures for illegal purposes. As a result,

international standards were updated, and the equivalent rules were enacted in many countries. Bill No. 43 meets our government's 2017 commitment with territorial, provincial, and federal partners.

In 2018, an intergovernmental working group reached out to national-level business organizations and other stakeholders for their input. So far, the beneficial ownership transparency is in effect under the federal statute and nine provincial statutes. The amendments align closely with similar provisions in these statutes, which apply to about 85 percent of corporations in Canada.

I will briefly outline the amendments in the bill. Corporations will prepare and maintain a register of individuals with significant control of the corporation. An individual with significant control, commonly called a "beneficial owner", will mean an individual who owns, as a shareholder or beneficial owner, at least 25 percent of voting rights or total shares, has a right to exercise control over that number of shares, or has some influence that, if exercised, would lead to control of the corporation. If two or more individuals jointly own or control at least 25 percent of the shares, each will meet the criteria for significant control.

If a corporation requests information for the register from a shareholder, the shareholder will have a duty to reply to the best of their knowledge. The corporation will make information from their transparency register available on request by law enforcement, tax, and regulatory authorities. Directors and shareholders may access the information for corporate-related matters only. The registrar of corporations will have access to the register on request to promote compliance with the act.

To align with corporate statutes elsewhere, the registrar will be authorized to make inquiries related to compliance with the act and to access any corporate record mandated by the act.

As I mentioned previously, bearer shares are incompatible with ownership transparency, since the corporation may not know who owns the shares until the person holding the certificate presents it to exercise a right. The requirement in the act for share certificates to be in registered form, not bearer form, will be strengthened by removing a couple of exceptions and prohibiting share purchase options in bearer form. The bill also enables supporting regulations and includes offences for non-compliance without reasonable cause.

Regulations will be made prior to the bill coming into force, which we expect will be similar to those under the federal and provincial statutes. The majority of Bill No. 43 will come into force on June 1, 2025 if this bill passes the House. That is when corporations will start developing the register. Certain offences will come into force on October 1, 2025. This will provide a four-month grace period for corporations to prepare the new register before failing to do so becomes an offence.

Madam Chair, I look forward to hearing comments from members and responding to their questions, as I said just a few moments ago during Question Period.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister outline the consultation that was done on this bill?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is asking about consultation. This is a nationally led initiative that then

flowed to the provinces and territories, as I said earlier. Virtually all provinces and territories have already adopted legislation stemming from that 2017 initiative on the part of the federal government — it began in 2017 — the exceptions being our two sister territories and Alberta, which is in the process of getting this done.

Canada conducted the consultations in 2018 and 2020. We did not conduct a separate engagement. This was done by the federal government. The bill is designed to align with harmonized provisions in the federal statute, phase 1. They are the ones with eyes on the whole process across the country and the holes that we are seeking to fill.

As this is a national-level agreement committed to by all jurisdictions, stakeholders would have had limited ability to influence it. It's coming from Ottawa. Stakeholders include investigative bodies, Yukon corporations and their corporate lawyers, directors, officers, shareholders, and other owners. As well, I will say that, in 2018, officials undertook targeted outreach — federal officials — for input from national-level organizations, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Business Council of Canada, the Canadian Bar Association, and the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

In February, a national consultation document was published inviting public comments on making ownership information more transparent through public registries. Three jurisdictions enacted the changes, while officials elsewhere are monitoring them. In early March of 2020, Community Services officials contacted the president of the Canadian Bar Association, Yukon branch, and a director with the Chartered Professional Accountants of Yukon to inform them about this national consultation that was ongoing, so that is that.

Now, were this bill to pass, of course, we will continue to reach out to Yukon stakeholders and provide information on what will be required and when the changes will take effect.

Mr. Dixon: In the minister's second reading speech and in his words earlier today, he pointed out that this bill will directly impact Yukon businesses, Yukon corporations, their lawyers, and a number of others. Why wouldn't the minister want to consult those people directly affected by this bill before tabling it?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I said just a minute ago that this is national legislation that has been enacted in virtually every province across the country. We are a territory, but we are following in line with the other provinces. This is a national process to make sure that our legislation in the territory aligns with that across the country and with the federal government. There's not much change that local officials can do or that local people can make to this legislation, and that's one of the reasons why we weren't involved in those consultations.

Mr. Dixon: Well, I respectfully disagree with the minister. This is a piece of territorial legislation. This is a bill that's before the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and this Assembly can change it however we want. So, the minister may be correct that this is a national initiative, but it is a territorial bill, and it's a territorial bill that's before the Yukon Legislative

Assembly, and we're being asked to vote on it. Of course, our vote will decide the content of the bill and the structure of it.

So, my question again for the minister is simple. It's clear that there was national consultation done by national organizations several years ago, but we are aware of concerns that have been had by local businesses and the local organizations that represent businesses about what this will mean for them.

So, again, I will ask the minister: Why would the minister table a bill — a territorial piece of legislation — without directly consulting with those stakeholders who are directly impacted by this bill?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: All right, with all due respect to my good colleague across the way, we do disagree on this thing, and I do understand the gnashing of teeth. But really, it was a federal initiative that has spread across the country. It is not that I don't want our local businesses to be consulted. Our local businesses were consulted; they were consulted by federal teams. We consulted the lawyers who represent corporations and submit filings on their behalf — the feds did — and the feds also looked at the accountants who file the financial statements for the corporations and who know these businesses well. They were consulted. Those were Yukoners who were brought in on the consultation that was nationally driven.

Really, the member opposite is absolutely correct; we are debating this on the floor of the House today. That's what it is. We will take the questions and we will take the suggestions.

But the reason why this is a national piece of legislation that is flowing across the country, trying to create a uniform presence against criminality across the country, is important because, if there are gaps — if there are jurisdictions that weaken the law, weaken the principles of the law for whatever reason — you get corporations that start to jurisdiction-shop and say: Hey, there's a weak one; we incorporate there and then we can do all of the money laundering and criminal behaviour that we want because they are not as strong as everybody else.

So, the federal government is trying to create a firewall — a bulwark against criminality — and they have asked all jurisdictions to do this, and all jurisdictions, in 2017, said: Yes, let's do it.

We are one of the last to adopt this legislation. All of the businesses and corporations — the stakeholders — in the territory had an opportunity to learn about the legislation and to feed into it when the federal government conducted their consultations. So, that's where we're at.

Now, it's not that I don't want local businesses and corporations to be consulted; they fed into this. I'm very wary — and we can certainly amend the legislation here on the floor of the House. We have that capability — absolutely — but we don't want to be off-step with other jurisdictions and create a weakness in this federal bulwark that makes the Yukon a haven for criminal behaviour in corporations.

Mr. Dixon: Again, I have to correct the minister when he says that this is a piece of national legislation. It is not national legislation. It is territorial legislation that is part of a national framework.

The point that I am raising here, Madam Chair, is that when this bill was tabled, as we do commonly with all bills, we send the bills to affected stakeholders. In this particular case, we sent the bill to Yukon chambers of commerce and the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce. Earlier today, the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce wrote back to us and informed us that they had not been consulted about this and that they did indeed have serious concerns about this bill and what it would mean, particularly for First Nation development corporations. Those concerns may be allayed — perhaps. Perhaps if the government had consulted with them before tabling the bill, they could have assured them that this won't impact them, but that is not the case today. The case today is that the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce has told us that they have significant concerns, they don't fully understand what this will mean for them, and they want the government to pause the progression of this bill. That was the nature of the question that I asked today in Question Period.

Will the minister agree, if we can, to pause the progression of this bill and to go consult with affected stakeholders so that they can have their questions heard and their questions answered and have the government address these concerns that have been legitimately raised by Yukon stakeholders?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to discuss the concerns that the member opposite has heard from the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce. It was around in 2017-18 when the consultations on this national framework began. So, if the member opposite has heard concerns, bring them forward. Let's have a discussion. We have our officials here; we'll answer the questions.

Mr. Dixon: I look forward to sharing some of those concerns, certainly. But I would like to begin by expressing a sentiment that was provided to me, and that is the following: That in an era of economic reconciliation, it's still clear that the government is acting before considering or consulting on major things that will potentially have major ramifications for us.

That's a sentiment expressed to me by the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce.

I would like the minister to respond to that. Does he believe that he has an obligation to engage directly with First Nation development corporations on matters that will directly affect them?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm struggling with this one. I'm struggling with this one deeply. I mean, our record stands for itself on consultation and working with First Nations. It's from holding a Yukon Forum with all First Nation leaders invited since 2017 — every three months — and the sheer volume of consultations that we've done in this government, the close connections and the synapses that we've developed with our First Nation leaders and businesses across the territory, and the First Nation procurement policy, which the members opposite do not support.

So, here I am — the irony this afternoon — and it's difficult for me to reconcile — is that I'm taking advice on consultation with First Nations from the Leader of the Official Opposition who has a very poor record on the very same thing.

I want to hear the concerns. I will deal with the First Nation corporations and leadership as I will. I have worked very closely with them over my time in office. I depend on their guidance and their wisdom, and I will continue to do so.

I have to say that I am a little bit glad to hear the Leader of the Official Opposition finally talking to the First Nation chamber — that's an improvement — and I look forward to hearing what the First Nation chamber told the member opposite.

Ms. White: First off, I don't know that personalizing or having that kind of conversation is actually a benefit in this Chamber. I think that serious, legitimate concerns have been brought forward, concerns that I hadn't thought about until I was able to read the communication. I am not going to speak for my colleague, but putting a pause on something isn't the end of the world. I think that putting a pause right now and asking the minister to go out, have conversations, and get that approval from the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce and from First Nation development corporations is probably not a negative thing.

If the minister views it as negative, then there's probably nothing I can say to change his mind, but I think that asking the House to pass something right now when concerns have been highlighted in this way is irresponsible. The minister can choose to plow ahead, but I have concerns. So, maybe the minister would like to respond to that.

I think that what is being asked right now is to take a pause to have those conversations. I guess the real question is: Is the minister willing to do that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 215, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 215: *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 215, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

Department of Community Services — continued

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Just to recap our discussion from yesterday, we were talking about municipal irritants, specifically one irritant: adaptive management plans that the Department of Environment raised with landfill operators about six weeks ago. Let me set the table for the members in the Chamber, specifically the member opposite who was questioning me yesterday.

The department's deputy had just passed away. The minister was in the hospital recovering. There were acting ministers and deputies. Amidst all of this, Community Services and municipalities were told about the need for adaptive management plans at six municipal and YG landfills, with a target date of the fall of 2025. Community Services is working with municipalities on this initiative and gathering information from Environment, which is recovering from the summer tragedy.

As I said, I understand cost pressures in municipalities. We are working with our municipal partners and have been for the last seven years. I ask for their forbearance while we gather the necessary information to inform the next year of planning and the associated costs to go with the adaptive management.

I understand —

Chair: Order.

Mr. Hassard: I will just allow the minister a few minutes to continue on or finish his last statement.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, I appreciate the ability to discuss these matters with my good colleague. We used to have good discussions while I was in highways; it's nice to have this repartee happening again. Honestly, what I think I will do is leave my remarks for now and let him ask his next question.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that information from the minister and look forward to seeing where we go or where we end up.

I had a question regarding some property in the City of Whitehorse. The piece of property is lot 55 on McFadyen Way. Back in February 2023, this came forward for rezoning. It was approved a couple of months later, but since then, it has been a bit of radio silence.

I know that the government had talked about the need for an access road to be designed and built, some trail alignment. I guess I'm curious, Madam Chair, if the minister can provide us with some updates on that property and whether it has gone to YESAB — has any of that work — design work or construction — been done, or has it started? I guess, finally, when he is on his feet, if he can let us know when that property will come for sale.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a very specific location. I'll endeavour to get the information back to the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: I look forward to a quick and timely return of that information.

I have some questions for the minister about the set-up of the EBR. There was a group called Interchange Recycling, which describes itself as a non-profit, producer-governed group that provides recycling services for the recycling of used motor oil, oil filters, oil containers, antifreeze, and antifreeze containers. Now, this group, Interchange Recycling, says that it

is currently engaging with stakeholders and consulting on a plan that was submitted to the government back in September.

I'm curious, Madam Chair: Did Interchange receive a plan in September?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. We are not familiar with this level of detail with extended producer responsibility. That is really Environment. I will consult with my colleague at Environment, but it might be a question better directed to the Minister of Environment when he is on the floor in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Hassard: I thought that could be a possible answer, as this is one of those files that crosses the desk of more than one department, so I appreciate that, and we will certainly look forward to having that conversation with the Minister of Environment when Environment is up for debate.

We talked a little bit today in Question Period about the Fire Marshal's Office and the fact that the Fire Marshal's Office has been chronically underfunded over the last few years — or that is the opinion of the fire chiefs' association. So, I am curious if the minister could provide us with a little bit of information around where we see the funding for the Fire Marshal's Office in the future.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question on our continued support for Yukon fire chiefs — rural fire chiefs. I mean, one of the reasons why we are here this afternoon in supplementary budget discussion is because we are asking for \$234,000 to increase the budget for our firefighting teams so that they get more money for honoraria. I just want to cut — this is what we're doing. We're asking for more money to increase the budget.

The Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs is an important partner in our efforts to support community fire services. They have had an important role in supporting volunteer fire services across the territory. They have raised issues with me. I was out at one of the fire halls talking to them. They did raise issues with me at that time. We've been working to address the issues they identified at that time. We are going to continue to work with them and speak with them to hear what concerns they have and do our very best to give them the tools and the finances they need to continue the great work that they're doing on behalf of rural Yukon.

Mr. Hassard: So, a couple more questions along those lines. I'm wondering if the minister can inform the House if the FMO is fully staffed.

The other question I had is a question that came from the Leader of the Official Opposition in Question Period about whether the money for the raise and honoraria — was that new money, Madam Chair? Or is that money that is coming out of the FMO?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The very short answers for the member opposite are: Yes, the Fire Marshal's Office is now fully staffed. All positions are filled.

Second of all, the very reason why we're here is because there is a vote to Protective Services' O&M program — \$234,000 is what we're asking for from the House for a supplementary budget to pay the honoraria.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that information from the minister. I apologize; it was actually the Member for Lake Laberge who asked that question and not the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I know that, in the past, my colleague the Member for Watson Lake had asked about backup communication systems at the fire halls. I just want to confirm: To the best of my recollection, the minister said that all fire halls in the Yukon had backup communication systems, so I am just curious if the minister could confirm that for me today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am checking on that information as we speak. I will endeavour to get back to the member opposite when I get an answer.

Mr. Hassard: I look forward to receiving that information as well.

A question about the ambulance coverage in Dawson City. Last winter, there were considerable gaps in coverage that prompted some Yukoners to create a group that was aimed at improving local ambulance service. I understand that the Yukon EMS reached out to that group to engage them.

Can the minister provide an update on EMS in Dawson? What level is it at? Has Yukon EMS reached out to the group who was concerned about the lack of coverage, and what was the result of those meetings?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am going to direct the member to talk to the department that is now responsible for EMS, which is Health and Social Services.

Mr. Hassard: Fair enough; I should have known that. I should have seen that one coming.

I have some questions regarding issues at the City of Whitehorse. We know that the City of Whitehorse had written to the government about their request for monies around dealing with the escarpment, so I am wondering if the minister can provide us with any updates on where they are at with that issue.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to talk about all the strong working relationships that we have with the City of Whitehorse. We are going to continue to work with the City of Whitehorse. Of course, today, we are in the midst of a municipal election, and I look forward to seeing the results of that election.

Really, I want to respect the City of Whitehorse that made the request of me. I don't want to tell the member opposite anything prior to talking to the City of Whitehorse myself.

Mr. Hassard: I guess what the minister is saying is that he won't provide us with information as to what the city was looking for in regard to dealing with the issues of the escarpment?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: No — no, I don't — I didn't understand that was the question. The City of Whitehorse has been given money from the federal government directly. I mean, the City of Whitehorse went to the federal government and asked them for money. Between the City of Whitehorse and the federal government, they held a news conference about that event — I think it was covered in the media. This was a deal between Ottawa and the City of Whitehorse. The federal government has been working with municipalities on certain

funding tranches, so this was something that the City of Whitehorse sought and received. I believe — I'll try to get the numbers that they released to the public. I will maybe do a search on Google or something and find out what it was. The City of Whitehorse has received this money, but it is, again, the same type of deal that the territory had with ICIP. I believe the city has to come up with about 25 percent of the money, and the feds will make up the remainder. I will try to get that number for the member opposite. I believe it's publicly available, but that is how it works.

Mr. Hassard: When the minister is at it, is it also possible to find out what kind of funding the city is asking for regarding the new — or the water treatment plant that they need and where things are at with that as well, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mayor Cabott, at the time, announced \$45 million in federal funding for work on the escarpment, so that is the money that they received — that is the commitment that they got from Ottawa.

As far as the request for the water treatment facility, I believe that is still in development. We haven't received a formal request for information — or for funding — on that yet.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that information from the minister.

Question around building permits: I'm curious: Did the government grant an agreement of sale extension for houses that were affected by the permitting delays, as per the City of Whitehorse's request?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe that's a question better directed to Energy, Mines and Resources. We do an awful lot of community services, but we are a kitchen sink department. It is actually EMR who handles the sales of those lots.

Mr. Hassard: Okay, I'm pretty sure that this one falls under the minister's purview: Did YG second any staff to the city to help them with the building permit issue?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, we did offer to provide staff to the City of Whitehorse to help with their permitting this year, but they actually didn't take us up on our offer.

Mr. Hassard: Moving right along here, I have a question regarding the status of the recycling program here in the City of Whitehorse. How much of the \$2.4 million that YG offered has actually flowed to the city, and what is the status of their program?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can tell the member opposite that, as of now, no money has flowed. The city still hasn't launched its program. As soon as it does, we will be funding it. The faster they get it going, the more money they'll get toward this service, but as of yet, they have not started their service, and that's where it sits right now.

Mr. Hassard: I am just curious if the minister has been in contact with the city. Has there been any idea on timelines on when that service may begin?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say to the member opposite that they have opened their depot up at the solid-waste facility — their landfill — but as of now, I don't have up-to-date information. I don't have information from the City of Whitehorse. They are in the midst of an election, of course, and there has been a transition.

They are in charge of — this is their responsibility; this is their job. They will procure it, and they will go through a tendering process, I have no doubt. So, I don't know where that is. I can endeavour to find out for the member opposite, but it is the city's responsibility. It is the city's process, and I have every confidence that government will handle this contract for its citizens.

Mr. Hassard: Totally understanding that it is the City of Whitehorse's program, but I was just hopeful that maybe the minister, in his communications, had heard something around timelines, so I just thought we would ask.

I'm curious: For that \$2.8 million, can the minister provide us with some insight as to the parameters around that funding? Is it based on that? Are there any timelines tied to it or parameters around how the program may be set up or how it may be run?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Right out of the gate, I would like to say it's \$2.1 million and not \$2.8 million — just to make sure that's clear.

That's up to \$2.1 million for over two years, through 2024 and 2025, for a curbside recycling program. The city is setting this up and expects to be operational by the end of this year, so I know this is in process. That's as close as I can get.

The Yukon government support will offset approximately 50 percent of the costs for Whitehorse households. It'll be a mix of — so, I hope that helps.

I will get more information for the member opposite, but that basically sketches it out. It's \$2.1 million. It covers about 50 percent of the estimated cost. It flows as soon as the program is up and running.

As I said, it offsets the costs to Yukon citizens, the Whitehorse citizens, of 50 percent of the cost of the project.

Mr. Hassard: Madam Chair, I apologize for using the wrong number. I don't know why I had \$2.8 million in my head, but now the minister says \$2.1 million. But I'm curious because in September, his statement said \$2.4 million, so maybe if the minister can just provide a little clarity here. Maybe we are both wrong today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will take the correction on the fly. Thank you very much to the member opposite for noticing the discrepancy before my earlier — it is actually \$2.4 million; there was a typo in my notes. Thank you for correcting the record — it is \$2.4 million, not \$2.8 million; \$2.4 million, not \$2.1 million. That is the amount of money that we have pledged to the City of Whitehorse — \$2.4 million over two years to cover 50 percent of the cost of their curbside recycling program.

Mr. Hassard: It is hard to believe that we could both be wrong on the same day, but it happened.

I have a question or two around solid-waste transfer stations — a topic that is very near and dear to my heart and that we have had many conversations about here in the Legislature. Now that they are closed as of October 1, I am wondering if the minister can provide us with an estimated yearly saving as a result of closing those four transfer stations.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The first tier of savings from the closure of these transfer stations is about \$1 million over the next five years.

Mr. Hassard: We will turn to the riding of the Chair. I am wondering if the minister can provide us with any information on the gasifier in Old Crow. Is it currently operational or — I know that it has been a bit of a thorn in the side of the department and the community for a number of years, so I am just curious if we can get an update on the status of things in Old Crow.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have done repairs and upgrades to the gasifier in Old Crow. They were completed this winter. They included replacing the secondary burner, upgrading and replacing the control systems, repairing refractory burn chamber liners, repairing the hydraulic systems, sea can building upgrades, and fuel system repairs. I am told that the unit is now functional and that officials are commissioning the unit and carrying out site safety and operator training.

Mr. Hassard: I have a question regarding the CEMA review. According to the minister's briefing note from the spring of 2024, there was going to be an engagement summary and recommendations for potential legislative amendments and/or other policy actions. I am wondering if the minister could provide us with an update on the status of that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Emergency Measures Organization and Health and Social Services are currently continuing their review of the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and *Public Health and Safety Act* to identify challenges in existing legislation and options for further action regarding pandemic and epidemic management. The work that is currently underway will inform the Yukon government about how to ensure that the legislative framework supports an efficient and effective approach to health emergency management.

The current review is focused on identifying challenges in the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and the *Public Health and Safety Act* as they relate to pandemic and epidemic management, as I just said. The scope of this work is specifically focused on those two areas — pandemic and epidemic management — and if the review touches on broader aspects, we will consider that for further amendments in the future.

Mr. Hassard: If I could just for a moment, I would like to go back to Old Crow for a second. The minister said that the gasifier was working and functioning properly now.

Just to clarify, does that mean that there is no open-pit burning taking place in Old Crow at this time?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my last response, we are in the process of commissioning and training staff to run the gasifier. There will be a delta — as we ramp up, we will use the gasifier more and the burning less. So, we are in the process of transitioning. We have staff that we're training. That is not to say that there is no burning happening, but the burning is going to get less and less and less as the gasifier staff get trained up.

Mr. Hassard: It's interesting that the government is still, in fact, doing open-pit burning.

I'm curious, Madam Chair: Does the government have an air emissions permit for that facility?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What I will say — I'm looking for more information, but we work closely with our regulator, so we are now checking with Environment to find out the particulars with that question, because it is Environment that hands out the permit.

Mr. Hassard: I'm sorry; it was very difficult to hear what the minister said, so maybe if he could repeat it. I apologize, but when he turned away from the mic there, I didn't hear any of it.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm trying so very hard, Madam Chair, and I fall into old habits sometimes, so my apologies to the member opposite. As somebody with a hearing impairment, I know how difficult it can be to hear people in this Chamber sometimes, so my apologies. I will endeavour to speak a little bit more forcefully, loudly.

What I can say about the Old Crow gasifier is that we work very closely with our regulator in Environment. I'm endeavouring to get more information about the permit status right now. Perhaps if we get to Environment this afternoon, he can ask Environment whether we are good corporate citizens or not. I'm endeavouring to find out more information for the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly hope that, as the holder of the permit, the minister can provide us with that information.

In terms of the Yukon disaster financial assistance program — now I know, according to this minister's spring briefing notes, it said that work is underway to develop a territorial disaster financial assistance program that will support recovery from natural disasters. The program will outline how Yukon provides financial support for emergency disaster recovery. This will ensure that resources get to Yukoners when they need it most.

So, can the minister provide us with an update on where we're at with that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I really appreciate how helpful our briefing notes are. I'm very glad that we made them available to the public and to the opposition, because they're weren't available for a long time. So, I'm glad they are of help to the members opposite — helping them frame their questions. I'm happy to answer this one this afternoon.

So, we did launch a disaster financial assistance program in the spring of 2024 to support recovery from natural disasters. It outlines how the Yukon government provides financial support for emergency disaster recovery. This ensures that resources get to Yukoners when they need it the most.

The hook is that the federal program is currently under review and they are going to have new parameters that will come down, and we will adapt our program to the new federal approach when it's tabled. So, we have a program; it will probably change when we get the new information from Ottawa, because we want our program to align with Ottawa's so we are guaranteed to get some federal funding support.

Mr. Hassard: I thank the minister for that answer. I have some questions around some recreation. First, I guess I'll just

ask what the status is or what the update is on the Dawson rec centre. I know that we had a good conversation in the briefing about it, but just to get it on the record — if the minister could provide us with that status update, please.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, it's a very exciting project for the Klondike, of course. I was talking to somebody just last week who was playing hockey in that facility — the old facility — and he was warned against one of the corners because it is in such a poor state. We have a project team, and it has designed a new project management and procurement approach to build the recreation centre within the \$65-million budget. The progressive design/build methodology is how we are building this rec centre.

The project team has presented the conceptual design to the community that describes the floor plan and identifies the areas available for recreational and community programming. We're hoping to get some site preparation done this winter and then the facility construction will begin next spring. So, we are preparing the site. It's not the construction; it's just to get the site prepared so they can start the construction next spring.

Mr. Hassard: My understanding is that, through this new process, the design will go out to public tender; correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, the design team has won the tender. They are designing the project. They have a \$65-million budget. They will then design the project and then deliver that within the budget. If they can't deliver it within the budget, then we will go back to tender, but at this stage, they are the ones that will build the project within the \$65-million envelope.

Mr. Hassard: Swimming pools — we know that Beaver Creek and Ross River have been without for some time. The minister and I have discussed the pool in Ross River in particular on several occasions in the Legislature. I am just curious if there are any updates on where we are at with the assessments and I guess updates in general.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, of course, the member opposite and I have discussed this matter many times in the last little while. Communities love these pools and they were all built — almost a monoculture going back to the early 1990s, late 1980s. The whole pools and pool structures and infrastructure — the mechanics — have all changed over the years. They are highly complicated systems.

Due to structural safety issues associated with the Ross River pool's foundation, the additional structure assessments were completed this summer, so we are assessing those structural issues. We are currently reviewing that right now as we speak to determine what to do next with the Ross River pool. The Sport and Recreation branch, working with the Ross River Recreation Society, created opportunities for the community to access the Faro pool over the summer. We are trying to work with the community to give them options. We know how important swimming is in that community — and others, of course — but we are working as best we can to deal with the situation. It is unfortunate that the pool is having these — we know that the terrain in Ross River is difficult and we will assess the structure to see what we can do, if anything, to fix the pool.

Mr. Hassard: The minister didn't comment on the Beaver Creek pool, so I am wondering if he can provide an update on the status of it.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thanks for prompting me on the Beaver Creek pool. The Beaver Creek pool was last open in 2018. Water has been accumulating under the pool liner, necessitating an assessment of the soil to identify the source of the water and its potential impact on the septic system. The assessment was conducted this summer and we are currently awaiting the results to determine next steps. Once this is completed, an evaluation of the circulation systems will be required, followed by addressing the repairs identified in the 2018 Stantec report — so, more to come on that as well. Again, that work is underway.

Mr. Hassard: I look forward to seeing the results of those assessments.

At the Association of Yukon Communities meeting in Dawson City in May, the Premier made a few commitments on behalf of the government. One of those commitments was to create a deputy ministers committee to look at a few things, one being rural land development and opportunities.

I'm wondering if the minister can provide us with any updates on whether that committee has actually been formed, what work has come out of that committee, and what kind of progress we're getting from it.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: While I am not party to those DM meetings, I'm told that they are happening. Work toward a rural land development strategy continues. Representatives from across government responsible for land and housing are monitoring, tracking, and reporting on progress related to the lot delivery and process improvements aimed at removing barriers to development Yukon-wide.

The Government of Yukon is working with the Association of Yukon Communities to create a mechanism that addresses land development opportunities and challenges.

We want to make sure that our municipalities' long-term growth strategies are considered and that we adapt to changing federal and territorial regulations as they come to housing.

I can say that we are seeing record lot development in the rural Yukon across the territory over the last couple of years. This fall and winter, we're designing subdivisions in Dawson, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks, Haines Junction, and Teslin. A number of these projects will be tendered for construction next year, creating 85 lots.

We are also seeing historic investments outside of Whitehorse. This year, we have completed 43 lots on Frances Avenue, another 44 lots in Haines Junction, and another 13 lots in other Yukon communities. That's in addition to the lots that we're designing in Dawson, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks, Haines Junction, and Teslin.

So, we're actually seeing record lot development in rural Yukon, and there's more to come.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly could have a very long discussion about some of those lots, but we're limited in our time.

Speaking of being limited in our time, this will be my last question before we take a quick break so that the Leader of the

NDP can have some time asking questions too. I would just like to thank the officials for being here again today.

So, my last question would be along the same lines of the deputy ministers committee.

The Premier had referenced that the committee would make sure that AYC and municipalities have the capacity, through Government of Yukon advisors at Economic Development as well as the advisors from Community Services, to access funding through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other organizations.

I'm wondering if the minister can provide us with any examples of funding that was accessed through the formation of this deputy ministers committee.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the discussion this afternoon. We have successfully worked together over the last year to access about \$45,000 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for infrastructure management-related initiatives, including for the Sustainable Communities forum held on November of 2023, so that was before, and then virtual sessions that occurred through April and August of 2024.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 215, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. White: Welcome to the officials today. I thank my colleague for Pelly-Nisutlin for asking lots of the questions that have, you know, been buried away, so I appreciate that.

Just to get right into it, where are we on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* review?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Initial drafting of the legislation is underway, and the goal is to table the amended legislation in the spring of 2025.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. Earlier today during Question Period, the minister was asked about the timeline for the development of regulations for psychology. Can the minister expand on his comments during Question Period? When can we expect those regulations to come into force?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The team at CS informs me that they are planning to — they are hoping to have the regulations done by late November.

Ms. White: That is excellent news. Does the psychology association of Yukon get a chance to see them before they are published?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will endeavour to get the answer to the member opposite. I am just looking — we're running that to ground.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. If the minister is unable to get an answer today on the floor, if he can just commit to providing that in written form to both the Yukon Party and me.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said, I will endeavour to get the member opposite an answer.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that, but I was just confirming that I would get it even if it wasn't today — so, I thank him for that.

There were some questions earlier today, also during Question Period, about fire gear for rural fire stations. Can the minister confirm that every volunteer fire station in the territory has adequate fire gear, including for new volunteers?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I received a letter that prompted the questions this afternoon at about 3:00 o'clock yesterday — I was in the House. I read the letter and forwarded it on to my officials. I am currently ground-truthing the information in the letter. I haven't got that information yet. When I have more information, I certainly will provide it. I want to meet with the fire chief in question and have a discussion with him to ascertain what the specific issues are.

So that work is ongoing. I haven't got an answer for them. To say that everything is hunky-dory across the territory is a pretty broad statement. I want to make sure that I verify what the state is and what some of the concerns are from the people before I give an answer to that.

Ms. White: I appreciate that comment from the minister. I highlight my concern because I had heard it prior to a letter being sent yesterday. I had a concern from volunteer fire stations across the territory that one of the constraints for onboarding new volunteers was not having fire gear. So, not having adequate equipment meant that they couldn't actually grow their volunteer numbers because they didn't have the capacity, based on that. Similar to before, I just look forward to getting that answer either verbally today on the floor or in writing. I appreciate that the minister will follow up with that.

Can I get an update on the agreement with the Red Cross and the EMO? How many volunteers have they recruited and trained since that agreement?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been told that the Fire Marshal's Office and rural fire have appropriate gear across the territory, and we have gear for new recruits when they come on board. That is the answer I just got from the department. As I said, this is a live file and I will be looking a little closer, but that's the information that I'm getting from the department right now. I am glad that's the case.

I need some more information on the Red Cross question. We do have a negotiated agreement with the Red Cross.

As of the moment, I don't have numbers for the number of recruits we have brought into EMO through the Red Cross. If the member opposite has more detailed information, I would be happy to consider the question further.

Ms. White: I guess my anticipated response from the minister would be an answer to the question. I'm not the one with the agreement with the Red Cross and I don't represent the Emergency Measures Organization.

So, I know that, at one point in time, an agreement was made between the two, and there was a commitment to recruiting and training volunteers — my guess is for emergency situations. I guess I can do some Googling to find out more about the minister's agreement, but for now, I will move on.

In *Our Clean Future*, it says that the minister will complete hazard identification and risk assessments — HIRAs — for all Yukon communities by 2022 that include climate change risks. Currently, it's listed as "in progress". Can the minister tell me which communities have had their hazard identification and risk assessments done and when they were completed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: First of all, I appreciate the question on the Red Cross from the member opposite — the confusion. We have confirmed that it is actually Health and Social Services that has an agreement with the Red Cross, not Community Services. While it may touch on emergency measures in some way, it is really, I am told, that it is Health and Social Services that has the agreement with the Red Cross.

As far as *Our Clean Future* and some of the work that we are doing — under *Our Clean Future*, we have completed flood maps for the Southern Lakes region and Carmacks, and we have draft flood plans for Teslin available and will be finalized later this year. We have flood hazard mapping for Old Crow and the City of Dawson and the Klondike Valley. They are expected to be completed in 2025.

We have worked with municipalities and First Nation governments to finalize community wildfire protection plans in Faro, Haines Junction, and Teslin. We also published draft plans for the City of Dawson and Mayo. We have done advanced climate change preparedness by initiating development of a permafrost monitoring system for key public buildings and guidelines to address climate hazards in major infrastructure projects. We have established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to Yukon transportation corridors. We have completed flood risk mapping for all transportation corridors in the Yukon. This is both with Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources.

In CS, of course, we have also been involved in the flood mapping. We have draft community wildfire protection plans nearing completion for Mayo, Dawson City, Old Crow, and Beaver Creek as well as the communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay together. These plans will be presented for engagement with the community and First Nations in 2024 — so, later. Teslin, Haines Junction, Faro, and Whitehorse have completed community wildfire protection plans or their equivalent.

Ms. White: Although I appreciate that the minister just read off that entire list, it's impossible to take notes to be able to have a broader conversation on them, so maybe we can go back. Let's talk about flood mapping first. I participated in some of them for the Southern Lakes. I caught the minister saying Teslin, Carmacks, Old Crow, Dawson City, so maybe we can talk about flood maps that have been completed, and we can then maybe go on to the next one, being flood maps that are in progress — where those are at, when we can expect them. I would just encourage the minister to take his time so that we can have a conversation about flood mapping.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: You know, I'm happy to discuss this all afternoon. The Minister of Environment just handed me the note. Really, the flood mapping — we are flood mapping for emergency preparedness. The Department of Environment is actually doing more detailed flood mapping and much more detail that comes down to biological-level plans to track for *Our Clean Future*.

The Minister of Environment, when he is in the House for this, will certainly have more detailed information on the flood mapping aspects. We are dealing with it from a point of view of disaster mitigation — just making sure that we have — our component of the flood mapping is to identify what properties, what infrastructure, might be at risk in the event of a flood. The Environment department certainly has a lot deeper — they are doing a lot more and a lot deeper examination for the flood mapping, so we can do that.

Now, as far as we are concerned, I'll start with that — flood mitigation. Just give me a second, please.

As I said just a few moments ago, we have completed flood maps for the Southern Lakes region and Carmacks, and we have draft flood maps for Teslin available and finalized for later this year. We are currently doing flood hazard mapping for Old Crow and the City of Dawson and the Klondike Valley, and that's expected to be completed in 2025.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. That was much easier to follow.

Understanding that the mapping that the minister's department does has to do with disaster mitigation and properties at risk, of the ones that have been completed so far, are there predominant areas of concern that EMO will pay special attention to? So, we can go back in time and look at what happened in the Marsh Lake area, as an example. There were many properties that were affected. There was concern in Old Crow, but in the end, there were no properties affected. Are there any areas of concern going forward about areas that have had the hazard mapping of being higher levels of risk?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The flood mapping that is completed is online, and it will show the areas of concern. That is the whole purpose of flood mapping: to identify which areas are of concern and which areas are not.

They are public, so you can take a look and see where some of the low-lying areas that might be at risk of flood are, given certain years or certain circumstances, if the creeks and the snow melts in a certain way at a certain time. This is a tool that will be used by residents and by communities and community organizations to prepare for floods into the future. We are working with community associations like our local advisory councils — like Marsh Lake and others — on flood preparedness and mitigation. Residents, of course, have responsibilities for their properties too and can undertake mitigation measures if they are in a flood plain or at risk of floods after consulting the maps. I'm sure that other agencies and organizations will probably be looking at it as well. I imagine insurance companies will be looking at those too.

Any flood maps that are completed — I listed a few of them a few minutes ago — will show what areas are at risk for use by communities, by community members, by businesses,

or by whoever really wants to know, including the federal government.

That's the whole process. I'm sure there are areas. If the member opposite would like to discuss specific areas that she's heard about or identified as flood risk, I'm happy to do that this afternoon.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I believe another hazard mapping that the minister mentioned was for wildfire. Can he just let me know if that was accurate in what he said?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is correct. We have draft community wildfire protection plans nearing completion for the Village of Mayo, Dawson, Old Crow, Beaver Creek, as well as the communities of Burwash and Destruction Bay. Those communities are nearing completion.

We have completed plans for Teslin, Haines Junction, Faro, and Whitehorse. Those four communities have community wildfire protection plans or their equivalent done. The other communities do not.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

I know that my colleague the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin asked the specifics and I did not hear the answer at the time. But can the minister please repeat what the cost is for closing the three rural transfer stations that were just closed on October 1 — those being Braeburn, Johnsons Crossing, and Silver City?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The initial cost-saving that I delivered to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin this afternoon was \$1 million — this is the first tier of savings — over the next five years.

Ms. White: Can the minister give me a breakdown of what that \$1 million over five years would be saving — what that money would be earmarked for or where that savings is coming from?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is the direct cost of gathering and transporting the refuse — and checking, in some cases, empty bins at those communities and cleaning up waste that was dumped there, like car parts and that type of thing. That is the cost for the next five years — about \$200,000 in total for all the sites each year. Over five years, that is \$1 million.

Ms. White: Can the minister tell me what the cost was for the specific contract around Silver City? Can the minister please tell me what, for example, the contract was until October 1, 2024?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That was a territory-wide contract. When you remove those four communities out of the contract for collecting waste, the contractor reduced our cost by \$200,000. I didn't break it down by community.

Ms. White: Surely, the minister would know what the cost was, though, for a specific community. I mean, the decision to close a transfer station — I would say that there was a long consultation process, but I don't necessarily know that any public feedback changed those decisions. Can the minister tell me the cost of the collection for the Silver City transfer station?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: No, not specifically. I can say that the cost of closing all four is a \$200,000 savings annually to the Government of Yukon.

Ms. White: So, when the minister says "all four", I was under the impression that Keno had a separate agreement with the mine at the mine site. So, when the minister says that it was a cost saving for all four transfer stations, can he please just list them for me?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is correct that the mine is currently collecting the garbage waste for the community of Keno, but that was one of the communities that was in the territory-wide collection. When all four transfer stations closed, the savings to the Yukon government was \$200,000 a year. That includes Keno, because we are not collecting there anymore either.

Ms. White: Can the minister tell me when Hecla started doing the garbage pickup in Keno? My understanding was that it didn't just start on October 1; it has been ongoing. Can the minister remind me when Keno City started having their waste collected by the mine?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will endeavour to get a specific date. It was more than a year ago for Keno, but I will get a specific date from the department.

Ms. White: I am just looking at a CKRW newsroom release from November 30, 2022 that says, "Yukon government offers Keno City residents new waste collection process."

"New waste collection equipment is coming to Keno as the Government of Yukon provides residents with some of the support they've been asking for."

"Each household in Keno will receive bear-resistant garbage and recycling carts, which will form part of a waste collection service that will be available in the community once the Yukon Government closes the transfer station."

"The Hecla Mining Company will offer regular garbage pickup and transportation service."

So, if that is from 2022, can the minister just let me know if it was 2022 that the Yukon government stopped paying for the transfer of waste from Keno, or was it in 2023, and maybe some more specifics on that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, it has been two years, then — that would be right — and Hecla is doing it as a community service for the community of Keno. We did, of course, provide the bear-proof bins and other benefits after talking to the community of Keno to make sure that they had better garbage collection opportunities.

They were worried about bears, so we provided those kits. We actually provided those same bear-proof bins or similar bear-proof bins to other communities as requested, and that was the deal that we struck with the communities after the consultations that we had.

Ms. White: Understanding that the minister hasn't been responsible for the transfer of waste from Keno for two years, it sounds like — when the minister says that the \$200,000 was responsible for the transfer of waste for four communities, can I get a breakdown of how that \$200,000 supported both Keno and then the individual community breakdown? So, I'm

looking for the cost specifically about Braeburn, specially about Johnsons Crossing, and specifically about Silver City.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are endeavouring to get the variation between the contract in 2022-23 and 2023-24 back, though I will assert again that we don't have a breakdown. The contract gave us a bid to do the territory with all four — that was in 2022; in 2023, they were down to three left; 2024, we are down to three. That is a collective reduction in the cost of the contract from the contractor. We don't have specifics on what they spent for each individual site.

Ms. White: So, I mean, I hope that the minister understands that I have concerns with the math right now. I mean, this is the same minister who, back in the day, said that closing down Central Stores and Queen's Printer would save millions of dollars, but we were never able to see where those millions of dollars of savings happened.

Again, the same minister has said that it's a \$200,000 savings a year for four transfer stations, but he has just admitted that it's only responsible for three transfer stations. Keno is being taken care of by Hecla.

When we talk about money management, the government has said that they have expectations for those contracts. If the minister doesn't have the answer now, can he commit to getting me a breakdown for the contract of each of those transfer stations?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a contract that encompasses the whole territory for the removal of refuse. That contract is a large contract; it is held by a company. With the transfer stations in place, it was \$200,000. The contractor hasn't given us a breakdown. They just said that if you take these sites out, the contract will be reduced by \$200,000.

We're paying \$200,000.

So, the cost of providing the service to those transfer stations was \$200,000 and now the contract is \$200,000 less. I don't have information on how much the contractor was spending on each contract; neither does the department — it doesn't have eyes on that.

We just know that the contract was \$200,000 once the transfer stations were removed from that contract.

Ms. White: I'm still just questioning the math. So, is that a \$200,000 savings with the closure of three transfer stations or the closure of four transfer stations? What did the contractor have to do with Keno City?

The minister has said that it will save \$200,000 a year. I'm confused, because it's my understanding that, two years ago, Keno City became — there was a relationship with the mine site — Hecla — now.

So, can the minister help me understand: Does he mean a \$200,000 savings for the closure of three transfer stations or does he mean a closure of four transfer stations, and does that mean that they have been paying the contractor for Keno City even though Keno City has been the responsibility of the mine? I am just trying to understand the minister's math there.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What I will endeavour to do is that I will get the contracts from 2022 when we had all four in and then in 2023 when we had three of the contracts in and then in 2024 when we have all of them closed. We will get that

transition — I can't get the individual breakdown for each individual site, but I can get the breakdown for when Keno came out of the contract and was picked up by Hecla as a public service to the community. Then I can get the contract today, which will include the last three, so it will show what it was with Keno and the four in there and then now with all of the transfer stations closed, and you can see the difference in those contracts from the reduction of all four transfer stations over the last two years.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that; that will be super helpful.

The minister said that there is a very large contract for the removal of refuse across the territory. Can the minister let me know what other places the government pays to have waste transferred from?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have currently — right now — with the closure of all of the transfer stations — acknowledging that Keno's collection is from Hecla. The transfer station is gone.

At the time that Keno and the other three were operating, we had a total of 16 sites that we collected refuse from. When Keno went private, that dropped to 15, and now we are down to 12 collection sites — the government-run collection sites across the territory.

Ms. White: Can the minister tell me where those 12 collection sites are across the territory?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Over the course of Question Period and the rest of it, I have this list somewhere, and I've been frantically looking for it. There's actually a map, and I will find it in my notes and get it over to the member opposite. It lists all those sites. I think that we have identified nine in my notes, but we actually have a list and a map, and I will get that to the member opposite.

Ms. White: I can appreciate that, as I have scrambled even today trying to find notes as required.

Out of those 12 sites, does the minister know if they include Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Destruction Bay landfill is now one of the regional sites, and it collects for the whole region. It remains open.

Ms. White: Appreciating that, where does the contractor come from? I ask this because I was up the highway and saw a truck emptying dumpsters in Burwash Landing when I was there. Is that contracted by the Yukon government? If it is, where is that contractor based?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for her patience on this. I wish I was quicker off the draw on this, but we have these regional landfills operated by the Government of Yukon: Beaver Creek, Braeburn — but that's no longer the case — Carcross, Champagne, Deep Creek, Destruction Bay, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Stewart Crossing, and Tagish. I'm just trying to see how many that is. There is one more that we are missing, so I will find that last one. Yes, we're getting one more — so, I'll get you the last one.

Now, where this garbage is coming from is Whitehorse, so the garbage collection is currently coming to Whitehorse. But once the regional landfills are established and operating as

planned with gates and operators, then the garbage will no longer be coming to Whitehorse; it will be going to the regional landfills, which will accelerate the savings. There will be more savings coming once that shoe drops. We're not quite there yet. We are making those investments in rural Yukon to make sure that these regional landfills are up and running properly. Once that happens, we will be in a much different situation and the savings will start to accelerate because they won't be bringing all of that stuff back to Whitehorse; they will be bringing it to the regional landfills that are properly run and managed. So, that is down the road, but the current savings is \$200,000 a year on that contract.

Ms. White: When I was in the communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay, I was told by residents there that the truck that was coming to empty the dumpsters was coming from Whitehorse, which is ironic, because it meant that they drove right past Silver City. I guess in theory, it could have picked up in Silver City to dump out at the Destruction Bay regional facility.

Are there plans in the future that there will be a truck to do collections based in those communities? What does the minister envision when he talks about the regional landfills?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We had 16 sites; we are down to 12. Yesterday, I was asked a question about the water monitoring that we are asking municipalities to do — and ourselves as well. One of the sites where we're being asked to do that water monitoring — from Environment — is Silver City where there is some cause for us to go and start to look at that. We will be working with Environment to see what they have found and what they want us to do there. There will be costs involved in that.

As I have said many times here, the reason why we are undertaking this investing in these regional landfills the way we are is to make sure that all the regional landfills are controlled and that they have, as I said, gates, regular hours of operation, and tipping fees so we start to put a price on pollution — a trigger for people to think about what they are doing.

The person at the gate will ensure that people dropping that stuff off at the landfill are putting it in the right spot and managing it better, which is part of what the water monitoring is all about as well, because we're finding evidence that there are issues in these places. We want them better managed so that, in the future, we're protecting our groundwater and really managing our waste better so that they are not producing as many gasses — all sorts of reasons. So, that's really why we're doing it.

We saw in many of these places that were not supervised that people dumped stuff there — car parts, waste-oil bins, and all sorts of nasty materials — that has actually led to concerns in these areas. So, we're shutting down some of these areas and we're establishing criteria for communities to start to manage their waste better, which is what the Association of Yukon Communities asked us to do.

We've established a critical mass size where, if a community has more than 200 people, they will be eligible for, perhaps, a regional landfill. If they're smaller than that, they manage it themselves, like all communities that are smaller than

that across the territory. Rock Creek doesn't have a transfer station, and there are many others that don't. There were some that did for some reason. So, we're closing those things down, keeping a regional facility in close proximity to these communities so that everybody has really about the same distance to travel — roughly — to dispose of their garbage. If they are outside, they don't have one of these regional facilities.

So, the efforts, as I have said many times, will result in a more cost-effective and sustainable system and one that is safer for the environment and aligns with best practices and recommendations from the Environment and Climate Change Canada's 2017 report *Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities*. The report recommends that every facility, regardless of its size or location, has the basic infrastructure and operational practices needed to protect the public, facility operators, and wildlife from immediate risks and release of toxic substances. That, again, came from a federal report, *Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities*, released in 2017. That backstopped and actually led to some of the foresight from the Association of Yukon Communities, which asked us to do this.

It's progress. It was just a few decades ago — and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin reminded me today in our discussion about the Old Crow gasifier — when some communities were still pushing their trash onto the river ice, letting it float away in the spring, or burying garbage without any thoughts of long-term environmental impacts, or they were burning it. It was the Official Opposition that actually got rid of the burning and I quite candidly commended them on that. That was a difficult decision too, and they went through it. This is another refinement and improvement in the way we handle garbage in the territory.

The days of burning garbage and putting it on ice floes are behind us. So too are the days when people could simply drop their trash in a dumpster or at an uncontrolled transfer station, expecting it to disappear, throwing it into the black hole on the side of the highway. We are taking a new route.

The Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste, developed in close collaboration with the Association of Yukon Communities, established a plan that includes capital upgrades and service improvements at our 12 solid-waste facilities across the Yukon, and we are partnering with municipalities through regional agreements to help them manage waste from people outside of their boundaries. As I said before, we have entered into regional agreements with Carmacks, Dawson, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, and Watson Lake to ensure that these municipalities can continue to provide sustainable and high-quality waste management services to all Yukoners who use their facilities.

These agreements provide more than \$425,000 in annual operating support in addition to nearly \$100,000 per year for groundwater monitoring in municipal waste management facilities. This is the investment that we're making across the territory in improvements to the way we handle waste. It's vital because, across Canada, emissions from landfills account for almost 20 percent of all methane emissions. That's why we're focusing on composting organic waste at all waste management

facilities that we operate through the Yukon government. We want to divert compostable materials from landfills. That is a critical step in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. By keeping food, yard, and other organic waste out of landfills, we significantly reduce these methane emissions.

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

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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 the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Chair: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 43, entitled *Act to amend the Business Corporations Act (2024)*, and directed me to report progress.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 215, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

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. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 17, 2024:

35-1-167

Five-Year Review — Cannabis Control and Regulation Act — October 2024 (Silver)

35-1-168

Yukon University 2023-24 Year-in-Review and Yukon University Consolidated Financial Statements Year Ended March 31, 2024 (McLean)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 17, 2024:

35-1-148

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: school drinking water quality (McLean)

35-1-149

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 53, Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 215, *Second Appropriation Act 2024-25* — PricewaterhouseCoopers invoice (Streicker)